

PART III

THE FREEDOM OF THE NEW CREATION

CHAPTER 5

FOR FREEDOM CHRIST SET US FREE! THE NEW SYMBOLIC UNIVERSE.

1. ORIENTATION

Although the first two parts of this thesis are most important and integral to its argument, they are but stepping stones to Part III where our main subject, freedom in Christ and the accompanying ethic of freedom, comes into play. In Part I we emphasised the urgency with which Paul regarded the Galatians' consideration of adopting circumcision and certain Jewish laws as part of their ethics. For Paul this was no small matter. Employing rhetoric of urgency, he wrote from his heart. The truth of the gospel was at stake – its content, i.e. the cross of Jesus Christ through whom he had been crucified for Christ to live in him (Gl. 2:20), as well as its integrity in the changed lives of believers. His *modus operandi* was not the provision of an academic treatise on the irrelevance of circumcision, neither was it a gentle persuasion to reconsider their position on circumcision. He did not follow the route of weighing up the pros and cons of employing law in Christian ethics. The situation was far too precarious to risk this route. He opted for the radical reframing of their minds, using apocalyptic as tool to reach this goal. By using the rhetoric of disclosure and radical change he hoped to convince them that in the Christ event a new dispensation had arrived. The present evil age had been dealt with. New creation had dawned, and the Christian ethic had to be determined against this broader and foundational paradigm shift.

In Part II our aim was to determine what Paul meant by this present evil age. Our conclusion was that it refers to life before and without Christ, characterised by slavery to the flesh and its *secundi*, the elements of the world and law with all its paraphernalia such as boasting, division and discrimination. Law, although divinely given, could not restrain flesh. Instead, law itself became a slave to flesh and enslaved man. Because Paul gives such prominence to circumcision and law, one is at risk of defining freedom solely in terms of freedom from law. Freedom reaches much wider. It is another way of describing the totality of the believer's deliverance and redemption by Christ. The present evil age underscores both the Jew and Gentile's plight of enslavement to flesh, and calls for a solution to the total plight.

Part III moves on to the new paradigm or symbolic universe. It is devoted to our actual theme, i.e.: "For freedom Christ set us free!" On the one hand, believers are *free from the present evil age* and all its characteristics. On the other hand, they are *free to participate in the new creation* (Ch. 5).¹ It will be argued that in the new creation, characterised by freedom in Christ and a life in the Spirit, there is no room for any element – law included – originating from the present evil age. The latter has

¹ Kertelge, 1991,187.

been replaced in the advent of Christ and his Spirit. In as much as law was unable to justify man before God and to prevent him from evil-doing in the old dispensation, it is equally ineffective in helping those who have been justified by faith in Christ to live righteously. Paul's soteriology is founded exclusively on the cross of Jesus Christ, and so too is his ethics. In as much as the Spirit induces faith in Christ and his cross in the believer, He also induces the ethos befitting those of the new creation (Ch. 6). Freedom is as much freedom from flesh and law as it is the freedom to live as a new creation. It will also be argued (Ch. 7) that this pneumatological ethic, characterised by loving service, is responsibly lived in and with the help of the community of faith.

In the current chapter we move our focus to the aim of this dissertation, namely to come to an understanding of what Paul meant with: **“For freedom Christ set us free!”** Attention will be paid to a few structural matters in order to determine the relation between Paul's argumentative section (Gl. 1:11-4:21) and so-called paranetical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10). Gl. 5:1-6:10 is not a mere ethical addendum without which the letter would make equal sense. It is no afterthought, no mere warning against libertinism, and on no account, a reintroduction of a christologically redefined law. It will be argued that Gl. 5:1-6:10 is integral to Paul's whole argument. After having denounced law as ethical basis for the new aeon in Christ, he explains how ethics should now operate.

It will be argued that Gl. 5:1, as the focal point of Gl. 5:1-12, is pivotal at the intersection of Paul's argument that a new dispensation had arrived in Christ (Gl. 1-4:31), and his description of the accompanying Christian ethic (Gl. 5:1-6:10). Gl. 5:1-6:10 could be described as the pneumatological-koinonial ethical flip-side of the christological-soteriological foundation of the new aeon. Thus Gl. 5:1, together with the whole Gl. 5:2-12, both concludes the foregoing arguments and introduces the ethical flip-side to follow.

Hopefully, it will become clear that freedom, as Paul views it, is in no way comparable to the wide variety of views from his *Umwelt*. Freedom is christologically founded. Through the cross of Christ and the advent of his Spirit believers were free from the present evil age and its slavery. This made them part of the new creation in which they were now free to live in service to God and their neighbour.

It will be argued that Gl. 1:1-5; 2:19-21; 5:1-12 and 6:11-17 should be read in tandem to illustrate that it is either Christ, a new creation and freedom through the cross, or it is law as the present evil age's thin end of the wedge, and ultimately severance from Christ. It will be argued that Paul's call to stand firm against any form of slavery is, contextually speaking, a call to denounce the reintroduction of external ethical law in any form. It will be argued that new creation has replaced the present evil age according to God's will and through Christ's cross. Paul is adamant that law cannot be introduced into new creation. It would reopen the can of worms from the present evil age. If law was unable to justify believers or induce righteous living in the old aeon, it was equally unable and unfit to do so in the new creation.

Freedom in Christ and through his Spirit involves a clear break with the different slaveries of the present evil age. It is one in hope, because new creation will only fully settle at the *parousia*, but believers were to stand firm in this freedom and not to revert to any form of slavery again. This would jeopardise redemption in Christ.

2. STRUCTURAL ORIENTATION

In this chapter and the two to follow the focus will be on Gl. 5:1-6:10.¹ It is essential to decide on the position of this section in the letter. Not of equal importance, but of some consequence, is the position of Gl. 5:1. Does it fit with Gl. 4:21-31 or with Gl. 5:2-6:10? Together with this we have to decide on the sub-division of the section for Paul to speak as clearly as possible. Equally important, is the possible link between, on the one hand, Gl. 5:1-12 and Gl. 6:11-17, and on the other hand between Gl. 5:1-12 and Gl. 1:1-5.

We have already determined the following in terms of structure:

- The *praescriptio* (Gl. 1:1-5/10) and *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-18) are solidly linked and envelop the letter in *apocalyptic*.² The *praescriptio* introduces the letter with God's gracious and promised provision (elaborated on later at Gl. 3:14-18) in the christological deliverance from the *present evil age*, according to his will (Gl. 1:5). The *conclusio* returns to this theme. Hinged around Gl. 6:14-15 it expresses that the gracious provision in the cross of Christ has led to a *new creation*. Believer and world are now dead to each other.
- Gl. 1:11-2:21 is Paul's introductory argument along biographical lines.³ He introduces the argument with Gl.1:11-12, strongly emphasising his gospel as God's truth in contrast to man's. This argument ends in his concluding remarks (Gl. 2:15-21) of which Gl. 2:19-21 are certainly the climax. In Gl. 2:20 he states: "I have been *crucified* with Christ; it is *no longer I who live*, but *Christ who lives in me*; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and *gave Himself for me*."

We proceed to determine a workable structure for the rest of the letter, the emphasis obviously being on Gl. 5-6. Our aim is not to determine detailed structures, but a broad, workable structure *to assist in determining Paul's view on freedom in his ethical section*.

2.1. Where does Galatians 5:1 fit in?

There is no unanimity on whether Gl. 5:1 should be fitted with Gl. 4:21-31 or Gl. 5:2-6:10. Scholars opting for the former position argue that in Gl. 5:1 Paul summarises the immediately preceding section (Gl. 4:21-31) in which freedom and slavery are

¹ The reason for taking the whole so-called parenetical section (G. 5:1-6:10) into consideration, should become clear at sections §2.2, §2.3 and §3.2 of this chapter, where the unity and internal structure of the section is argued.

² See my Ch. 2.

³ See my Ch. 1.

very functional.¹ This makes Gl. 5:1 the grand conclusion to his fourth argument.² Bruce takes it a step further. He allocates a double function to Gl. 5:1, seeing it as both a summary and an application in non-allegorical language of the preceding allegory on Sarah and Hagar, as well as the conclusion to the whole line of argument started in Gl. 2:14.³ Witherington emphasises that Gl. 5:2-15 forms the next argument in which Paul returns to the matter of circumcision, which was the real bone of contention in Galatia, but had been delayed up to now in order to lay the foundation for that which is to follow.⁴ For this reason Paul follows with the refutation of circumcision and Mosaic Law (Gl. 5:2-12). He summarises this position by again emphasising freedom in Christ and its fruition in love for the neighbour. The rest of the section up to Gl. 6:10 explains the meaning of life in the Spirit and according to the law of Christ.⁵ In favour of this, one can add that Paul's tone seems to change from Gl. 5:2. He follows a more direct and personal approach.⁶ He calls for their attention by using the imperative form of ἐἴδον (Ἴδε) and then specifically refers to himself by name. He points to how well they had run, but how they had now been hindered (Gl. 5:7) by a bad influence (Gl. 5:9).⁷ He compares himself, his experiences and gospel with those of the other persuasion and declares his conviction that the Galatians will follow his understanding (Gl. 5:10). He is certain his opponents will be judged negatively (Gl. 5:10) and even calls for their mutilation⁸ (Gl. 5:12). This is passionate rhetoric and could benefit the position that Gl. 5:2 starts a new section, making Gl. 5:1 fit better with Gl. 4:21-31.

Esler makes a very important observation from a social-scientific perspective, stating that Gl. 5:1, in concluding the allegory of Gl. 4:21-31, lays down freedom as identity-descriptor for those associating with the action of Christ and adhering to

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 340.

² Also known as his fourth major argument in most analyses. Cosgrove, 1987, 219-35, makes a fine and deserving contribution to the discussion concerning Gl. 4:21-31. He argues that Gl. 4:22-27 constitutes a complete "argument to the effect that the Torah is in 'slavery' and has produced no 'children of the promise.'" In this way Paul reinforces his thesis that both the law itself (as παιδαγωγός) and those 'under the law' are in slavery (Gl. 3:21-4:11)" (234). Gl. 4:28-30 constitutes a second interpretation in the sense of a warning that "life in the Spirit" does not depend on law keeping (234). "The Galatians are children of the free woman, and to say that is to assert their freedom. The idea that sonship means freedom differs little in the end from the dominant theme in Gl. 3:23-4:7 that sonship means heirship, 'freedom' being closely associated in Gl. 5-6 with life in the Spirit. But the theme of freedom carries a strong ethical edge in Paul. Therefore, the motif of sonship in freedom provides a most appropriate conceptual means of transition from the ideas developed in the letter up to this point and the concrete exhortations to follow (see Gl. 5:1; 5:13), facilitating in the widest sense the movement from indicative to imperative" (235). He argues that the original readers would have heard a break by the auditor already in Gl. 4:31, which starts with διό, ἀδεῶφοί. He therefore chooses to add Gl. 4:31 to 5:1f (233). This is fine arguing, but still does not make it compelling to add Gl. 4:31 to Gl. 5:1f. It could equally well be argued that διό, ἀδεῶφοί introduces the conclusion to Gl. 4:21-31, or even the whole section from Gl. 3:1.

³ Bruce, 1982¹, 226.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 364.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 359.

⁶ In both Gl. 5:11 & 13 he refers to them as "brothers".

⁷ It is commonly accepted that the metaphor of leaven working its way through the whole lump refers to a bad influence.

⁸ It could also be translated with "castration"; Morris, 1996, 162.

Paul's gospel.¹ However, although he is correct with regard to freedom as an identity marker of the believers, there is no conclusive reason in this regard why Gl. 5:1 should necessarily be added to Gl. 4:21-31. Gl. 4:31 is an almost perfect conclusion to Gl. 4:21-30, reading: "So, brethren, we are not children of the slave, but of the free woman."

More scholars favour the position that Gl. 5:1 is part of Gl. 5:2-12,² in which case the natural conclusion to Gl. 4:21-31 is not Gl. 5:1, but Gl. 4:31. The latter is a fitting conclusion in the same idiom as the preceding allegory and is introduced by the words διό ἀδελφοί, which can be translated as "in conclusion, brothers."³ Betz states that this section

is marked by an abrupt new start. There is no transitional phrase or particle.... The *probatio* section (3:1-4:31) now concluded, a new section is expected to begin, and its beginning should be clearly indicated.⁴

He even regards Gl. 4:31 as the conclusion to the entire *argumentatio* (Gl. 3:1-4:30) and a restatement and summary of his conclusions in Gl. 3:9, 14, 24, 29 and 4:7.

The last two words τῆς ἐλευθέρως ("of the free woman") repeat the end of the preceding v 30, and also point forward to the beginning of the new section of the exhortation (5:1). They indicate that the entire new section beginning in 5:1 is guided by its leading concept of "freedom" (ἐλευθέρια).⁵

Dunn speaks in the same vein:

Freedom is the leitmotiv of the letter. Having brought the discussion back round to that theme in iv.22-31, Paul reaches the climax of his exposition and appeal. The whole reason for his writing to the Galatians is summed up in the passionate cry of v:1. And the depth of feeling which so strongly motivated the writing, and which moves disturbingly beneath the surface throughout, bursts through once again in the forcefulness of the appeal... The consequence is a passage almost unique within Paul's letters in its passionate forcefulness, in its polarization of choice, and in its dismissal of those opposing him...⁶

In this thesis Gl. 5:1 is considered as a *most pivotal text* having affinities with both the preceding and the following text. It is transitional, containing an indicative of freedom as well as an imperative to stand firm in this freedom and not to fall prey to slavery again. In fact, it makes good sense as a *conclusion* to the whole theological argument (Gl. 3:1-4:31) if the prominence of freedom as soteriological metaphor is considered. Paul summarises and redefines the whole argument of Christ's deliverance and redemption of believers in terms of freedom. By the same token, he moves on to the flip-side of having received freedom, namely to stand firm in this new status. By doing this he *introduces* the way in which Christians should not

¹ Esler, 1998, 206.

² To mention but Betz, 1979; Dunn, 1993²; H.N. Ridderbos, 1976¹; Morris, 1996.

³ Betz, 1979, 251.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 255.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 251.

⁶ Dunn, 1993², 260. R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 221, agrees when he states: "All that Paul has argued for and exhorted previously in Galatians comes to focus here."

conduct their lives, i.e. in terms of law (Gl. 5:2-12), and how they should, i.e. in terms of Christ and his Spirit (Gl. 5:13-6:10). It will hopefully become clearer when the chiasmic structure of the letter is discussed in section 3 below. However, because Gl. 4:31 seems a more natural conclusion to Gl. 4:21-31, Gl. 5:1, although concluding the whole argumentative section, seems to be *more introductory to the so-called ethical section*. Therefore it will be regarded more as part of Gl. 5:2-12, but not exclusively so.

2.2. How functional is the position of Galatians 5:1-6:10?

Gl. 5:1-6:10 is not a mere addition to the foregoing. This should become clearer as we proceed. At this stage it would suffice to mention that the main themes of the argumentative section are revisited throughout the ethical section. This is obviously so because the letter is an integral whole of which the theological and the ethical arguments are in no way to be separated. The ethical arguments flow logically from the theological arguments. Paul does not have different sets of arguments for soteriology and ethics. They are two sides of the same coin. This cohesion and coherence must be respected if Paul is at all to be heard clearly. The following themes are revisited in Gl. 5:1-6:10.

- In Gl. 5:1 Paul revisits the christological indicative of deliverance (Gl. 1:4) by substituting ἐξέλιπται (“to deliver”) with ἐλευθερώ (“to set free”).
- The slavery metaphor so prominent in Gl. 3-4, is reintroduced as early as Gl. 5:1. It is also used positively in the sense of service to one another (Gl. 5:13). There might be an allusion to slavery in Paul’s reference to the marks of Jesus that he bore (Gl. 6:17).
- He revisits circumcision (Gl. 5:2-3, 6, 11) as introduced in Gl. 2:3, 7-9, 12.
- He juxtaposes the notion of reversion to circumcision with being severed from Christ (Gl. 5:4), implying that those considering circumcision are drawing a line through his main christological arguments in Gl. 2:15-21 and 3:1-4:20.
- He revisits the Spirit as the One who gives life to those of faith (Gl. 3:2-5; 4:6, 28) in 5:5, 16-25; 6:8.
- The cross and crucifixion (Gl. 2:20; 3:1, 13) recur in Gl. 5:11; 6:12, 14, 17.

Scholars are unanimous in regarding Gl. 5:1-6:10 as primarily parenetical. Even Joop Smit, who regards Gl. 5:1-6:10 as a later Pauline addition acknowledges this. In fact, it is its exhortatory character, according to him, that makes it difficult to fit it into his deliberative rhetorical structure, so that he regards it as a later addition.¹ Already in the 19th century Lightfoot identified it as *hortatory*.² In modern times Betz³ is credited for bringing the literary composition of Galatians into sharp focus, setting

¹ J. Smit, 1989, 9.

² Lightfoot, 1890, 65-80.

³ Betz, 1975 & 1979.

a trend for many to react to. In terms of Greco-Roman rhetorical convention he refers to this section as *exhortatio*.¹

Although there is no disagreement on Gl. 5:1-6:10 being wholly or partly parenetical, there is disagreement on where the exhortation begins and how it should be sub-divided.² Some regard Gl. 5:1 as the parenetical beginning point, because of the imperative “to stand firm” (στήκω) and not “to be submitted” (ἐνέσθε) to the yoke of slavery again following the indicative of freedom in Christ.³ Others regard Galatians Gl. 5:13 as the beginning point,⁴ following on their choice to fit Gl. 5:1 with Gl. 4:21-31. This leaves the very operative imperatives “to stand firm” (στήκω) and not “to be submitted” (ἐνέσθε) to slavery again, separate from Gl. 5:2-12. One of the reasons for this choice is the supposition that, because the warning against law is strongly emphasised in Gl. 5:2-12, it rounds off Paul’s “dogmatic section” before he moves on naturally to the “practical part” starting at Gl. 5:13.⁵ Interestingly, there are scholars who opt for Gl. 4:12 as the beginning of the ethical section, because of its use of a passionate imperative (“become as me”), followed by another (“Cast out the slave and her son” - Gl. 4:30).⁶

Thereafter both imperatives and hortatory subjunctives appear repeatedly throughout 5:1-6:10: imperatives at 5:1 (twice) 13, 14, 16; 6:1,2, 6, 7; hortatory subjunctives at 5:25, 26; 6:9, 10. It is therefore necessary to insist that all of the request section of 4:12-6:10 is in effect the *exhortatio* of Paul’s Galatian letter, for throughout all of this section Paul is pleading with his converts.⁷

Longenecker continues by sub-dividing the *exhortatio* into two parts, namely Gl. 4:12-5:12, dealing with the Judaizing threat, and Gl. 5:13-6:10, dealing with the problem of libertine tendencies.⁸ I contend that the introduction of a libertine threat, or even a mere tendency in that direction, is both unnecessary and unwarranted. Paul deals with one subject throughout the letter, i.e. the believer’s deliverance by Christ from the present evil age, or as he formulates it in Gl. 5:1, his freedom in Christ, and how it relates to his daily living or *ethos*. His concern is that reversion to law in any form will render this freedom null and void (Gl. 5:2-12). Knowing that flesh was still a reality and that law had been unmasked as ineffective to deal with flesh, he introduces the Spirit as the new internalised ethical *Enabler*, with love as overriding ethical standard (Gl. 5:13-24). Nowhere is libertinism mentioned as a threat. He is more concerned with the problem of flesh still being around and influencing the believers to live according to its influence instead of to that of the Spirit. He is not attacking a possible libertine party from the left, but providing an answer to

¹ Betz, 1979, 253.

² See the following paragraph (§2.3) on the sub-division.

³ Betz, 1979, 253. Morris, 1996, 151-3, does not refer to it as an ethical section, although acknowledging its imperative nature. His title is significant, because it stresses the Pauline emphasis on freedom in Gl. 5:1-6:10.

⁴ Bruce, 1982¹, 239; Witherington, 1998¹, 260; Merk, 1969, 104.

⁵ Bruce, 1982¹, 239.

⁶ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 186-9.

⁷ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 186.

⁸ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 187.

the Galatians' implied question of how to deal with the flesh in the absence of law (Gl. 5:18). He argues that the Spirit would provide ethical guidance (Gl. 5:22-23).

Dunn remarks that though most English commentators follow Betz, regarding Gl. 5:1-12 as the beginning of the parenetical section, it is better to follow the more German approach, regarding it as the conclusion to the main argument.

But since the exposition leads into the conclusion and the conclusion has the character of exhortation, the disagreement does not amount to much.¹

The question arises as to the importance of this section for Galatians. Should it be regarded as only loosely related to the all important argumentative section in which Paul downplayed the soteriological importance of law and its works, and emphasised the priority of faith, promise and the Spirit? If that were the case Paul could have ended his argument and the body of his letter at Gl. 4:31 after having come to the conclusion that: "We are not children of the slave but of the free woman." He might even have added Gl. 5:1, but more would have been unnecessary. Many scholars correctly regard Galatians' *exhortatio* as the climax of Paul's letter. Betz expressly states that it is the centre of Paul's argument.² Dunn refers to it as the climax of Paul's exposition and appeal. The whole reason for his writing to the Galatians is summarised in his emphatic declaration in Gl. 5:1.³ Having come to the conclusion in Gl. 4:31 he pushes on to stress both the indicative of Christ's soteriological action, expressed in terms of freedom, and the practical implications of its imperative for Christians. Fee fittingly states that Gl. 5-6 is

a crucial part of the *argument* of Galatians, not simply a collection of paraenesis added at the end, after the theological argument is in place. The ethical result of the life of the Spirit is part of the essential argument of the letter, since this is the burning question, "How do believers *live*?"⁴

Matera has been helpful with regard to the structure and importance of Paul's argument in Gl. 5-6.⁵ He regards the whole of Gl. 5:1-6:17 as the climax of Paul's argument. He differs from most, by not regarding the whole section as the letter's parenetical section. He does, however, argue that it contains a great deal of parenetical material, and that it is not an optional addition to Paul's theological argument. In fact, he too regards it as the culmination of Paul's argument.⁶ He reasons that Paul had been aiming at persuading the Galatians not to partake in circumcision. After introducing the subject in Gl. 2:3 he returns to it only now in Gl. 5:2. What he did in between, was to show the necessity of faith rather than works of law (Gl. 3:1-14); to explain the relationship between law and the promise to Abraham (Gl. 3:15-

¹ Dunn, 1993², 261. One can go along with this in the sense that Gl. 5:1-12 is pivotal in joining the indicative and imperative as long as the integrity of Gl. 5:1-6:10 is not affected.

² Betz, 1979, 255.

³ Dunn, 1993², 260; Witherington, 1998¹, 359 is in agreement with him.

⁴ Fee, 1994², 385.

⁵ Matera, 1988, 79-91.

⁶ Matera, 1988, 82.

29); to link law and other elements of the world to man's religious infancy¹ (Gl. 4:1-11); to appeal to their friendship (Gl. 4:12-20); and to allegorise with regard to their allegiance to Isaac, the freeborn (Gl. 4:21-31).

To be sure the circumcision question has been in the background (2.3-5), but Paul has not explicitly stated that the Galatians must refuse circumcision. The reason is clear. Before Paul can raise the question of circumcision, he must show the Galatians that they are no longer under the law, that the law belongs to their period of infancy (4.1-11). Only after he has dealt with the law can he concern himself with the most dramatic expression of the law's observance, the outward mark of circumcision.²

We have pointed to the fact that there are other scholars who regard Gl. 5:1-12 as part of Paul's so-called theological argument,³ but Matera insists there is also a connection between the theological argument and the rest of the parenetical section. He argues that the parenetical section proper (Gl. 5:13-6:10) is sandwiched between two very important sections in which Paul is pleading with the Galatians not to be circumcised (Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-18). He then quite rightly continues to find intentional literary parallels on circumcision between the latter two sections.⁴ It should be mentioned that these parallels are extremely solid, being based on both syntactic and thematic similarities.

Parallel 1

- 5:6 – For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail (οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία), but faith working through love.
- 6:15 – For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision (οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τι ἔστιν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία), but a new creation.

Parallel 2

- 5:3 – I testify again to every man who receives circumcision (περιτεμνομένῳ) that he is bound to keep the whole law (ὅλον τὸ νόμον ποιῆσαι).
- 6:13a – For even those who receive circumcision (οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι) do not themselves keep the law (νόμον φυλάσσουσιν).

Parallel 3

- 5:11 – But if I, brethren, still preach circumcision (περιτομή), why am I still persecuted (διώκομαι)? In that case the stumbling block of the cross (σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ) has been removed.
- 6:12 – It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised (περιτέμνεσθαι), only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ (ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται)

Fig. 5.1.

¹ It might be better to rather refer to their religious insufficiency, because of the fact that infancy or immaturity carries the undertone of religious developmental theory.

² Matera, 1988, 82-3.

³ Matera, 1988, 81, acknowledges, amongst others, Ropes, 1929, 24, for having pointed out the futility of an unconnected parenetical section. This is also the position of Kennedy, 1984, 146, who argues that Paul's arguments in Gl. 1-4 lead to Gl. 5-6, which is "the point of the letter". Furnish, 1968, 69, warns against sharp distinctions between doctrinal and ethical sections in Pauline letters.

⁴ Matera, 1988, 83.

Matera is correct about Gl. 5:1-6:17 being integral and indispensable to Paul's argument. He is equally correct about Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-18 being corresponding warnings against accepting circumcision as mark of the believing community, and about these pericopes enclosing the parenetical section proper. This highlights the parenetical section as descriptive of the believing community's actual identity markers. It is even more relevant if one considers that both are concluding summaries of the main argument. My contention is that not only Gl 5:1 is transitional from the theological to the ethical section, but also the entire Gl. 5:1-12, bearing elements concluding from the introductory and the theological arguments, as well as strong indications as to how ethics should be conducted; the latter being dealt with in greater detail in Gl. 5:13-6:10 (*fig. 5.2*).

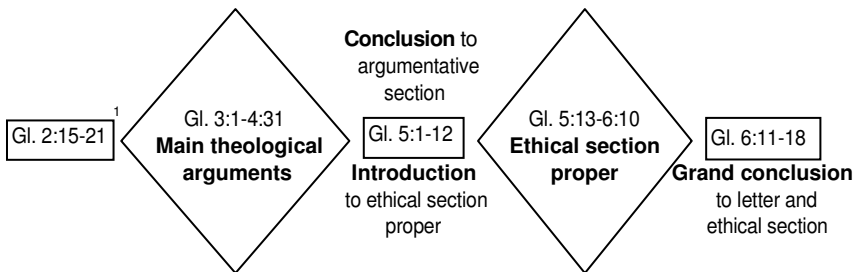


Fig. 5.2.

Clearly, Gl. 5:1-12 is transitional. Paul moves from theology to ethics, indicating equally that the two are not only related, but fundamentally inseparable.

It is significant that only now, at the pivotal point of moving on to his ethical section, does Paul expressly and overtly use the word group ἐλευθερώω ("to set free") to describe Christ's saving action. Only now, after having previously only introduced freedom in Christ as the truth of the gospel (Gl. 2:4-5), then arguing his case and coming to the conclusion that believers in Christ are children of the free woman (Gl. 4:31), does he stress freedom in Christ (Gl. 5:1) and add to it a vocation to live in freedom (Gl. 5:13) and to walk by the Spirit (Gl. 5:16, 25). This in itself suggests that Paul did not think of freedom merely as a matter of principle, but as a position that had to be concretely enacted in everyday living.

One has the impression, which will be substantiated in the pages to follow, that Paul, because he does not as a rule separate soteriology and ethics,² is about to emphasise freedom as essential to ethics as much as it is to soteriology,³ although he initially describes it as deliverance. It is also quite obvious that Paul would move

¹ Refer to Ch. 1 at §3.2.4.1 where it is argued that Paul used Gl. 2:15-21 as a *propositio*, reflecting the *narratio*'s material content and setting up the arguments to be reflected upon in the *probatio*.

² H.N. Ridderbos, 1975, 237-42, 253-8.

³ Morris, 1996, 153.

on to freedom in ethics, since his opponents could very easily argue – and probably did – that law was essential to determine ethical behaviour. Freedom is no side issue. It is fundamentally important with regard to daily Christian living. This he wanted to explain.

[B]ecoming a Christian meant entering a life of freedom, a life in which sin had been dealt with by Christ's death, a life in which the believing Paul now experienced the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There was no pressure to keep a set of rules, no compulsion to earn merit in the sight of a God who was himself perfect and who demanded wholeheartedness from his worshippers. That the believer is called to live his or her life in obedience to the will of God did not, for Paul, constitute bondage. It was the natural outcome of the fact that the believer is set free from the slavery to evil that is characteristic of unbelieving humanity.¹

In Gl. 5:1-6:17 Paul brings his arguments to a close, becoming increasingly practical in what he meant by freedom for those delivered from the present evil age. He does not separate soteriology and ethics. After having argued that justification is not through works of law, but by faith (Gl. 2:16) in the promise of God (Gl. 3:14-18) and through the Spirit (Gl. 3:3-4), he follows with a very forceful ethical section in which he expressly implements the language of *freedom* (Gl. 5:1, 13) and *walking* in the Spirit (Gl. 5:16, 25). Paul's forceful closing section (Gl. 5:1-6:17) is the climactic fruition of his developing argument. He is not reacting against a libertinistic threat of some kind. He is not concerned about balancing out a so-called anomistic point of view with a new form of nomism. He is only drawing his arguments against circumcision and law to a logical conclusion. In as much as law could no longer determine salvation (soteriology), it could equally not be part of the ethical indicative of the time since Christ's resurrection. The freedom of believers in Christ should be evident in their ethical choices and actions in concrete daily living. It is a status that has to be lived to the full.² It is part and parcel of being in Christ and no longer being part of the present evil age. It is not something that can or should be put on hold for fear of being untrue to God's will and then reverting to law as the well-trodden and trusted ethical way.³

¹ Morris, 1996, 151.

² Betz, 1979, 256; Kümmel, 1973, 224-8.

³ 1 Cor. 8; 9:19-23 & 10:23-33 do complicate this position slightly. Paul calls on the Corinthians to be willing to put their freedom on hold when dealing with "those who are weak" (1 Cor. 8; 10:23-33). He himself became as a Jew to win the Jews, and as one without the law for those who were without the law in order to win them over (1 Cor. 9:19-23). To be sure, the situations are totally different. In the *Corinthian situation* it was, on the one hand, about sensitivity towards people without Christ who could easily experience a heavy-handed or imperialistic approach as belittling and offensive and consequently resist the gospel. On the other hand, with regard to the "weak" in the community of faith, their associations with regard to the eating of meat sacrificed to the gods, together with their immature faith and limited knowledge, could lead to disgust at the "accommodation" of these gods in the church. Once more, sensitivity and patience on the side of more mature believers was called for. This is in tandem with Paul's remarks that neither circumcision nor non-circumcision were of any value, but faith working through love and new creation (Gl. 5:6; 6:15). Faith and love would dictate the believer's application of freedom, and not his or her *right* to be free from circumcision and law. The *situation in Galatia*, however, was one of principle and not occasion. Non-Jews were being wooed into believing that Christianity involved becoming more Jewish in addition to believing in Jesus. This was untrue to the gospel.

2.3. How Galatians 5:1-6:17 could be sub-divided

This section has been regarded as a collection of a variety of loosely fitted ethical remarks.¹ The collection of *sententiae* at the end of the exhortation especially (Gl. 5:25-6:10) gives the impression of being without structure.² It will become clearer as we proceed that this section is not only well integrated with the rest of the letter, but that its internal structure is not at all loose. It is impossible to find unanimity amongst scholars on the internal structure of this section, which is greatly influenced by positions taken with regard to the matters raised above. One is humbled by the magnitude of activity in this regard. Therefore the word “could” in the above subtitle. Esler correctly acknowledges: “[T]here is always a measure of artificiality in any structural division of a Pauline letter.”³

In view of this remark and the variety of positions taken, an overview of the latter is unnecessary. Much in line with Matera’s division is that of Betz.⁴ He argues that Gl. 5:1-6:10 can be seen as an ethical trilogy consisting of Gl. 5:1-12, 5:13-24 and 5:25-6:10. Each sub-section is dominated by an introductory text consisting of an indicative, restating the discussed salvation, and an imperative or warning related to the indicative.

- Galatians 5:1(a) restates the indicative of *freedom* obtained in Christ and follows with the imperative to stand firm (in this freedom) and a warning not to submit to slavery again. He then explains how detrimental Mosaic Law and circumcision is, and stresses that, through the Spirit (Gl. 5:5), faith working through love is all that counts (Gl. 5:6).
- Galatians 5:13(a) restates the same indicative of *freedom* as a vocation, following with the warning not to give flesh an opportunity, and the imperative to serve one another through love. Believers are to *walk by the Spirit* (Gl. 5:16). He stresses the irreconcilability of the desires of the Spirit with those of the flesh (Gl. 5:16-17). The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are listed and the obsolescence of law is stressed (Gl. 5:18, 23).
- Gl. 5:25(a) restates the indicative in terms of *living by the Spirit*, and follows with the hortatory subjunctive to *walk by the Spirit*. Then follows a series of gnomic sentences in which there is a heavy emphasis on *intra-group relations*. He concludes with an eschatological warning (Gl. 6:7-9) and a summary of the whole parenetical section (Gl. 6:10).⁵ He refers to the bearing of one another’s burdens and the fulfilling of the *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2), sowing to and reaping corruption from the flesh or sowing to and reaping eternal life from the Spirit (Gl. 6:8), and the household of faith (Gl. 6:10).

For the sake of perspective, I reiterate the previously made point that Gl. 5:1-12 is a transitional pericope concluding the argumentative sections, and introducing the

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 359.

² Betz, 1979, 291.

³ Esler, 1998, 205.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 254-5.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 255.

ethical arguments. In this regard the occurrence of “love” (ἀγαπᾶν in Gl. 2:20; 5:14 and ἀγάπη in Gl. 5:6, 13, 22) is significant. Outside this ethical section reference is made to “love” only in Gl. 2:20, and as christological indicative at that. It resurfaces only in Gl. 5:6 at the introduction to the ethical section. This time around it consistently refers to the correct ethical behaviour expected of believers, enhancing the notion that Gl. 5:1-12 has strong links with the rest of the ethical section. Gl. 5:13-24 seems to deal with the operative principle for Christian ethics, i.e. living the fruit of the Spirit (primarily love) in freedom, and Gl. 5:25-6:10 with the same principle in the context of the faith community.

This being said, we proceed to Gl. 5:1-12 and its “twin section” Gl. 6:11-17.¹ The emphasis will obviously be on Gl. 5:1 as Pauline indicative on soteriology *and* ethics. The Christian is a new creation characterised by freedom. His freedom from flesh and, amongst others, law, should be illustrated by not being circumcised or subjected to law, but by “faith working through love” (Gl. 5:6).

3. THE MOST STRATEGIC POSITION OF GALATIANS 5:1-12

3.1. Galatians 5:1-12 in relation to Galatians 1:1-5

In Ch. 2 we emphasised parallels between the *salutatio* (Gl. 1:1-5) and the post-script (Gl. 6:11-17). The main aim was to point out Paul’s total reframing of the Galatians’ symbolic universe. Through the advent of Jesus Christ and his cross the *present evil age* had met its match and had been replaced (although not yet removed) by the *new creation*. In the following section we take note of the implications of the parallels between Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17. It could be expected that there would also be a parallel between Gl. 1:1-5 and 5:1-12, which indeed there seems to be.² The main connecting lines are the following:

- In Gl. 5:1 Paul states: “For freedom Christ set us free” (τῆ ἐλευθερία ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν). In Gl. 1:4 he refers to this same deed of Christ with a phrase reflecting the same intention, i.e.: “to deliver us” (ἐξέλιθται ἡμᾶς).
- *Christ* features strongly in both (Gl. 1:1, 3 and 5:1-2, 3, 6). Add the reiteration of the christological basis of the *deliverance* or *setting free* of believers.
- He refers to God as “him who calls you” (τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς- Gl. 5:8). He refers to himself as “an apostle – not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father” (Gl. 1:1). Although “call” is not used, it is implied. Add the judgement that those who have themselves circumcised “are severed from Christ” (κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ – Gl. 5:4) and “have fallen away from grace” (τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσατε – Gl. 5:4), as opposed to their having been called. In other words, because one has to

¹ The reader is reminded of the solid parallels between Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17 motivated above. It will become clearer in §2.2. below, why they are here referred to as “twin sections”.

² Some might argue that it was not intentional. Such a position would actually unwittingly enhance the notion of Paul’s theology in general and his arguments in Galatians specifically, as being very well integrated.

be called before one can be severed from Christ or fall away from grace, by using these opposing verbs, Paul actually implies that they had been called.

- Continuing on an antithetical level, Paul refers to *judgement* (κρίμα) on those who preach circumcision (Gl. 5:10), which could be in opposition to the *glory for ever and ever* (ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων – Gl. 1:5) to God for deliverance through Jesus. Once again, the judgement of God comes into effect, because his will (Gl. 1:4) his glory were dismissed.

These are enhanced if one accepts Longenecker's arguments that there is also a marked parallel between Gl. 5:2-12 and Gl. 1:6-10.¹ He stresses:

- The severe tone in both sections.
- He accuses the Galatians of deserting "him who called you" (Gl. 1:6), echoing it in Gl. 5:8 regarding the persuasion not being from "him who calls you."
- In Gl. 1:6 the Galatians are said to have been called in the *grace* of Christ, while Gl. 5:4 makes mention of their having fallen away from *grace*, or being in danger of it.
- Gl. 1:9 and 5:3 give prominence to πάλιν, introducing confirmations.
- Both Gl. 1:8-9 and 5:10, 12 contain profoundly harsh anathemas on the opposition and their position.

Obviously, the first two are the strongest connecting lines between the two pericopes. After having stated the deliverance from the present evil age in the advent of Jesus Christ as the banner of the letter, he follows with his autobiographical section and his theological arguments against law. In Gl. 5:1-12 he returns to this deliverance, now referring to it as "freedom". The specific law now coming into play is that of circumcision, probably because circumcision was the one law with which the Galatians were confronted, but also because it was the *mother of identity markers and representative of all law*. He states that if circumcision were to be applied they would have to adhere to the whole law, which he had just refuted in the preceding arguments (Gl. 3-4). Law as such, law in its totality, was rejected. In this pericope, when Paul addresses circumcision, he implicitly refutes the whole law once more. The Christian had been set free from law as such and as an undivided entity: "If you are led by the Spirit you are not under law" (Gl. 5:18). There was no way in which law could be unravelled, certain parts be done away with, and others retained.²

It is very possible that by framing the arguments against law with the theme of deliverance and freedom, Paul rejected any form of law as part of the new creation. Just as circumcision represented the whole of law in Gl. 5:1-12, circumcision and law were probably representative of the present evil age dominated by flesh from which man was delivered or freed. This is especially possible, considering Gl. 5:13-25, di-

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 221-2; Witherington, 1998¹, 360 is also supportive of Longenecker.

² Hansen, 1997, 229.

rectly following, is dedicated to life in the Spirit in opposition to life according to flesh. We have already deduced that the flesh is the overall description of the plight of the present evil age.

The theological-christological indicative of deliverance from the present evil age is introduced in Gl.1:1-5 and subsequently strongly argued in terms of Christ as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise (Gl. 3-4). In Gl. 5:1 he rephrases christological deliverance as christological freedom. However, he immediately expands it to include an imperative to live in this freedom. In other words, the *argumentative section* (Gl. 1:11-4:31) is *framed* in a movement from *deliverance to freedom*, and from *indicative to imperative*.

3.2. Galatians 5:1-12 in relation to Galatians 6:11-17

We have already taken note of the parallels between Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17.¹ The main parallel is certainly the recurrence of the warning against circumcision as opposed to Christ and his cross. Gl. 5:1-12 being his conclusion to the theological argument, and Gl. 6:11-17 the grand conclusion in his own hand, it could be expected that these two pericopes would strike a parallel. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of the ethical section in between as part and parcel of his argument and not as a mere ethical addition.

Paul frames the ethical section in-between with the theme of circumcision (Gl. 5:2, 3, 6, 11, 12; 6:12, 13, 15) as opposed to Christ and his cross (Gl. 5:2, 4, 6, 11; 6:12, 14, 17). That which the believing community is supposed to have, namely a life in the Spirit, characterised by loving service to one another, could not and cannot be provided by circumcision. In fact, whether one was circumcised or not, the result was still the same, namely a life not lived according to the Spirit, but according to flesh; in other words, considering Part II of this thesis, the present evil age. What was needed was not circumcision, but faith working through love, and this would be possible only if man were completely recreated to *καὶνὴ κτίσις* (Gl. 6:15 – “new creation”), possible only in the advent and cross of Jesus Christ (Gl. 6:14). Paul then draws persecution into the picture. He calls on the Galatians to open their eyes to the fact that he himself, who is aligned to the life in the Spirit (Gl. 5:13-6:10) was being persecuted. He probably had the opponents in view. They, on the other hand, feared persecution and therefore practised circumcision.

Without a doubt, the cross and the crucified One are absolutely central in Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17. Equally, in Gl. 5:1-12 the central point of opposition to circumcision, and the slavery it entails, is the freedom in Christ and his cross. In tandem with this, Gl. 6:11-17 finds its focal point in Gl. 6:14-15. In this case the opposite position to circumcision is the cross, the triple crucifixion and new creation. Thus, the result of the cross is *freedom* (Gl. 5:1-12) and *new creation* (Gl. 6:11-17), the two fundamental concepts that frame the ethical section. Because of the freedom from the pre-

¹ See Fig. 5.1.above.

sent evil age brought about by Christ, the believer was now part of the new creation. Inevitably, as a result of such a new situation of freedom and new creation, a new ethic is called for. This ethic is found in Gl. 5:13-6:10. Because these two concepts, i.e. freedom and new creation, are inseparable, new creation will also be tended to in this chapter.

The fact of the matter is that between the parallel sections (Gl. 5:1-12 and 6:11-17) faith working through love, the cross of Christ and new creation are aligned with the life in the Spirit, and circumcision and its adherents are portrayed as unable to produce such a life. In fact, they do their best to prevent others from living it. This makes the whole ethical section (especially Gl. 5:13-6:10) more than a list of Christian do's and don'ts. It becomes an argument on the *secret of Christian ethics*.

Hopefully the strategic importance of Gl. 5:1-12 in Paul's total argument has been illustrated. If all these arguments are accepted, it means Gl. 5:1-12 is in tandem with both Gl. 1:1-5(10) as the introduction to the letter, and Gl. 6:11-18 as its conclusion. Gl. 1:1-5(10) thus introduces Paul's letter and theological arguments (Gl. 1:11-4:31) which culminate in the conclusion that Christians are free in Christ (Gl. 5:1-12). The latter immediately introduces the ethical argument culminating in his personal closing of the letter (Gl. 6:11-18).

It should be clear that Gl. 5:1-12 is vital and pivotal in Paul's argumentation. At four instances Paul summarizes the truth of the gospel in different ways. What makes Gl. 5:1 so incredibly important is *firstly*, that it is situated at the pivotal point where Paul's argumentative section ends and the ethical section is introduced. *Secondly*, it contains an indicative as conclusion to the argumentative section, as well as an imperative as introduction to the ethical section. *Thirdly*, the indicative is formulated in terms of christological freedom, and the imperative equally so, by denouncing its antithesis, i.e. slavery. *Fourthly*, Paul's statement is almost an exclamation. This is where he gets a hold on the whole situation. Circumcision and law prompted him to write the letter. In Gl. 5:1-12 he gets a firm grip on the whole issue with his fundamental theological-Christological indicative of freedom and the imperative of standing firm in that freedom. The rest of the pericope is devoted to the fatal implications of reverting to circumcision and law and faith working through love as the only correct way in which to stand firm. If this is accepted, then Gl. 5:1 is the pivotal text on which Paul's theological and ethical arguments and conclusions rest. One could say that his indicative arguments converge into 5:1a ("For freedom Christ set us free") and diverge ethically at 5:1b ("Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.")

If we break up Paul's argumentative section into its main components, we end with a structure that could be illustrated with the following model:

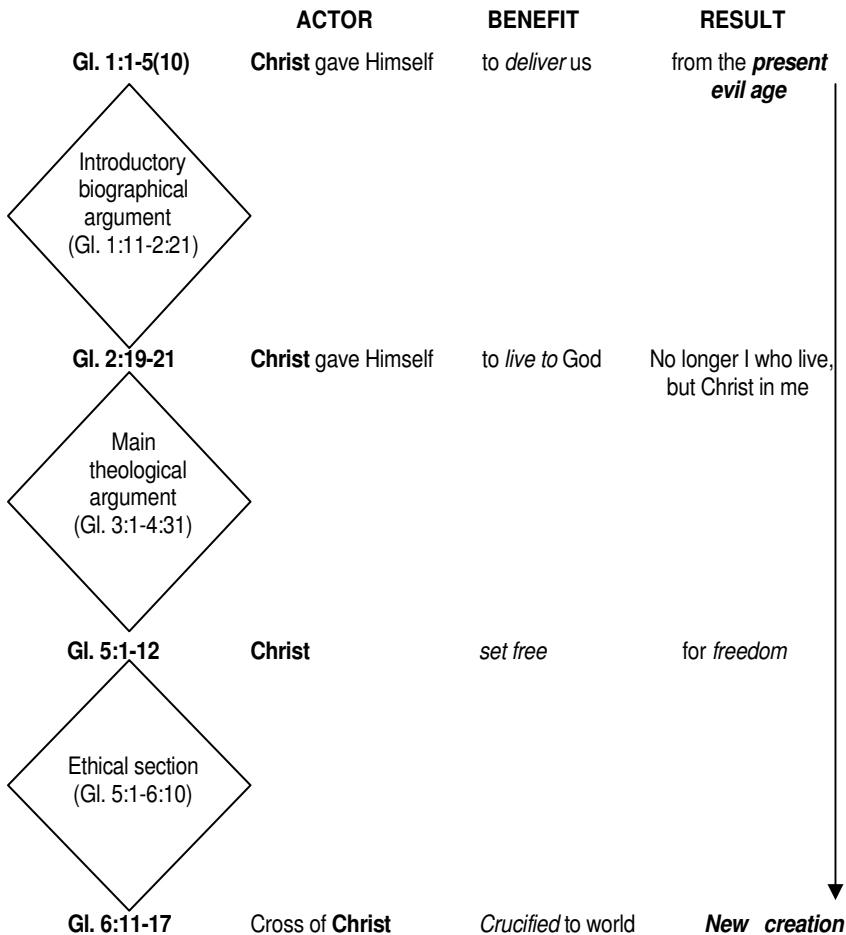


Fig. 5.3.

4. FREEDOM AS CHRISTOLOGICAL-SOTERIOLOGICAL INDICATIVE

4.1. Semantic Orientation

Paul's parenetical, final section begins with an indicative of salvation in Christ: *For freedom Christ set us free* (τῆ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν). Till now Paul used christological formulae¹ akin to the Jewish cultic tradition from which he stemmed. These formulae are not void of the notion of freedom. In fact, Gl.1:4 with its use of ἐξέλιπται sets the tone of the letter, introducing the notion of freedom in Jewish apocalyptic terms. The formulae in Gl. 2:20 and Gl. 4:4-5 at least allude to freedom in

¹ E.g. Gl. 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; 4:4-5.

Christ. He has, however, kept the concept of freedom itself in the background, only briefly introducing it in Gl. 2:4-5 and explaining that submission to those who wanted to spy out their freedom and bring them into bondage to the law would jeopardise the truth of the gospel. He draws it a little closer in Gl. 3:26-28 and even closer in Gl. 4:22-31. He only now, in the parenetical section, emphatically introduces it into the equation of salvation in Christ by presenting it as a christological formula.

As a result, ἐλευθερία (“freedom”) is the central theological concept which sums up the Christian’s situation before God as well as in this world. It is the basic concept underlying Paul’s argument throughout the letter.¹

This is even more significant, considering the occurrence of the *freedom* word group. The expanded Pauline corpus uses it 28 times, whilst it occurs only 13 times in the rest of the NT.² Of the 28 occurrences in the Pauline corpus, 11 are in Galatians.³ Of these, 4 are in the parenetical section under discussion and 5 in the immediately preceding Gl. 4:21-31,⁴ of which Gl. 5:1-6:10 could well be the *ethical conclusion*.⁵ Longenecker remarks that τῆς ἐλευθερίας (“of the free woman”), used throughout the allegorical section (Gl. 4:21-31), provides the linguistic basis for all the discussion on freedom following in Gl. 5. He adds the profound insight that the idea of freedom does not originate here, but runs through the letter like a golden thread. In the *salutatio* (Gl. 1:4), as indicated earlier, he writes that Christ “gave himself...to deliver us from the present evil age.” The *narratio* (Gl. 1:11-2:14) emphasises freedom from the restrictions of Jewish law for Gentile believers. He refers to “the freedom we have in Christ Jesus” (Gl. 2:4) and equates it with “the truth of the gospel” (Gl. 2:5). In the *probatio* (Gl. 3:1-4:11) he stresses that believers are no longer under law’s prescriptions,⁶ but in a newly established relationship with Christ. The *probatio* intensifies this idea in Gl. 3:26-28.⁷ No doubt, freedom is at the heart of the ethical conclusion, and for that matter, at the heart of the letter.

The abruptness of the exclamation without syntactical link to the preceding theme... suggests that Paul wanted the verse to stand on its own, not simply serve as a conclusion to the exposition of iv.22-31... Since the eye of the reader would not run smoothly over a grammatical bridge between iv.31 and v.1, the reader would be forced to pause, and thus to signal to his Galatian audiences a statement of importance to follow. The predominance of long vowels in the Greek and repetition of the theme of freedom (noun and verb) would also serve to give the exclamation the resonance and forcefulness of a slogan or epigrammatical summary which brought to focus the burden of the whole letter.⁸

¹ Betz, 1979, 255.

² Morris, 1996, 153.

³ Jones, 1987, 70.

⁴ Schmoller, 1989, 160.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 221.

⁶ Of the 32 occurrences of νόμος and its derivatives in Galatians, 17 occur in the *probatio* (Gl. 3:1-4:11).

⁷ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 223.

⁸ Dunn, 1993², 261.

4.2. The metaphor of slavery

Focussing on freedom in Galatians, especially Gl. 5:1, one cannot ignore the metaphor of slavery.¹ As Paul presented the metaphor of the *pedagogue* to indicate the limitations inherent to law in Gl. 3:21-4:2, he introduced the metaphor of *slavery* in Gl. 4:3-31, on the one hand, to indicate the negative type of life associated with the present evil age, but, on the other hand, to indicate the opposing positive type of ethic associated with new creation.² A brief semantic orientation reveals the importance of the metaphor.³

Firstly, the immediate context of Gl. 5:1 resounds with the metaphor. Paul refers to an heir, as long as he is a child, being equal to a *slave* (δοῦλος - Gl. 4: 1). He says that in that status of still being heirs, they were *slaves* to the elements of the world (δουλοῦν - Gl. 4:3). Since God had sent forth his Son (Gl. 4:4) and his Spirit through whom they call "Abba! Father!" (Gl. 4:6), they were no longer *slaves* (δοῦλος - Gl. 4:7). One should also add his reference to formerly being in *slavery/bondage* to ungodly beings (δουλεύειν - Gl. 4:8, 9; also 2:4). All these references are to the status of the Galatians in their pre-Christian days in the slavery of the present evil age. *Secondly*, with the allegory of Sarah and Hagar Paul equally stresses the antithesis between those who believe in the promised Christ and those who hold onto Sinai, as respectively of the *free woman* (ἡ ἐλευθέρα - Gl. 4:22, 23, 26, 30, 31) and the *slave* (ἡ παιδίσκη - Gl. 4:22, 23, 30, 31).⁴ He also uses δουλεία (Gl. 4:24) and δουλεύειν (Gl. 4:25) in this negative regard. *Thirdly*, Gl. 5:1 itself uses the term negatively when calling on the Galatians not to submit again to a yoke of slavery (δουλεία).

But *fourthly*, Paul also makes *positive* use of the metaphor. In Gl. 1:10 he refers to himself as a *slave of Christ* (Χριστοῦ δοῦλος), as opposed to pleasing man. In Gl. 5:13 he defines the ethic pertaining to freedom as one of being slaves of one another (δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις) through love. In Gl. 3:28, quoting a baptismal formula, he states that the difference between *slave* (δοῦλος) and freeman had been disbanded in Christ.

Although both the phenomenon and the metaphor of slavery are intriguing subjects, one should be extremely careful of exploiting the metaphor beyond what Paul intended in the specific context. Therefore the current discussion will be limited strictly to those aspects applicable to Galatians. Hermeneutically speaking, it is equally important that one should not cloud the issue of slavery in antiquity with that of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries CE. Despite many similarities, the issue

¹ Jones, 1987, 77-8.

² Loubser, 1994, 172.

³ Although the metaphor of slavery is of great importance and a most fascinating subject, we can afford only a brief orientation on the matter in this dissertation.

⁴ Although παιδίσκη could be translated with "girl"/"young woman" it should be translated in this context with "slave", "slave girl" or "slave woman". Nida & Louw 1, 1988, 742; Braumann & Brown, 1975, 282; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 208.

of slavery in antiquity is best discussed in terms of its *Umwelt*.¹ For one, slaves were not easily distinguishable in terms of race, language, clothing, financial status, level of learning, professional capacity and other external features.² They were allowed to own property – even to own slaves of their own.³ Some even became slaves voluntarily for reasons of debt, job security and social integration.⁴ Most importantly, slaves of Greco-Roman antiquity had the very real expectation of manumission. Except for instances where slavery was handed down as a criminal sentence, it was never regarded as a permanent state.⁵

Harris correctly stresses that regarding the metaphor of slavery one should distinguish between physical and spiritual bondage. The physical or literal slavery is about the external and observable relationship between a slave and his owner. Spiritual slavery or bondage is about metaphorical use. This indicates an inward orientation according to which a person is under the authority and influence of another person or entity.⁶ We now suffice with a brief description of slavery as phenomenon and then continue with the metaphorical use.

4.2.1. The phenomenon of slavery in Paul's day

4.2.1.1. Slavery as total bondage to the owner

No matter what position the slave had, he was not free. Whether he was forced into slavery or entered into it voluntarily, he was the property of his master as much as the horse and the plough it drew, or the goblet from which he drank, and the wine in it, belonged to the master. The slave was an object totally at the disposal of his master. He was even disposable. Not only his labour belonged to his master, but his whole being.⁷ He was even marked by his owner.⁸ Although this did not necessarily include maltreatment, the fact remains, the master had full control, his purpose for living being to do what pleased his master and to suit his whims. However, responsible slave-owners treated their slaves well and even went to great trouble to improve their skills. Obviously, a skilled slave was a greater asset with improved market-value.⁹ Equally, after manumission of a slave such a former slave-owner would benefit from an ex-slave who had an obligation to be of future assistance to his former owner.¹⁰ There were also slaves who did not wish to be freed,¹¹ probably

¹ Harrill, 1995, 11-2.

² M.J. Harris, 1999, 44; Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 66; D.B. Martin, 1990, 1.

³ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 66.

⁴ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 66; Harris, 1999, 130, 141. The latter denounces the notion of D.B. Martin, 1990, 30-5, that slavery was a popular way of social upward mobility. Be that as it may, the fact remains that however prominent or obscure, it did occur and was thus a possible way of social improvement.

⁵ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 70; Ryken, Wilmot & Longman, 1998, 798.

⁶ M.J. Harris, 1999, 27.

⁷ M.J. Harris, 1999, 108; Weiser, 1990, 350; Tuente, 1978, 593.

⁸ M.J. Harris, 1999, 123.

⁹ Ryken, Wilmot & Longman, 1998¹, 797.

¹⁰ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 72.

¹¹ Tuente, 1978, 594.

because they were well-treated. This being said, most slaves looked forward to being free to make their own choices and to serve whomever, however they wished.

4.2.1.2. *Slavery as temporary disposition*

Biblical slavery reflects strict measures regarding the temporary status of Hebrew slaves. There were numerous laws on slavery. It would be incorrect to state that Hebrew slaves never served longer than six years or till the next Sabbath Year. However, the duration of slavery not being our main concern, one could state as a rule of thumb, granted there were exceptions, it would seldom exceed six years, or till the debt leading to the slavery was repaid.¹ There were provisions for extended periods, but then, only till the next Year of Jubilees, and at that, the slave had to be treated and paid as a wage-earner or a guest.² In instances where the slave declined emancipation to attach himself to a specific house voluntarily, his ear would be pierced to the doorpost symbolising final, life-long attachment to the household.³

In both Greco-Roman and Jewish slavery their freedom was religiously based. The latter was about Yahweh's divine grace translating into regularly setting his people on an equal footing.⁴ In the Greco-Roman world it was about keeping the social and economic system running smoothly. Slaves could be costly and owners would see to it that their investment was taken care of. Some were furthered an education, received wages and even shared in profits, improving the slave's output and benefiting the owner. Although there were slaves who wished not to be manumitted for fear of losing their securities, most could later afford manumission. This, their former owners being Romans, afforded them Roman citizenship – a sought after status. In fact, so common was manumission that Augustus Caesar introduced legislation to regulate and restrict it in order to protect citizenship from being cheapened. Diligent slaves exercising self-discipline usually accumulated the funds to manumit and became examples to others to follow suit in hope of a better future.⁵ We have not touched on the practice of slaves being manumitted by well-meaning patrons, a common practice in Roman society. Patrons would be motivated by altruism, gratitude for faithful service, or self-interest, such as seeking the vote of the ex-slave who was now a citizen.⁶

But manumission never brought absolute freedom, for in Roman society a manumitted slave entered a client-patron relationship with his former master, a relationship which involved particular duties prescribed by the patron.⁷

¹ For a short overview, see Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 63-4.

² De Vaux, 1973, 82-3; Tuente, 1978, 594.

³ De Vaux, 1973, 88.

⁴ Du Plessis, 1997, 328.

⁵ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 70.

⁶ M.J. Harris, 1999, 40-1.

⁷ M.J. Harris, 1999, 41.

In Roman society these duties varied from caring for a patron in ill health or old age to just keeping the patron's interests at heart. Failing to do such could lead to a charge of ingratitude.¹ Relevant to Galatians, one of the duties a patron could expect of his client or ex-slave was that he acted as his son's guardian.²

The idea is not to romanticise slavery. There were incidents of maltreatment. Roman slavery was less regulated and protective of slaves than Jewish slavery.³ However, regarding the temporariness of enslavement, one must emphasise, slaves did not expect to die in slavery. Obviously, this excluded those enslaved as convicted criminals who would usually be worked to death or died as gladiators.⁴

4.2.1.3. *Slavery as undignified status*

In all societies of the Ancient Near East slavery was regarded as the lowest position on the social ladder. In Greek society dignity was attached to freedom. To compromise freedom in any way was equal to giving up one's freedom and becoming a *slave* in some way. One was to be as independent from others and as free to choose as possible. This did not exclude service or the taking up of certain responsibilities. Service was actually regarded as essential, but then as a deed done in freedom and the actor described as *διάκονος*. The term *δοῦλος* was regarded as derogatory.⁵ A slave was the epitome of being at the beck and call of another. It was about belonging not to oneself, but exclusively to another.⁶ This was regarded by Greeks with "revulsion and contempt."⁷ Slaves lacked full rights of citizenship in the Greco-Roman world. Amongst Greek thinkers wisdom was regarded as a possession of the free, and slaves viewed as largely ignorant.⁸

4.2.2. ***Slavery as positive metaphor in Galatians***

4.2.2.1. *A matter of controversy*

Dale Martin has pleaded for a rethink of the positive meaning of the metaphor.⁹ He correctly emphasises the importance of the reader's context. Focusing on the Corinthians, he motivates that Paul would have used a metaphor regarding slavery in

¹ M.J. Harris, 1999, 72-3.

² M.J. Harris, 1999, 72. Refer to my Ch. 4 for a discussion on guardianship, where even the guardian's task is seen as limited and temporary. It is quite possible that Paul intended the use of the slavery and pedagogue metaphors in such close proximity in order to exponentially enhance the temporariness of law for the period between Moses and Jesus.

³ Weiser, 1990, 350; M.J. Harris, 1999, 41; Du Plessis, 1997, 328.

⁴ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 70.

⁵ Rengstorf, 1964¹, 262-3.

⁶ Rengstorf, 1964¹, 261.

⁷ Tuente, 1978, 593.

⁸ M.J. Harris, 1999, 70.

⁹ D.B. Martin, 1990, is the result of his rethink on the matter. One must take note of his own acknowledgement that the scope he allows for himself is very limited: "[O]ne function of one metaphor as seen primarily in one text" (xiv).

a positive light only if there was ample sociological evidence of such a usage, since the Greco-Roman world did not view slavery positively. Related to this, he warns against the fallacious practice of explaining *slave of Christ* in terms of the origins of the metaphor without ascertaining whether it still makes sense in the new context. Lastly, he points to the dilemma that the so-called “high literature of Greco-Roman culture” more often than not receives too much attention at the cost of literature reflecting the views of the commoner. The former reflects a more negative view on slavery and the lower classes in general, so that one could possibly get a skewed impression of the phenomenon.¹

Martin argues that when Paul refers to himself in 1 Cor. 9:17 as having been commissioned (οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι), he has in view that he is in a managerial position. Thus, in the eyes of the other followers of Christ in Corinth, Paul was emphasising his position of authority when he referred to himself as a slave (1 Cor. 9:19), which would have been understood as such, especially by the lower class people. He also acknowledges that the higher ranking believers would probably have understood it as an offensive self-degradation.² He even argues that Paul’s very early reference to himself as a *slave of Christ* in Gl. 1:10 is curious. Equally strange, according to him, is Paul’s reference to his bearing of the *marks of Christ* (Gl. 6:17). He reasons that the latter refers to the tattoo often placed on slaves in order to denote ownership. He concludes that it probably is a rhetorical mechanism to indicate that Paul is answerable only to God. The letter opens and closes with this notion. For Martin this makes perfect sense, since he operates with the notion that Paul’s apostolic authority was at stake.³

Because it is not in our scope to discuss 1 Cor. 9, and because it addresses a totally different situation, I would rather steer clear of an exposition of this text. However, because Martin’s study does reflect on Galatians it cannot merely be ignored. It does seem strange that Paul would use the δοῦλος terminology in 1 Cor. 9:19 if he had οἰκονόμος in mind and available (refer to 1 Cor. 9:17). Together with this, it is not clear that οἰκονόμος necessarily indicated slave status in either Pauline or wider Greco-Roman usage.⁴ Turning to Galatians, one must insist that δοῦλος is placed in opposition to ἐλεύθερος (*freedom*).⁵ The text indicates that this is the literary context within which one has to make sense of the application of the terminology and within which one has to ask one’s sociological questions. Paul was, after all, not motivating an ideology to his hearers. He was motivating that they were to make a radical switch from one theological-ethical paradigm to another. He was not advocating life in terms of what

¹ D.B. Martin, 1990, xvi-xviii. He also warns against disregard for sociological context in favour of “a world of ideas” (xx).

² D.B. Martin, 1990, 84.

³ D.B. Martin, 1990, 59-60. Refer to my Ch. 1 on the matter of apostolic authority and rhetoric.

⁴ Byron, 2003, 181-4.

⁵ Byron, 2003, 193-4.

they knew, but life as crucified with Christ and being a new creation. One should consider that Paul had *διάκονος* available. In fact, he even uses the term in Gl. 2:17. Granted, it is in a different context and has a different meaning. The point is, if Paul wished to assert his authority and to steer clear of slavery as a metaphor denoting a positive meaning, he had the apparatus to do so, and yet, he chose not to.

4.2.2.2. *Indicating a special relationship*

Paul uses the metaphor positively in Gl. 1:10 and Gl. 5:13. Both references are in connection with a special relationship in which the believer as a free person finds himself. In Gl. 1:10 Paul refers to himself as a *slave of Christ* (Χριστοῦ δοῦλος). In Gl. 5:13 he calls on the free not to abuse their freedom, but through love to *be slaves of one another* (δουλεύετε ἀλλήλους). *Firstly*, with regard to the relationship with God, scholars are largely unanimous about the metaphor entering the NT *Umwelt* via the Jewish notion developed after the Exodus from Egyptian slavery and not via Greco-Roman philosophy or religion.¹ It might be pushing things too far to understand it exclusively in terms of a Jewish origin. Marshall helpfully suggests that the occurrence of a ransom in combination with a change of ownership, probably points to Greek influence in the Christian use of the metaphor.²

The Jewish notion carries a sense of reciprocating endearment on the part of the believer. They were formerly in Egyptian slavery from which Yahweh saved them. In this regard we read that He would free them from being slaves and “redeem” them (Ex. 6:6). Yahweh refers to them as his “treasured possession” (Ex. 19:5-6; Dt. 26:18) and “his people” (Dt. 26:18). In Ps. 74:2 the Psalter reminds Yahweh of “the people you purchased” and “whom you redeemed” (Ps. 74:2). In Mt. 3:17 Yahweh states: “They will be mine in the day when I make up my treasured possession.” Harris correctly speaks of the OT concept of slavery to Yahweh as carrying a dual meaning: *redemption – acquisition*.³ It is about Israel having been served well by Yahweh and voluntarily feeling obliged to reciprocate. It is a term of intimacy indicating Israel’s wanting to be his possession and wanting to serve Him, acknowledging that they existed by his grace.⁴ By referring to himself as a slave of Christ Paul was actually indicating to whom he owed his allegiance. God had shown him, and all believers in Christ, special

¹ Dandamayev & Bartchy, 1992, 72. A marked exception is Deissmann, 1927, 322-3. He grounds the expression in 1 Cor. 7:22 in the Greek practice of manumission where the slave provides his own ransom to the god of his choice. The owner accompanies him to the temple to receive the ransom from the priest. Technically the slave becomes the property of the god, but not of the temple. M.J. Harris, 1999, 121-2, acknowledges there are striking similarities with the position of Christians, but also significant differences. In terms of the NT, the ransom is paid by the divine figure; the former master is not involved; Christians are permanently free, but attached to a new Master; there is no obligation by the freeman to the former master. See also the very similar objections of Combes, 1998, 85-7.

² Marshall, 1974, 159.

³ M.J. Harris, 1999, 122.

⁴ Tuente, 1978, 595.

grace in providing his Son as a ransom. He was no longer merely a slave of God in the sense that the Jews regarded themselves, but slave of the God who provided in Jesus, breaking the bondage of the elements, law and flesh.¹

Secondly, with regard to slavery to one another (Gl. 5:13), Paul again emphasises believers are not to serve flesh. Faith did not provide the believer with that type of freedom. He was to seek to serve fellow believers as well as others (Gl. 6:10). In the new aeon brought about by Christ one shared in his love and servanthood and freely seeks to love and serve. One is inextricably bound to one's neighbour and his well-being. Being part of the new aeon meant being bound up with the weal and woe of one's neighbour.

The bottom-line of this aspect of the metaphor is thus that having been freed from slavery to the present evil age in its different forms the believer is not without special allegiance. He is bound to serve God and neighbour as part and parcel of his being. It is no side-issue in which one can engage condescendingly, or as a matter of option.

4.2.2.3. *Slavery as a special kind of service*

We have already referred to the Greek notion of willing service to the community for the common good, not because it was expected, but because the individual willingly took the initiative in full freedom. They referred to such a person as a δίακονος in distinction from a δοῦλος. It is as strange as it is a pity that most English translations translate δοῦλος, and its associated terms referring to the Christian and his service to God and neighbour, with *servant*. This seems in order in terms of the believer not serving grudgingly or under duress, but lovingly and gratefully. However, Paul, having had διάκονος available, chose to use δοῦλος. Was he not, seen against his *Umwelt*, meaning to stress man's being *free* in his subservience to Christ; serving his neighbour in love and not patronisingly like in the Greek paradigm? I am of the opinion that Paul used the term *slave* to stress man's service as essential to his faith. Man's being in a relationship with God in Christ involves that he serves Him as a matter of necessity. His faith in Christ also involves that he serves his neighbour, not because he has the urge to show kindness for some reason or other, but because he has been placed in a relationship with the neighbour in which his love must be translated into concrete service. But, equally, whilst one should not think in terms of a natural inner urge, it does not exclude the divinely created new inner willingness to serve God and neighbour. The willingness is not naturally part of man's ethical make-up. On the

¹ Combes, 1998, 87-9, emphasises the notion of slavery as social death and of death as a form of manumission. In slavery a person was dead to the world to live only for his master. In death that slave was regarded as free. Paul probably had in mind that by dying with Christ the believer was dead to the slavery of the world and free to live in allegiance to God in Christ. The paradox of freedom as well as slavery in Christ ceases to be a problem if it is brought into relation with the crucifixion of Christ.

other hand, it is also not divinely forced upon him. It is about God so renewing man that he wishes to serve Him in Christ.¹

4.2.2.4. *All depending on the Owner and his yoke*

Israel was not in the position of having been sold by one merciless master to another. Firstly, they did not regard the pharaoh as their master. Secondly, Yahweh did not purchase them from the pharaoh. He took them from the pharaoh, because they were his own. Thirdly, he did not do it to enrich himself or for any other ulterior motive. He did it through grace, having heard the pitiful cry and lament of his people (Ex. 3:7-9). He was Yahweh: unique! Being his possession would not entail the harshness of an owner seeking only to enrich himself at another's cost. Serving Him would be life-fulfilling.²

In fact, Paul states that the slave becomes like a son to the Owner (Gl. 4:7). This is a totally different relationship than the usual slave-master relationship. Now, in Gl. 4:1 he also used the son-slave analogy, but negatively. In the latter case he made the point that the slave was as unequal in relation to his master as the immaturity of a son in relation to his father's maturity. The son, although he is the future heir to his father's possessions, was as little entitled to own it as the slave was. During the time before maturity he was under the guidance of the pedagogue, who, ironically, was a (very trusted) slave. However, in Gl. 4:7 the position is totally different. The time had fully come (Gl. 4:4); the Son had been sent forth to redeem those under law to receive adoption (Gl. 4:4-5); and the Spirit was witnessing to this in their inner beings (Gl. 4:6). The son was now no longer in the position of immaturity and no longer needed guardians. Having reached maturity, he was now the heir (Gl. 4:7).

The point having been made is that the relationship of the believer in Christ to the One to whom he owes allegiance, is not altogether comparable with the usual master-slave relationship. It is about an Owner who is in a class of his own, regarding those that belong to Him as sons and not as slaves.

4.2.2.5. *The marks of Jesus*

Paul refers to his bearing of the marks of Jesus on his body (Gl. 6:17). It is not altogether clear what Paul intended with this reference. The most probable indication, on the surface of things, was to persecution. We know Paul was persecuted at different instances. But why would he refer to his persecution here? The immediate context suggests that he is juxtaposing himself and the integrity of the true gospel with his opposition and their so-called gospel. He clearly states they sought to be circumcised in order to avoid persecution for the sake of the cross of Christ (Gl. 6:12).³ He adds that the Judaisers were encouraging circumcision with ulterior mo-

¹ M.J. Harris, 1999, 153-6, reflects on the willingness of the slave in Christ's service.

² M.J. Harris, 1999, 149-53, reflects on Christ as the perfect Master.

³ He also played to this tune earlier on at Gl. 5:11.

tives. They were not seeking the good of the Galatians or the honour of God, but the gratification that the Galatians had received the marks of circumcision. He states that they wished to glory in the Galatians' *flesh* (Gl. 6:13). What they should have done was to follow Paul's example of not glorying in the flesh, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world had been crucified to him and he to the world (Gl. 6:14). Clearly, the context suggests that marks of persecution for the sake of the cross and marks of circumcision are in opposition to each other, the one aligned with salvation in Christ, and the other with the flesh.

However, Paul need not have referred to the physical marks of persecution on his body as the marks of Christ. He could have meant it wholly metaphorically in the sense of having identified himself completely with the marks of Christ, a reference to Christ's crucifixion. I suggest that these marks, metaphorically or literally meant, seen as a reference to allegiance with Christ, probably allude to the marks of slavery common in the Greco-Roman context. Not that circumcision symbolised the slavery of Jews to Yahweh, but that Paul enhances the notion of slavery to Christ, special allegiance to Him, by using the phenomenon of the marking of slaves. One is reminded of the custom of the slave who wishes not to be manumitted and voluntarily undergoes the ceremony of being nailed to the doorpost as a sign of unwavering allegiance. In this way he implied that he belonged exclusively to Christ,¹ but the Judaisers were still in slavery to the flesh, seeking to glory in what was typical of the present evil age, whilst Christ had dealt with that slavery. Paul had left those elements behind and gloried only in the cross. This notion finds further support in the extended *praescriptio* where Paul refers to himself as a slave of Christ (Gl. 1:10) in contrast to pleasing men. In the *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-17), which we have indicated, combined with the *praescriptio*, envelopes the letter, he again contrasts man's both-ering side, flesh, with slavery to Christ.

4.2.3. Slavery as negative metaphor in Galatians

4.2.3.1. Bondage of the will

The slavery metaphor was widely used in the NT *Umwelt* in order to depict certain aspects of the relationship with the different divinities and philosophical schools of thought. One should be careful not to regard this metaphor exclusively in terms of either its Jewish or its Greco-Roman roots. This is extremely important in the Galatian context. Although they were largely of Greco-Roman pagan background, they would have been aware of the Jewish background of their newfound faith. Paul himself would have had a broader context in view. We have noted in my Ch. 1 that, although he was Jewish, Paul not only had a vast knowledge of the Greco-Roman world, but was influenced by it to some extent.

In our reflection on the present evil age it became clear that man in the present evil age is in bondage to the *flesh*. Man had become corrupted and allowed sin to dominate his life – his decisions and actions. He had become enslaved to

¹ Harris, 1999, 112.

flesh in the sense that he lived in terms of his own transitoriness, frailty and corruption. He was focussed on himself and lived for himself. This was not something he could merely rid himself of. God had to intervene in his Son (Gl. 1:3-4). But, prior to this intervention man had certain elements according to which he ordered his life: principles, rites, laws, superstitions, entities that are by nature not gods, but regarded by many as such, etc (Gl. 4:3, 8-10). To Israel he gave a very special set of elements, namely *Torah*. However, *Torah*'s limitations were not always central to Israel's mind and they became so focussed and dependent on it that it determined their entire relationship with Yahweh. Life and life's decisions became dependent on knowledge of, focus on and allegiance to *Torah*. Paul describes this orientation as a *yoke of slavery* (Gl. 5:1).

Whether in allegiance to law, other elements of the world, or to so-called gods, it carried with it the bondage of the will. It resulted in man not living according to God's will. In fact, humanity became self-serving in its bondage to flesh. Even law was unsuccessful in dealing with flesh. Jewish believers became so focussed on law that many of them unwittingly replaced Yahweh with his law. While they regarded themselves as God's slaves, they had actually become slaves of his law.

4.2.3.2. *Lack of choice and responsibility, an abundance of curse and miserable*

They had no need to reflect on how to deal with new ethical situations. They did not always think along the lines of how to serve Yahweh and others in love, but rather how to interpret law. Even this was the function of learned men. The ordinary Jew had no need to take great personal responsibility with regard to interpretation. His was to remember the necessary laws and slavishly to abide by them.

The accompanying tragedy was that he neither had the inherent capacity to deal with flesh, nor to abide by the law given to aid him. This resulted in law becoming more of a burden and a heavy yoke. It continually reminded him of his failure to do what law demanded. It even led to his having to accept the punishment accompanying his misdeeds, or having to rely on the mercy of the One who gave the law. The fact is that Paul's references in Galatians to slavery and bondage to an entity other than God, have an extremely negative bearing. If one bears in mind that Paul refers to being under law as a curse (Gl. 3:10-13), as well as being in slavery (Gl. 3:23-4:5), it seems he hitches onto the notion of slavery as a miserable state.

4.2.4. **Conclusion**

Paul uses the metaphor of slavery to describe the position of both those without Christ in the *present evil age*, and those in Christ and part of the *new creation*. Although he uses the same metaphor, he clearly attaches totally different bearings to the two positions of slavery. With regard to slavery in the present evil age, he has in mind man's inability to deal with flesh, elements, law and gods of

his making in any other way than subjecting to their demands. The problem is that their demands are against Yahweh's will and lead to destruction and the unleashing of God's wrath. It refers to a burdensome life under wrong leadership and ownership. With regard to slavery to Christ and one another, he interprets the metaphor very positively, much in line with Israel's notion in the OT.

Firstly, the Owner involved was our God and Father who willed that Jesus Christ would deliver those who believe in Him (Gl. 1:3-4). The object of his taking ownership was not to place people in pitiful servitude, but to redeem them in order to become his sons and heirs (Gl. 4:4-7). *Secondly*, it is a concept depicting man's allegiance to God and his neighbour. It is about the special relationships and the acceptance of the responsibilities that accompany this relationship; about being willing even to be persecuted for being true to God and neighbour; about wanting to be owned by Him. *Thirdly*, it was about service in a new situation that God had created (Gl. 6:15). It would no longer be an inevitable fact of life that man would live according to flesh and so bring God's wrath upon him. God had taken away the temporary taskmaster of law giving orders and direction from outside man's being. He had, through the cross of Jesus Christ, dealt with flesh and provided man with the Spirit to guide him from his renewed inner being. Through the Spirit he had been renewed, enabled and provided with inner guidance to live according to the law of Christ.¹ New creation removed the notion of automatic failure and curse. *Fourthly*, the metaphor of slavery aimed to indicate that the redeemed person was not relieved of all responsibility. He had no responsibility to any entity of the present evil age, but was most definitely accountable to the One who redeemed him (Gl. 1:10). He had to serve Him in love, and also had a responsibility to fellowmen, especially to fellow believers (Gl. 5:13; 6:1-6, 10).

The movement from the present evil age to the new creation is about being under new Ownership and having been internally renewed to want to live in allegiance to Him. One is reminded of the appropriate remark by Harris: "Slavery and love are perfectly compatible in the divine economy!"²

4.3. The metaphor of sonship

In antiquity one was left to the elements if one was not part of a family. Being part of the family, having access to that which belonged to the family, sharing in its honour rating, and acting in accordance to what the family represented, etc., afforded one the protection of the family. Within the family one was safe and free to live one's life to the full, according to the family's traditions. Being taken into a family by adoption, one was freed from the whims of the elements. For

¹ We will deal with *law of Christ* in Ch. 6. At this stage it is enough to say that it will be argued that law of Christ does not refer to a new law, not even to the words of Jesus and the so-called love-command, but to *Christ as paradigm*. One who so fully lived up to fulfilling the demand to love and serve, that He was willing to die for sinners, in order to give them life and make the new ethic possible for them.

² M.J. Harris, 1999, 104.

this reason one could say that sonship was equal to freedom within the borders, traditions and spheres of influence of that family. Sonship of God meant freedom from the elements and the present evil age in general.¹ As Lull puts it, in Galatians *sonship, freedom and new creation* are all synonyms for salvation.²

4.4. Τῆ ἐλευθερία : a peculiar construction of significance

Paul's peculiar use of the dative τῆ ἐλευθερία is central to the correct understanding of the whole section. We will therefore firstly investigate the significance of the use of the definite article in its reference to freedom. Secondly, a decision will have to be taken on the question whether the dative in the construction τῆ ἐλευθερία is one of cause or instrument, or rather of purpose and destiny. Careful consideration of both these matters is fundamentally important.

4.4.1. Freedom: christologically defined by the definite article

Both Morris and Bruce remark that Paul uses the definite article in reference to freedom in Gl. 5:1 in order to define the freedom of which he speaks as the freedom given by God in Christ.³ Believers have this freedom as a result of their being children of the free woman (Gl. 4:31). They are from the Jerusalem above that is free (Gl. 4:26). They are children of the promise (Gl. 4:28) and from the Spirit (Gl. 4:29). These references immediately recall Paul's earlier remarks that: "Christ redeemed us..." (Gl. 3:13), "... that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gl. 3:14), and: "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings' referring to many; but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' which is Christ" (Gl. 3:16). When Paul speaks out on freedom he has Christian freedom in mind.

He is not talking about the abstract concept of freedom, or about the kind of freedom the lordly Romans enjoyed, but specifically about Christian freedom, the freedom Christ died to bring about.⁴

In view of the textual context in which Paul has explained the difference brought about by God in Christ Jesus, and how the promise made to Abraham had been fulfilled so that Gentiles now believe through the Spirit, he could very well have intended to specify the obtained freedom by using the definite article.⁵ Morris' remark might be slightly ambitious. However, different concepts of freedom were operative in Paul's time. The Galatians were obviously exposed to these and

¹ Niederwimmer, 1966, 195, states "daß υἱός und ἐλευθερος synonym sind." See J.L. De Villiers, 1950, 181.

² Lull, 1980, 109. We shall return to the metaphor of family in Ch. 7.

³ Morris, 1996, 152; Bruce, 1982¹, 226.

⁴ Morris, 1996, 152-3.

⁵ There is also the suggestion by Hort, in Westcott & Hort, 1974, 122, that τῆ= should be seen as a primitive textual corruption of ἐπὶ and should be read in accordance with the parallel sentence in Gl. 5:13. If this were the case the definite article would not be in discussion at all. Bruce, 1982¹, 226, regards this suggestion as unnecessary. In fact the evidence to this effect is not substantial.

Paul would want to be clear that the type of freedom he had in mind, was in no way related to the *elements of the world* (Gl. 4:3) which are part of the *present evil age* from which Christ had delivered them (Gl. 1:4). This would include Jewish and Greco-Roman views on freedom. It is also in keeping with the conclusion already reached,¹ namely that Paul writes in apocalyptic fashion and makes use of antinomies to stress that the new situation of freedom in Christ is radically different from anything anyone might have thought before Christ's advent.

At this point it seems apt to cast a bird's eye view on the main conceptions of freedom in the time of Paul in Galatia. Obviously it cannot be more than a superficial orientation concerning the more prominent positions on freedom and how they relate to or differ from Paul's conception. The idea is certainly not to indicate how Paul's views on freedom were developed or influenced along these lines.

4.4.1.1. *The backdrop to Paul's christologically defined freedom*

i) *Political freedom in the secular Greek world*

In the Greek world of antiquity ἐλευθερία was primarily a political term. Initially it was used in antithesis to the social position of a δοῦλος. In as much as slavery was regarded as essential for the healthy functioning - even preservation - of society, it was equally true of the opposite institution, namely that of ἐλεύθερος. One was born into one of these institutions. Political reality determined everything. From this point of view, freedom primarily referred to the social position of those not born as slaves. Freedom was a political term designating social position and rights within society,² including the rights to free speech, openness, boldness and frankness.³ Greek philosophical reflections on freedom were from this political basis. Obviously their reflections concerned only the ἐλεύθεροι. Aristotle was very influential in determining that freedom was all about doing what one wanted to. This was obviously problematic, because it could result in total chaos and anarchy. For this reason he argued that νόμος was necessary to provide the limits within which the free could operate freely. Freedom and law were not opposites, but belonged together and qualified each other.⁴ Man could not be a law unto himself within society and therefore νόμος was the expression of the will and claims of the polity while the state was there to administer the law.⁵ From this the notion of democracy was born as the best way to maintain self-government. It included the freedom to alternate governments when they did not administer the state to the liking of the common will of the ἐλεύθεροι. It was a guard against tyranny.⁶ In conclusion to this paragraph on freedom as primarily a political concept in Greek antiquity, it need only be mentioned that it reached a climax after the Persian war. At this point, the country realis-

¹ See my Ch. 2.

² Schlier, 1964, 488.

³ Blunck, 1975, 715.

⁴ Blunck, 1975, 715.

⁵ Schlier, 1964, 488-9. Gerhardsson, 1987, 4, writes: "The free men put themselves under a common law and appointed common rulers whom they could also dismiss."

⁶ Schlier, 1964, 489-90.

ing it was at war in defence of the freedom of its ἐλευθεροί, and for that matter, of the entire society and its institutions, freedom became a word denoting the state's autonomy to act as it saw fit.¹

ii) *Freedom as Greek philosophical concept*

It was especially the philosophical schools of the Cynics and Stoics² that developed the concept of freedom along non-political lines. The Cynics were champions for freedom, regarding themselves as ἐλευθεροί in the true sense of the word, fearing no human lord, subject only to a god, and constantly defending freedom and freemen from tyrants whom they perpetually criticised. The Stoics continued in this vein, but recognised a new dimension to freedom. The Greek state had started to decay³ and individuals no longer had the security provided by societal law. The emphasis moved from political freedom to that of the individual “set apart and under the law of his own nature or of human nature generally.”⁴ He had to become introspective. Within the frame of his self-understanding and experience of the cosmos he had to find his own position of freedom. It became “independent self-determination.”⁵ When one has insight into one's own situation one identifies spheres of life in which one can exercise free dominion, and others in which one has less freedom. There are external entities such as the body, possessions, family, etc., to which it was important to become less attached to and less dependent upon in order to be able to occupy oneself with that which is inward – the soul, ideas and principles – where one's real existence supposedly lies. It could also be described as participation in a divinity of sorts.⁶ One is reminded of the earlier discussed “elements of the world” (Gl. 4:3) and “beings that by nature are no gods” (Gl. 4:8).

In so doing he only fulfils what he is, “a part of God,” “a son of God,” even “God” Himself.⁷

In Stoicism there was a profound emphasis on ethics. Because they had the notion that freedom meant doing whatever one wants, one could get the idea that they promoted libertinism or amoralism. However, this is far from the truth. According to them, man had a natural law that was good. Thus, man who does not want to do what is bad, but that which is good, is truly free when he does what he really wants, i.e. the natural law of good. Although it was always debated how close to true the law of the day was, there was no doubt as to the necessity to live truthfully.⁸ In this sense, even a slave was free.⁹

¹ Schlier, 1964, 492.

² Klauck, 2003, 372f. and Long & Sedley, 1987, 158-83, attest to the fact that the Stoics were probably the most influential philosophical school in the Roman Empire.

³ Blunck, 1975, 715; Vollenweider, 1989, 23.

⁴ Schlier, 1964, 493. J.L. de Villiers, 1997¹, 187, reminds us that they were pantheists.

⁵ Schlier, 1964, 494.

⁶ Schlier, 1964, 494; Vollenweider, 1989, 30-1; Gerhardsson, 1987, 4-5.

⁷ Schlier, 1964, 496.

⁸ Jones, 1992, 856; Vollenweider, 1989, 82-5.

⁹ Vollenweider, 1989, 85-7.

The next step in the movement from political freedom towards individualistic philosophical freedom was the enhancing of detachment or withdrawal from the world, and restricting of one's personal desires (so-called *apatheia*). It involved the abandoning of one's life's course to circumstances and to the gods, accepting it as the divine will to which the individual should resign himself.¹ Freedom involved even the abandoning of passion, and ultimately, abandoning of one's fear of death.² In fact, death was deprived of its menacing character by allowing man to become part of the *Absolute Individual (Überindividuellen)* that transcends individuality. Suicide even became attractive.³ Importantly, according to this school, man never fully attained freedom. It always remained an ideal to strive towards and hope for.⁴

iii) *Freedom in the OT*

In the OT freedom is almost exclusively a social phenomenon, regarding slavery, manumission,⁵ prisoners of war (Deut. 21:14), and once, exemption of obligations (1 Sm.17: 25).⁶ The reference to *hōrīm* (חור) is actually to nobles (1 Ki. 21:8,11; Neh.13: 17; Jr.36: 2). Taken with 1 Sm.17: 25 and 8:10-18 one concludes that under the monarchy the Israelites were in effect not free subjects, but slaves to the king. Only the nobles and a few privileged subjects were regarded as free. Once again, freedom is employed in the context of slavery.⁷

Other than could be expected the OT never developed a theology of freedom based on either the exodus or the return from exile. Rather, it understood Israel's obtaining of freedom from Egyptian slavery as a divine deed of *redemption*.⁸ Israel did not understand freedom in a political sense. The whole concept of slavery and freedom was seen in terms of Yahweh's lordship over his people. They belonged to Him and He gave them protection and took care of them. It was not seen as something they had by nature, but rather as a gift from God. Within this context it was always seen as part of God's redeeming acts towards them. Freedom is the result of returning to God.⁹

iv) *Freedom in Second Temple Judaism*

In Second Temple Judaism the picture changes from the apolitical position of the OT to a more political one. Although the freedom movements that arose had a reli-

¹ J.L. De Villiers, 1997¹, 189; Blunck, 1975, 715-6.

² Schlier, 1964, 494-5.

³ Vollenweider, 1989, 72-4; Klauck, 2003, 363-5.

⁴ Schlier, 1964, 496.

⁵ Jones, 1992, 855. It is reflected in passages like Ex. 21: 2, 5, 26-27; Lv.19: 20; Dt.15: 12-18; Jr.34: 8-17; Ezk.46: 17; Job 3:19 with the use of Hebrew terms such as *hōr*, *hupša*, *hopsī*, *dērōr* and *hāpaš*. The LXX translates these terms with the ἐλευθερία word group. However, there is no fully corresponding term for freedom in the OT. Gerhardsson, 1987, 5: "The vocabulary shows that the very idea for freedom was not a matter of reflection in ancient Israel."

⁶ Blunck, 1975, 716.

⁷ Blunck, 1975, 716.

⁸ Jones, 1992, 855.

⁹ Ryken, Wilmot & Longman, 1998², 112.

gious foundation, they had the political intention to overthrow the pagan secular authorities and to implement the freedom promised by God.¹ Movements of interest in this regard are the Maccabees of the second century BCE and the Zealots who operated in Jesus' time.

But it is not only on the political front that the Jewish concept of freedom began to develop. The more Judaism came into contact with the vibrant stream of thought from the Greco-Roman world, the less it could escape the influence of their philosophers.² Philo is probably the most prominent exponent of this tendency to remould Jewish tradition by introducing complimentary ideas from Hellenism.³ He drew from the Stoic notion on true freedom, but maintained that the true law that kept freedom from breaking loose and becoming counter-productive, was the Jewish law.⁴ Freedom and law are the two sides of a coin.⁵ Further, he did what the LXX had not done. He described the exodus in terms of freedom. He also emphasised that all freedom was a gift from God and that the freedom of the mind was more important than any other form of freedom. Only God could enable this.⁶ Another point of difference relates to their conceptions of God. Being Jewish, Philo did not entertain a pantheistic view of God. As Vollenweider puts it:

Der Kosmos ist als ganzes die wunderbare, einzigartige Epiphanie göttlicher Gnade und ist entsprechend von einem *unwandelbaren Gesetz* durchwaltet, das Gottes Willen vollendet zum Ausdruck bringt.⁷

The Maccabean religio-political struggles are depicted in terms of freedom (1 Macc. 14:26; 2 Macc. 2:22). Josephus even depicts the Maccabees as freedom fighters. Coins from the second and third years of the revolt bear the inscription: "Freedom of Zion."⁸ In fact, the struggles of the Maccabees were regarded as struggles for political freedom. It was feared that loss of political freedom would result in loss of religious freedom.⁹ Added, was a growing eschatological and apocalyptic hope of freedom.¹⁰ This is in line with our prior discussion of the use of Jewish apocalyptic throughout the letter, but most explicitly in Gl. 1:4, referring to deliverance from the present evil age.

4.4.1.2. *Paul's christologically defined freedom as totally different from his Umwelt's*

After this very brief orientation to the variety of views on freedom with which Paul had to contend, we return to the question of how these conceptions relate to or differ

¹ Blunck, 1975, 717.

² Jones, 1992, 856.

³ Hagner, 1988, 509.

⁴ Jones, 1992, 856; Vollenweider, 1989, 125-6; Gerhardsson, 1987, 7.

⁵ Vollenweider, 1989, 128.

⁶ Kosnetter, 1970, 282; Jones, 1992, 856.

⁷ Vollenweider, 1989, 132.

⁸ Jones, 1992, 856

⁹ Kosnetter, 1970, 281.

¹⁰ 4 Ezra 7:96-98, 101, and 13:25-26, 29. Targum to Lam.2: 22.

from Paul's views in Galatians. Obviously, since clarity on Paul's view on freedom in Galatians is the objective of the current study, we cannot at this stage make but a few cursory remarks. It is, after all, the aim of this paragraph to draw attention to the fact that it would not be unlikely for Paul to emphasise that he was concerned only about Christian freedom – the freedom for which Christ lay down his life. He had to define his position against a wide backdrop of views. Although his agitators were of a Jewish background, his audience was, despite the Jewish influence of the agitators, originally from a Greco-Roman background.

The subsequent history of this concept cannot be traced here even in its broadest outlines. Indeed, such summary presentations, especially those by theologians...run the risk of being too sweeping to allow for the details necessary to illustrate exactly how Greek and Roman ideas influenced Judaism and Christianity, and thus they often fall prey to the standard theological bias that portrays Hellenistic thought only as a foil against which the Jewish and Christian tradition gains its contours.¹

Jones is obviously correct if his intention is to prevent theologians from making sweeping statements and regarding Christian thought as having originated in a total cultural void. Paul obviously wrote against a backdrop of preconceived ideas of which he was very knowledgeable. However, Jones seems at fault when he, almost effortlessly, identifies direct Hellenistic influences in Paul's views.² One is reminded of the appropriate observation in this regard by Earle Ellis regarding source criticism: "There is a tendency to convert parallels into influences and influences into sources."³

It seems more responsible to contend that terminology from the Hellenistic philosophical and religious spheres relating to freedom would have assisted Paul in providing the necessary apparatus in order to find a foothold in their hearts and minds. Strategically and rhetorically freedom was a very appropriate term to use. This is true for both Christianity and the ancient world in which it first germinated; the latter preparing the way for God's unique dealings with man in Christ.⁴ In view of Paul's presentation of a radically new and different situation in the advent of Christ, it is very appropriate to point out the differences.

Speaking in broad terms, one sees that Paul's Christological interpretation of freedom in Galatians differs radically from his Umwelt's conception both in terms of its foundation and its content. To what extent he used terminology from his *Umwelt* is nigh impossible to determine. What does seem certain is that he provided the terms with new content.

- His views were far removed from the political conceptions on freedom. True, his views, especially the baptismal formula (Gl. 3:38) had social implications, but were far removed from politics. They were concerned pri-

¹ Jones, 1992, 855-6.

² Jones, 1992, 857-8. With regard to Paul he sites mainly instances in I Corinthians. He does mention a few instances in Galatians and Romans. Discussion of the references is not necessary.

³ Ellis, 1979¹, 29.

⁴ J.L. de Villiers, 1997², 204; Duvenhage, 1975, 27.

marily with social interaction in the believing community. He does not deal with the broader community. But more importantly, his freedom was founded in Christ (Gl. 5:1) and not on human endeavours.

- Freedom from slavery in Galatians' terms was primarily a religious and not a political concept, in keeping with the OT notion of redemption. It was not about being freed from slavery to other humans, but about becoming free from the oppression of the flesh, sin, law and the elements (Gl. 1:4).
- However, freedom reflected negatively on the Greek institution of *δοῦλος*. Within the parameters of the believing community this institution could not be continued in the same way as before; if at all. This matter remains open for another discussion.
- He is adamant that man is no longer *under law* (Gl.5:2-4). He does not have in mind the ordinary civil laws that every state and community deems necessary to function to the benefit of all. His reference is specifically to Jewish law, although he does imply the elements of the world (Gl. 4:3).
- Pauline freedom is not about self-realisation, but about the freedom to realise that which God wants. Dying to the world through the Cross of Christ and no longer living according to the flesh took the essence out of that one. It was now about Christ living in the believer (Gl. 2:20).
- It is not about becoming one with God through inner detachment from material things or through the soul's release from the body and this world to be absorbed by or dissolved into the sphere of the divine. It is about being freed by the One sent by God for the believer to live in the flesh, but not according to it (Gl. 2:20). It is about walking according to the Spirit (Gl. 5:16, 25).¹
- It was not about superior knowledge, but about knowing God and being known by Him (Gl. 4:9). Freedom could not be attained by one's own endeavour. It was revealed to one by God's initiative, as indicated in Ch. 2.
- Freedom is especially not about being detached from fellow humans, as we shall see in the next chapters. It is profoundly emphasised in the believer's and believing community's imperative to love (Gl. 5:6, 13, 14, 22) and to serve one another (Gl. 5:13; 6:10). Then there are the many ethical calls in Gl. 5:25-6:10.

That which the Greeks regarded as the highest form of freedom becomes in the NT the source of man's most abject bondage. Man, bent in upon himself, obstinately waves God's help aside and busies himself in running his own life in his own strength, trusting in his own resources, and falls into the grip of fear (Rom. 8:15; Heb. 2:15). He trusts in the tangible and is subject to the "bondage of morality" (Rom. 8:21). He makes use of the law and the powers of this world to create "his own righteousness", and is enslaved under the "curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13).²

¹ Chamblin, 1993, 314.

² Tuente, 1978, 597.

Christ's advent and resurrection was the apocalyptic turning point in salvation-history. Everything changed radically, because, when the time determined by God had fully come (Gl. 4:4) Christ delivered man from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4). Paul goes to great lengths to make this point absolutely clear.

- He refers both to Christ as God's Son (Gl. 1:16) and to the content of his gospel (also Gl. 1:4)
- Gl. 2:4 specifically refers to "freedom, which we have in Christ Jesus" (τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἣμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).
- Although Gl. 2:16-21 deals with justification as christologically founded and defined, it has as much bearing on the christological definition of freedom, because it is about being set right with God and therefore also being set free from guilt and hopelessness, the latter being taken up in Gl. 5:5 as "hope of righteousness" (ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης).
- Then there is the very pungent Gl. 2:19-20 where Paul refers to his having died to the law and having been crucified with Christ who lives in him. He draws both the death and resurrection of Christ into the equation and applies it to his own life through faith. This is reiterated in Gl. 6:14 with the even more pungent threefold crucifixion formula where law is replaced by the much broader concept, "world" (κόσμος).
- He stresses the vividness of the crucifixion (Gl. 3:1). Not identical, but evident of the vividness and immediacy of their experience of Christ's work, is Paul's reference to their almost having equated him with Christ (Gl. 4:14) at their acceptance of Him.
- In Gl. 3:13 Paul refers to Christ's deliverance and setting free of the believers as redemption (ἐξηγόρασεν). Importantly, it is once again connected with the crucifixion. One could probably add our previously discussed metaphor of slavery to Christ (Gl. 1:10) to this notion of redemption.
- Gl. 3:22-29 places a heavy emphasis on Christ as fulfilment of the promise to Abraham and as the One by whom the believers were set free from the custodianship of the law. They had been made sons of God through faith in Christ. In Gl. 4:1-7 he stresses it even more strongly by stating that God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying: "Abba! Father" (Gl. 4:7). This theme is picked up again in Gl. 4:21-31. Through this divine activity in Christ the Galatians' former "bondage to beings that by nature are no gods" (Gl. 4:8) and "elementary spirits" (Gl. 4:9) had been broken.
- Gl. 3: 27-28 emphasises baptism into Christ as the putting on of Christ, resulting in the negation of previously all-powerful social structures, so that all in Christ are one.
- The previously discussed Gl. 5:1 ("For freedom Christ set us free.") is essential to the christological foundation of Paul's freedom. Can it be any clearer?
- Equally central to our topic is Gl. 5:24 – "And those that belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

- He emphasises the role of the cross in Gl. 2:20 and 6:14 very existentially. What Christ did through his cross, he did for Paul. He not only turned salvation-history onto a new track, but equally turned Paul onto that track.

Quite obviously, Paul founded the notion of freedom in Galatians on the cross and resurrection of Christ. It was not about self-realisation, as Bultmann would have it – an anthropologically founded and motivated notion that could be either individually or socially determined. Neither was it about inner detachment from external entities and the individual's ambition to be released from this world in order to be absorbed in a deity. It was not about self-mastery, but about a liberation that was introduced from outside the believer through which he would submit in obedience to God.¹ It did not involve the attaining of superior knowledge placing one on a higher hierarchical intellectual level. It was about God's initiative in Jesus Christ to deal decisively with flesh and sin, and his gracious inclusion of man into that position of freedom through faith in Jesus Christ alone.²

4.4.1.3. *Freedom from flesh and its secondary jailors of the present evil age.*

In Ch. 3 the point was elaborately made that, although he approaches the subject at hand from the angle of law, Paul takes it to a much deeper level and spreads the wings of freedom over a vast array of slaveries. It is a pity that while so much scholarly labour has been spent on the subjects of freedom from the law; the extent to which law is still applicable to the Christian community, or how it should no longer apply; as important as these subjects are, too little attention is paid to freedom from the much deeper form of slavery reflected in Galatians, namely freedom from flesh!³

Paul, we have seen, introduces the notion of flesh very early in his letter. Although he initially uses it very neutrally, but does contrast it with God (Gl. 1:16), he gradually increases the negative light in which *σάρξ* should be viewed. In Gl. 2:16 the need for *σάρξ* to be justified is expressed and elaborated on in Gl. 2:20, and eventually he comes to the use of *σάρξ* in an explicitly negative ethical sense in Gl. 5. It would be a mistake to ignore this build up and confine

¹ Layman, 2000, 298.

² Jones, 1987, 82, quite correctly states: "Christlicher Glaube ist Freiheit."

³ Fletcher, 1982, provides much with which I agree. He denounces a division of Paul's letter into a section against opponents advocating law (Gl. 3-4) and another against opponents of libertinistic orientation (Gl. 5-6). I agree with his understanding that there was only one opposing group advocating law and that Gl. 5:1-6:10 is as much part of Paul's argument against them (Judaizers) as the foregoing section (220-68). I also agree with him that Gl. 5-6 is not an added on exhortation without which the letter could very well do (141-5). However, in his endeavour to emphasise the absence of a second opposition group I must disagree with his remark: "Freedom is consistently, in this letter, freedom from the law" (244). As I have advocated up to now, Paul takes his cue from the Judaizers advocacy for law, but moves in behind the scene set up by them to deal with the real problem, i.e. flesh. If this perspective is not followed the arguments against law tend to be too indiscriminate and the real enemy, flesh, almost gets away again by pushing law forward. Unless, of course, he is correct in his criticism of Betz who holds that Paul's arguments are primarily against flesh and secondarily against law. In this regard Fletcher is of the opinion that if Betz is correct, Paul misunderstood the problem, "since the body of the letter deals with the law and not social problems" (217). I believe Fletcher is wrong.

Paul's use of flesh only to Gl. 5. This easily leads to the understanding of law as the primary or essential jailor and Gl. 5 as an addition (if not an afterthought) to warn against libertinism or amorality in the absence of law. But, there is more to be said. Paul quite unequivocally opposes flesh and Spirit (Gl. 3:3; 4:29; 5:16-25 – most elaborately). One should see flesh and Spirit as a proleptic pair of antitheses. Where the one is read there is also an allusion to the opposing other. Paul very early in his argumentative section employ's the antithesis between the two ("Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" – Gl. 3:3).

Paul aligns circumcision, law and flesh as enslaving in opposition to respectively non-circumcision, promise and Spirit as characteristic of deliverance or freedom. The further his argument develops the more the two opposing sets of alignments are set up against each other. It should be accepted that in the Galatian congregations the letter would most probably have been read a few times. Through this repetition the two opposing tripartite alignments would have become more obvious. For instance, a second reading of Gl. 2:3, stating Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, immediately involved the rest of law and a life according to flesh. It also anticipated the antitheses of non-circumcision, faith and Spirit, introducing them into the equation proleptically.

In view of this way of observing matters one must argue that Paul starts off by introducing circumcision – that to which some Galatians were considering subjecting themselves – expanding it with dietary laws in his biographical section and with law as such in his argumentative section,¹ and then boils it down to the actual problem, namely flesh as the primary jailor of the present evil age. This is enhanced when we take the chiasmus between Gl. 5:1-12 and "Paul's own hand" in Gl. 6:11-17 into consideration (*fig. 5.3*).

Both the opposing alignments are present in these two sections. The circumcision-law-flesh alignment is shown to be "a yoke of bondage" (Gl. 5:1); severance from Christ, falling away from grace and of no value (Gl. 5:2,4); disobedience to the truth (Gl. 5:7); a bad influence² (Gl. 5:9); and fear of persecution for the cross of Christ (Gl. 6:12). The non-circumcision-faith-Spirit alignment is portrayed as "waiting for the hope of righteousness" (Gl. 5:5); being concerned that faith is portrayed in love (Gl. 5:6); glorying only "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gl. 6:14); being crucified to the world (Gl. 6:14) and a new creation (Gl. 6:15); and a life of "peace and mercy" (Gl. 6:16). The emphasis is on circumcision and non-circumcision. This is obviously so, because Paul is wrapping up his arguments which started with the dilemma of circumcision. He does, however include flesh in the second section. But, very importantly, he brings the opposition between flesh and Spirit to its climax in the two sections in-between (Gl. 5:13-24 and Gl. 5:25-6:10). He portrays flesh as impotent to do any good (Gl. 6:8), and the Spirit

¹ Inclusive of τὰ στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου (4:3).

² Betz, 1979, 266.

as the One through whom one reaps eternal life and through whom one does “good” to “the household of faith” (Gl. 6:10). In other words, in the core of the chiasmus Paul stresses that circumcision and law, with which the Galatians had become troubled, was neither the issue nor a solution to any problem. It all boiled down to the problem of flesh. Man had been corrupted to such an extent that scripture consigned everything to sin (Gl. 3:22). This was the problem. God’s divine initiative of promise to Abraham was made (Gl. 3:6-14). Only later (430 years later), because of sin (Gl. 3:19) God gave the law. It was not to annul the promise (Gl. 3:17), but to help believers till the promise would be fulfilled (Gl. 3:23-24). Unfortunately, because of flesh – man in his corruptibility and indeed having been corrupted – law was not successful in its limited task. For this task law was impotent against flesh. The Spirit would provide the believer with the capacity to deal with flesh after the advent and resurrection of Christ.

The fact is that for Paul deliverance or freedom from the present evil age is more than freedom from law or τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. It is about freedom from the corruption of flesh, but then, also from law and στοιχεῖα that had become secondary jailors because of their inability to deal with flesh.¹

Obviously, a new dispensation having been brought about by the advent and resurrection of Christ, and flesh in its corruptness having met its match in the Spirit, there was no longer a need for law. An apocalyptically new dispensation had arrived. A new creation had dawned. The remedies provided by the cultic rituals within law, had been fulfilled in Christ. He became “a curse for us” (Gl. 3:13). The Spirit had replaced the impotency of law in its effort to deal with flesh. Law had become obsolete, because flesh had been dealt with.

4.4.1.4. *Freedom to partake in new creation*

As stated earlier and illustrated schematically, Gl. 5:1-12 and Gl. 6:11-17 can be regarded as parallel pericopes; both being concluding summaries of Paul’s theological arguments. One sees a movement from Gl. 1:4 and the believer’s deliverance by Christ from the slavery of the *present evil age* to the preliminary conclusion in Gl. 5:1 that *for freedom Christ set us free*. This is further developed in the ultimate conclusion (Gl. 6:11-17) that “neither circumcision counts for anything, nor non-circumcision, but a *new creation*” (Gl. 6:15). For this reason and others that will become obvious, new creation is discussed here in relation to freedom.²

A very encompassing term with which Paul describes the new aeon that had arrived in the apocalyptic event of Christ’s advent, death and resurrection, is καινὴ κτίσις (“new creation”).³ Hubbard correctly insists that, although the phrase καινὴ κτίσις

¹ Of course it was meant to be a παιδαγωγός with all its positive intentions and elements. Because σάρξ rendered it impotent to fulfil its divine appointment, law as a whole had actually become a jailor or enslaver.

² Lull, 1980, 110, 129-30, even states that for Paul *new creation* is summarised in the term *freedom*.

³ A decision has to be taken on whether κτίσις denotes a noun or an action. In other words, does it refer to the act of creation or to the resultant product of the creative act? Without making too much of these possibili-

occurs only twice in the NT (2 Cor. 5:17¹ and Gl. 6:15), the notions of newness of life (Rom. 6:1-11)² and of Spirit (Rom. 7:1-6),³ which are in tandem with *καλὴ κτίσις*, are well represented. When these 3 notions are viewed in the contours of the death to life construction in Pauline thought, it should be apparent that *καλὴ κτίσις*, despite its infrequent use, is not at all as scarce in Pauline thought as meets the eye.

This is probably one of the most apocalyptically loaded phrases in Galatians. In view of our earlier observation that the *praescriptio* and *salutatio* envelop the letter apocalyptically one can assume *καλὴ κτίσις* is a description of the aeon opposed to the *present evil age* (Gl. 1:4). It describes the new paradigm in which the believer operates since the paradigm switch⁴ in the advent of Christ. Taking Gl. 6:14 into consideration, the point is made even clearer. *Καλὴ κτίσις* is very strongly contrasted with *κόσμος*.

In dealing with the freedom of being a new creation and/or being part of it, we shall have to deal with a few matters of which the importance will become clearer as we proceed. *Firstly*, a decision has to be taken on whether Paul's specific use of *καλὴ κτίσις* in Gl. 6:15 has an anthropological or a cosmological bearing. *Secondly*, to what extent is *καλὴ κτίσις* antithetically related to *κόσμος* to which Paul says he was now dead, and to law. *Thirdly*, the foundation of the new creation (the cross of Christ) will have to be discussed. *Fourthly*, how does the Spirit relate to the new creation? *Fifthly*, we shall have to pay attention to the ethical norm of new creation, namely love. *Sixthly*, we turn to Paul's reference in Gl. 3:28 to the non-discriminatory character of the new society in Christ. *Lastly*, a short reflection on new creation being in hope is in order.

ties, it seems the contrast with *κόσμος*, which is a noun, should settle the matter. It thus acts as a noun referring to the product of creation.

¹ Although one is tempted to partake in the most intriguing scholarly reflection on the occurrence of *καλὴ κτίσις* in 2 Cor. 5:17, I shall refrain from doing so and stick closely to the occurrence in Gl. 6:15. Hubbard, 2002, 133-87, provides interesting reading and sound reasoning regarding 2 Cor. 5:17. I find his conclusion wholly sound that Paul meant for new creation to have an anthropological bearing, but both on an individual and a communal level.

² Hubbard, 2002, 103: "In keeping with initiatory symbolism generally (chapter 5), Romans 6.11 stresses ritual suffering (death, burial and crucifixion with Christ), empowerment ('so that we might walk in newness of life,' v. 4), and transformation ('alive to God,' v. 11). Further, and also at home in this broader symbolic network, Paul's death – life symbolism in Romans 6.1-11 is focused on the individual and provides a basis for the moral imperatives which must result from the believer's identification with Christ. This ethical renewal is best expressed by the word 'life' (6.2, 4, 10, 11, 13)."

³ Hubbard, 2002, 112: "Romans 7.1-6 introduces two crucial themes routinely featured in Paul's death-life symbolism: the Spirit, and Paul's New Covenant retrospective. The two are intrinsically, that is, salvation-historically connected, and the presence of one implies the other. This section has also clearly exposed the substructure of Paul's soteriological imagery, which helps to account for the interconnectedness, even interchangeability, of some of Paul's favourite concepts... Finally, this section pointed to Israel's prophetic traditions, particularly Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as the inspiration for Paul's letter – Spirit antithesis."

⁴ "Paradigm switch" is chosen instead of the usual "paradigm shift", in order to emphasise the radical nature of the change. In doing this the salvation-historical approach is not harmed, neither is the continuity between OT and NT diminished in favour of discontinuity. Too often continuity boils down to merely a smooth shifting of gears. Here the emphasis is more on the steering mechanism taking the believer on a new route to God's destination for man.

Betz is of the opinion that *new creation* sums up Paul's whole soteriology. The Christian is only new, because he is in Christ. In Christ he has risen as part of the body of Christ; he has the Holy Spirit; and partakes in the new life in which he is clothed with Christ.¹ Although this observation is largely acceptable, one must, however, agree with Dunn² that Betz overstates his case when he, on the grounds of this antithesis between *new creation* and *circumcision or non-circumcision*, claims that Paul is actually announcing a new religion.³ In terms of Gl. 3-4 alone we have more than enough evidence that Paul understood *new creation* as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise and the coming of age of the Jewish heirs, namely the believers in Christ.⁴

(i) *New Creation: Anthropological or cosmological?*

In Ch. 4 I briefly illustrated Israel's hope for a solution to their plight. The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Joel were called to witness to this hoped for divine solution.⁵ Although the words "new creation" do not occur in these prophets, they definitely witness to an eschatological new creation of God's people⁶. Yahweh would renew their inner being so that they would find divine ethical guidance from within. His Spirit would be given to them.⁷ When Paul speaks of new creation in line with the long prophetic and Second Temple tradition the question arises: what did he have in mind? Broadly speaking, did he view it cosmologically or anthropologically? Differently put, does it refer to man becoming a new creation or to the whole cosmos, man included, being renewed?⁸ Aymer,⁹ as well as Mell,¹⁰ provides a quick survey of the past century's main positions. We will not go into detailed arguments. Adams identifies three main approaches, namely of new creation as the individual believer, or as the believing community, or as a new cosmic order.¹¹ Aymer divides the trains of thought slightly differently, providing a less rigid approach, i.e. new creation

¹ Betz, 1979, 319.

² Dunn, 1993², 342.

³ Betz, 1979, 320.

⁴ Although Dunn's criticism of Betz is valid, he himself is probably guilty of overemphasising the continuity between Judaism and Christianity. One such instance is his understanding of "Israel of God" (Gl. 6:16), which is related to the subject of new creation. Refer to the subject at (ii) in §4.4.1.4 below.

⁵ See also Ch. 2 on the death of the world and new creation.

⁶ Eichrodt, 1979, 390.

⁷ See §3.1.2.2. in my Ch. 4.

⁸ Mell, 1989, 47-257. The expression *καλλὴ κτίσις* is found in Jewish apocalyptic where it is used synonymously with "new heavens and new earth" and most definitely has a clear cosmological bearing. It referred to the transformed creation that was to replace the current world. It was seen as a future event. It must, however be acknowledged that it was not at all exclusively cosmological. Westermann, 1969, 407-11, stresses that Trito-Isaiah (65:16-25) describes redemption as having both anthropological and cosmological significance. Everything (the whole creation) was to be miraculously renewed and the people filled with joy.

⁹ Aymer, 1983, 17-30.

¹⁰ Mell, 1989, 9-32, provides a more elaborate overview from a tradition historical perspective.

¹¹ Adams, 2000, 226.

as anthropological (individual and personal); anthropological, but with cosmic effect; or cosmic, but including humanity.¹

One must be careful of a too quick decision on Paul's use of new creation as anthropological or cosmological. Hubbard clearly indicates that even in the tradition from which Paul stemmed the bearing changed situationally. He argues that Is. 65-66's reference to "new heavens and a new earth" definitely has a cosmological bearing, but the anthropological bearing is not excluded. Is. 65:18 clearly has an anthropological bearing in reference to Jerusalem becoming a delight and its people a joy. Equally, Is. 66:22, after referring to "the new heavens and the new earth," assures the inhabitants: "So will your name and descendants endure." Trito-Isaiah seems to discern the anthropological and cosmological bearings.²

Hubbard might be too hasty in denouncing Westermann's interpretation of "new heavens and a new earth". The latter reasons the phrase should not be understood literally. He regards it as apocalyptic and therefore figurative language; even as "language of exaggeration" or as a quotation introduced from another context unknown to us.³ Westermann's further argument is that, whilst "new heavens and a new earth" are introduced, Trito-Isaiah's focus remains on Jerusalem and Judah. To his mind the gulf between the focused reference to salvation for Jerusalem and Judah and the more general creation of a new heaven and earth is too great to give the cosmological bearing prominence above the anthropological.⁴ Hubbard's criticism that later developments in Jewish apocalyptic, which tend towards a cosmological interpretation,⁵ disprove Westermann, is not convincing. Regardless of such a development subsequent to Trito-Isaiah, and despite the possibility that Trito-Isaiah might have sparked such a development, one cannot assume that Trito-Isaiah intended an exclusively cosmological bearing. Westermann, on the other hand, emphasising the localised Jewish salvational bearing, underplays the broader picture. Granted, the language is apocalyptic and figurative and addressed to Judah and Jerusalem; and granted it was probably not primarily concerned with replacing the cosmological order. However, one should take into consideration that Trito-Isaiah specifically addressed Jerusalem and Judah. His focus was on them. It does not, however, imply that the wider world was not included in the bigger picture. Of course, if that world refers to the wider human world it still carries an anthropological bearing. On the other hand, if Trito-Isaiah had only an anthropological inten-

¹ Aymer, 1983, 17-30.

² Hubbard, 2002, 17.

³ Westermann, 1969, 408-9.

⁴ Westermann, 1969, 409. Hubbard inadvertently creates the impression that Westermann chooses for an anthropological bearing against a cosmological one. My impression is that Westermann emphasises the new creational activity of God in relation to his people, because it was Trito-Isaiah's intention to do this. However, Westermann does not ignore the cosmological element. He very clearly states (410-1) the inclusion of the animal world, Is. 65:25 probably referring back to Is. 11. "This lets us see an important step in the transition from prophecy of salvation addressed to Judah and Israel to the description of a transformed world such as we find in apocalyptic (Westermann, 1969, 410-1).

⁵ Hubbard, 2002, 17.

tion with this phrase and did not mean to imply the created world of man, he could have made use of exclusively anthropological terminology akin to his time or to the Isaianic prophetic tradition without introducing creation terminology. This he does not do, so that one can acknowledge that the scale tips towards accepting a cosmological bearing of some kind and magnitude, but probably not exclusively or predominantly so.

[T]he Isaianic motif of new creation is both anthropological and cosmological in scope. It includes God's people and God's world. Addressing the needs of a community in exile, it speaks of a transformed people (40-55) in a transformed universe (65-66).¹

Jeremiah's prophecy of a new covenant (Jr. 31:31-34) is profoundly important for our subject. It most definitely has an anthropological bearing and is used exclusively with regard to Israel as God's elect. As indicated in Ch. 4, Jeremiah's reference to Israel's wickedness throughout the prophecy is a lament on its heart or inner being not being in tune with God's will, and a life of "organized hypocrisy".² The new covenant addresses this plight by promising an inner renewal of the elect. This is also Ezekiel's bearing.³

Hubbard continues the investigation of Paul's tradition, turning to new creation in both apocalyptic and diaspora Judaism of the second temple period. He investigates the book of *Jubilees*⁴ as representative of the former, and *Joseph and Aseneth*⁵ of the latter. He finds that new creation has both a cosmological and an anthropological nuance in *Jubilees*, although the cosmological nuance is more prevalent. An interesting observation, anthropologically speaking, is that it envisions both the moral and physical renewal of man. Longevity, good health and peace are envisioned for Israel. Cosmos' natural order would be renewed, Satan overthrown and the yoke of Gentile oppression broken.⁶

Battling both earthly and heavenly forces, the apocalyptic visionaries felt the cosmos itself closing in around them, and it is hardly surprising that their picture of the future was that of a completely transformed universe.⁷

However, *Joseph and Aseneth*, concerned with entrance requirements for pagans into Judaism, is wholly anthropological. Hubbard therefore concludes that both anthropological and cosmological nuances are present in the writings of Second Temple Judaism, but the cosmological element is more pronounced.

However, a pessimistic appraisal of the human condition (*Joseph and Aseneth*) called for a different solution than a pessimistic appraisal of the historical situation (*Jubilees*), and this observation provides a fitting introduction to the treatment of new creation in Paul's letters.⁸

¹ Hubbard, 2002, 17.

² Hubbard, 2002, 19.

³ Hubbard, 2002, 20-3.

⁴ Hubbard, 2002, 26-53.

⁵ Hubbard, 2002, 54-76.

⁶ Hubbard, 2002, 48.

⁷ Hubbard, 2002, 53.

⁸ Hubbard, 2002, 74.

This brief background on new creation in the tradition from which Paul stemmed being given, we move to determine Galatians' specific bearing on the term.

(ii) *New Creation in Galatians*

The strategic point where Paul employs *new creation* is fundamentally important. An overwhelming number of scholars are agreed that Gl. 6:11-17 is Paul's *conclusio* to and *recapitulatio* of the letter's main arguments, and therefore also the *hermeneutical key* to its meaning.¹ Most scholars regard Paul's drawing attention to his own handwriting as a way of emphasising the profundity of what is to follow.² On the basis of the urgency of the letter, the seriousness of the situation, Paul's not seeming to be frivolous, and the fact that his arguments are revisited in the subscript, one should accept Paul's reference to his use of large letters as emphasising and summarising his main arguments.

Hubbard's view from his death-life paradigm is quite in line with Betz' earlier remark that *καληὴ κτίσις* sums up Paul's whole soteriology.

Functioning as the "life" side of this death-life equation, *καληὴ κτίσις* resonates back through the entire epistle.³

Paul states that through "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (*ἔμοι κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὼ κόσμῳ* - Gl. 6:14). The old created order, present evil age, the world in its corruption, had met its match. It had come to an end. God created a new order in Christ.

The death of Christ on the cross changed the world, it had cosmic effects.⁴

With the *κόσμος* crucified and replaced by *καληὴ κτίσις*, it seems obvious Paul had the whole creation in mind, not merely the individual human creature.⁵ The whole creation had been affected. A new cosmological order had been founded. God's redemption through his Son extends beyond mere human regeneration.⁶ Af-

¹ Betz, 1979, 313; Weima, 1993, 90-170. The importance is enhanced by the fact that Paul himself took up the pen at this point. Bahr, 1968, 27-41; Fitzmeyer, 1974, 201-25, make it clear that there is ample evidence of such personal subscripts in antiquity. Bahr, 1968, 32-3, however finds it rarely has any connection with the bulk of the letter. Witherington, 1998¹, 440, is therefore probably correct in stating, in line with Betz, that in the subscript Paul follows rhetorical rather than epistolary practice. Once again, one should remember the criticism of Du Toit, 1991, 236, that it is not a true summary of all the arguments. It does, however, reflect the main content. For our argument that is enough.

² Lightfoot, 1890, 221; Oepke, 1989, 270-2; Lührmann, 1978, 119; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 290. Morris, 1996, 186; Witherington, 1998¹, 441. Bruce, 1982¹, 268, seems to accept a hint of emphasis, but remains undecided. Moule, 1953, 12, on the basis of Paul's use of the so-called *epistolary aorist*, is willing to acknowledge only that Paul took the pen from the amanuensis, but regards attaching a meaning to it as speculative.

³ Hubbard, 2002, 191. He refers to Weima, 1993, 170, who quite rightly agrees that *καληὴ κτίσις* might very well typify Paul's major thesis in Galatians. See also Harnisch, 1987, 279-96.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 450.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 451. In this regard one is reminded of Richard Hays' criticism of Betz and other post-Reformation interpreters who read the text "through a hermeneutical filter that highlights the relation of the human individual subject to God. Focussing on the problem of how a person may find justification, Betz places heavy emphasis upon individualistic soteriological elements in Paul's message," 1987, 271.

⁶ Aymer, 1983, 29.

ter all, man's living according to flesh was the primary cause of pain and suffering for the whole creation (Gn. 3). Restoration would involve both man and cosmos.

Anthropologically one can safely say, although Paul implies an individual and personal element in new creation – after all, it is an individual who comes to believe and is taken up in the new community – the communal element is not underplayed (e.g., Paul's recollection of his encounter on the road to Damascus in Gl. 1:11-24; 2:18-21). He is, after all, addressing congregations and makes abundant use of collective figures of speech, such as "men of faith" (Gl. 3:7) and "sons of Abraham" (Gl. 3:7); nations are blessed (Gl. 3:9); "all sons of God" (Gl. 3:26); "sons" (Gl. 4:5,6); "my little children (Gl. 4:19); etc. He speaks collectively of Jews and Gentiles on many occasions; and, importantly, in Gl. 6 the very emphasis of the ethics is on inter-group relations and responsibilities.

Pauline eschatology is concerned not merely with the individual but with the whole of human history and creation.¹

The very obvious alternative to this individualistic approach is the emphasis on the believing community as new creation.² If it does not exclude the individual element it is a whole lot better than the previous one, but both these anthropological approaches lack the cosmological element. On the one hand, that which happens to the believer or believing community has an affect on the cosmos. If man is renewed he is also renewed in his relation to the rest of creation and the latter is also renewed.³ On the other hand, one must not think of man's coming to faith as the decisive event in history. That honour goes to God (Gl. 1: 5) for having willed the cross and resurrection of Christ.

For Paul, both humanity and the cosmos are fallen and thus in need of redemption (Rom. 1:18ff; 8:22ff). He attributes the fallen state of the cosmos to humanity's transgression (Rom. 5:12; 8:20), but nowhere does Paul state or imply that the redemption of the cosmos will be affected as a consequence of the redeemed humanity's world view. Rather, for Paul both the redemption of humanity and the transformation of the cosmos are acts of God (1 Cor. 7:29-31; 15:23-28; 11 Cor. 5:17; cf. Rom. 8:38; Gl. 4:3).⁴

It would probably be safe to assume that Paul's theology included both the cosmological and anthropological bearings of new creation. The use of *κόσμος* in close proximity and in opposition to new creation, as well as the opposition of "present evil age" in the *salutatio* (Gl. 1:4), provides enough cosmological foundation. It does, however seem that in Galatians Paul employs it very strongly in terms of its significance for the believing community.⁵ It must be emphasised that the believing community is not equated with new creation. They are not the new creation. They are part of the new creation. Just as their living according to the flesh had caused sorrow to all creation of

¹ Aymer, 1983, 20.

² Chilton, 1977/8, 311-3.

³ Aymer, 1983, 21.

⁴ Aymer, 1983, 24.

⁵ Adams, 2000, 227.

which they were part, they now obviously have a very fundamental role to play in the well-being of the new creation by living according to the Spirit.

In the community of ἀδελφοί in Christ, God takes humanity to himself and loves with a truly human heart. Christian *agapē* is the fulfilment of the New Covenant, whereby God puts his own will in the hearts of the members of his Church to make of it the beginning of a transformed humanity.¹

One could thus argue that the cosmological transformation is currently more in the background, while the anthropological renewal is more to the forefront and very conspicuous in the community of believers. One should not set the cosmological and the anthropological bearings against each other. Rather, it might be better to consider Paul's use of new creation in Galatians as an *aeonological-soteriological concept* involving both the cosmological and the anthropological bearings. It is about the new order of things. It is about the new paradigm of being in Christ, having the Spirit and being dead to the world. That is why Paul, in the very next sentence, refers to this new creation or order of things as a κανὼν (rule or paradigm) according to which the Israel of God is to live (Gl. 6:16). Although it will ultimately be fully concretised in the *parousia*, the paradigm has been introduced by the advent of Christ and his Spirit.²

"New" is for Paul, that which is eschatologically new; that which is of definitive consequence. And the one who, by faith and baptism, is "in Christ," participates in this new eschatological creation, which has begun with the resurrection of Christ. Such an individual also eagerly awaits Christ's return for the full expression of this new creation.³

In view of what has been argued, one should remark that *Israel of God* is not to be equated with *new creation*. The Israel of God partakes in the new creation, which is God's new dispensation in Christ that will be fulfilled in Christ's *parousia*, but new creation exceeds it by far.

(iii) *New creation as non-discriminatory (Gl. 3:28)*

Theologically and eschatologically there is no longer an old Israel or any other people. In the new dispensation there is only one eschatological people of God, the Israel of God.⁴ Obviously, by the latter he means those who had come to faith in Christ and to whom the world had died and they to the world.⁵ It was the commu-

¹ Deidun, 1981, 149.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 451: "Paul is saying that the new creation, not circumcision or uncircumcision, is the measuring rod by which persons should evaluate their lives." Dunn, 1993², 341, states that by the death of the world a whole new world of possibilities had been opened.

³ Gordon, 1984, 112.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 451. In this regard, one should also make mention of the Jewish notion that the ideal Israel of the end-time would be known as the "sons of God". See Byrne, 1979, 62f.; my Ch.7 at §3.2.3.

⁵ I will not go into the debate concerning *Israel of God*. Suffice it to mention the following: (1) The letter thoroughly rejects any notion of Israel having any preference soteriologically. Paul emphasises the radical eschatological change in Christ. He slams the Judaisers for thinking in terms of Jewish identity. Strategically, Paul would have been inconsistent if he were to acknowledge such a group in the closing. It is also unthinkable that he would incur a blessing on them. (2) Even if Paul were to have included the believers in Christ into the historical people of God (Dunn, 1993², 345), or thought wholly in terms of Jewish Christians, it would contradict his strong emphasis on a totally new dispensation having arrived in Christ. It would be like the metaphorical new wine being poured into old wineskins (Mk. 2:22). (3) Grammatically it is possible to translate the final καί with "that is", "indeed" or "in fact"

nity typical of the new creation.¹ The distinctions between people were no longer conclusive or constitutive of one's position before God and in the community (Gl. 3:28). However believers were dealt with outside the community of believers, they were to run counter to ordinary society.² Within the community all were on the same level. Faith in Jesus Christ was the only determining factor drawing the line between believers in Christ and all other people – Jewish or pagan, and determining relations and conduct in the community of faith.³

In Christ the old privileges which men use to erect barriers between themselves (circumcision and uncircumcision) are no longer valid. Only belonging to him counts – the new creation. The past has been cancelled by the cross. Therefore the world, as the embodiment of the old creation, is unable to make any claims upon Christ. For his part the Christian is unable to live in dependence on the world: they are dead to each other (Gl. 6:14f.).⁴

The only defining factor for life in the new dispensation is the relationship with Christ.⁵ Association with the cross would have been humiliating, but the believer was to find glory in that revolting instance. Christians could not boast in anything like law-observance from the previous dispensation. The cross of Christ was the only orientation point. A lasting separation from the old world had occurred.

[A] lasting separation has also been effected from the whole contemporary world, with its climate of opinion and canons of honour and dishonour.⁶

A new creation had been inaugurated, which would inevitably transform the whole cosmos.⁷ In the interim the community of faith had to pursue being non-discriminatory. However, Paul does not implement or advocate a program of non-discrimination. He advocates being orientated to Christ.

No social agenda will correct the situation, and no pedagogical strategy will suffice, because the power of evil is such that it can corrupt even the purest motives and the sternest resolve.⁸

In light of this broader context of movement from the *present evil age* to *new creation* in Christ, I find it impossible to argue as Miller does⁹, that Paul argued

(Bauer, 1979, 392-3; Moule, 1953, 167; Witherington, 1998¹, 452). It is thus accepted that *Israel of God* refers to Gods eschatological people, all believers in Christ. See also Clark, 1980, 21-9, who argues that Paul assumed that his Gentile converts followed his understanding of Judaism, namely the one based on faith and not on works.

¹ J.A. Sanders, 2002², 124-5, describes the community of believers as a new family. They were totally different from the old genetically determined families. "Being born again at that time meant joining Christ's new family of inclusiveness, grace and universal access to personal salvation by adoption into Christ's new family" (125).

² Duff, 1989, 287.

³ Johnson, 2002, 34-44, is most valuable in this regard. Presenting baptism as an apocalyptic act (41), she states: "[B]aptism represents the very end of the created order, replaced by the new creation in Christ" (42).

⁴ Esser, 1975, 385; Gerhardsson, 1987, 17-18.

⁵ Dunn, 1993², 343; Jewett, 1994, 251.

⁶ Bruce, 1982¹, 271.

⁷ Martyn, 1997, 382-3, 570-4, observes that Gl. 3:28 represents the switch from the old aeon with its building blocks of opposites to the new creation which is orientated to Christ alone. New antinomies had arisen, such as being in Christ or without Him; living by the Spirit or according to the flesh.

⁸ Gaventa, 2000, 278.

⁹ Miller, 2002, 9-11, interprets the οὐκ-οὐδέ and οὐκ-καὶ combinations as: "It is a matter of Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, because believers are all Jews, all free, and all males" (11).

for a salvific union with Christ amongst all believers, but only on a soteriological level. On the ordinary, day to day practical level this would have no bearing. In fact, he argues that these differences are integral to his argument – actually constitutive thereof. He argues from the immediate context of the believers being heirs. In terms of the Jewish background or roots of Christianity, Paul actually re-enforces being Jewish, free and male in the sense of all believers in Christ having been *promoted* to being Jewish, free and male in God's sight. But, back in civil society believers experience the opposite and Paul seems to be at peace with the situation. According to Miller, this would account for his lack of a program for social change, as well as for other pronouncements that seemingly reek of patriarchy.¹

If so, Paul is presupposing, and thus reinforcing, a conception of the social order in which these distinctions are not real, but are in fact to be pressed into the service of explaining how God makes good his salvific promise. The explanation presupposes not only those differences, but, more importantly, the practical and social superiority of the position of the Jew, the free person, and the male!²

I agree with him that Gl. 3:28 is not the introduction of an egalitarian program, and that Paul was largely a child of his time and therefore, not insensitive to the way in which society ordered itself.³ However, I have to disagree that Paul had no intention that this paradigm should transform wider society. Seen against the broader context, not of heirship, but of the introduction of the new paradigm (*present evil age to new creation*) he would have had the wider society in view too. After all, faith cannot be contained in the narrow boundaries of the fellowship. It had to be concretised in daily life and believers were to bear witness of their faith and partake in the expansion of the fellowship and its beliefs. In this regard Paul's words in Gl. 6:10 are most relevant: "*Do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith*" (my emphasis).

(iv) *New creation as free to love*

Paul undoubtedly intended a definite parallel between Gl. 5:6 and 6:15, reading:

Gl. 5:6 ...neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail; but faith working through love. (... οὐτε περιτομή τί ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη)

Gl. 6:15 ...neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation (... οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἔστιν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις)

Was his intention to equate "new creation" and "faith working through love"? Without much ado, the parallel use of circumcision and non-circumcision certainly *aligns* "faith working through love" with "new creation", but certainly does *not equate* the

¹ Much has been written in this regard. Pelsner, 2000, 433-5, although in a different context, reiterates his earlier position in 1976, 92-109, that Paul not only revealed the positive attitude of Jesus towards women, but even awarded them with equality in the service of the gospel.

² Miller, 2002, 11.

³ Buckel, 1993, 177.

two. If this were the case new creation would simply be a matter of attitude: where there is faith working towards love, a new creation arises or manifests. This would defeat Paul's objective. He reasons the other way around. Because of God's having created anew and the believer's partaking in this newness through faith, love is not only possible, but should be manifest as proof of such a recreation. The way in which they should be aligned with each other is that faith manifesting itself in love is the one identity marker signalling the presence of God's new creation, be that in the individual, in the believing community, or in the structures of society and the cosmos. New creation and love born from faith are inseparable.¹ On the other hand, they separate the present evil age and its adherents from those who are part of the new creation. We will return to this subject in the next chapters. For now it will suffice to emphasise the importance of love as identity marker of the new community.²

(v) *New creation as a life in the Spirit*

Paul employs the Spirit intensively. After laying extremely heavy emphasis on Christ as the inaugurator of the new aeon (Gl. 1:4); as the One who gave Himself for our sins (Gl. 1:4); who delivered us from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4); on faith in Christ making all the difference (Gl. 2:16-17); and the existential impact of this faith on the believer as equal to the believer himself being crucified and no longer living so that Christ lives in him (Gl. 2:20); and the vivid remark that Christ was as good as publicly portrayed to them as crucified (Gl. 3:1), he introduces the advent of the Spirit into the picture in Gl. 3:2-5. Paul makes a remark on justification (Gl. 2:16, 17) and shortly afterwards juxtaposes it with a similar sounding question (Gl. 3:2), revealing the following:

Gl. 2:16, 17: "(We) who know that a man is not *justified* by works of the law, but *through faith in Jesus Christ*"

Gl. 3:2: "Did you *receive the Spirit* by works of law, or by *hearing with faith*?"

Both justification and the reception of the Spirit are through faith. In the first instance he qualifies faith christologically. This is evidently implied in the second instance, because of the heavy emphasis on Christ and his crucifixion in between (Gl. 2:20-3:1). Now, faith in Christ is obviously the beginning point of Christian living. It is about almost reliving the scene of Christ's crucifixion (Gl. 3:1) and then existentially being crucified with Him, so that he now lives in the believer (Gl. 2:20). When Paul follows onto the reception of the Spirit through faith with: "having begun with the Spirit" (Gl. 3:3), he implies that the Christian's

¹ Niederwimmer, 1990, 433. However, I disagree with him that the moral obligations of Torah remain applicable. We will deal with this in Ch. 6. Kertelge, 1991, 193, 203-7.

² I will not pursue the matter regarding Paul's insistence on love of neighbour without mentioning the need to love God. I assume that Paul simply accepted the believer's love of God as a matter of fact. He assumed the Galatians would know this. Love of God is implied in terms such as the believer's faith (Gl. 2:16), living to God (Gl. 2:19) and crucifixion with Christ Gl. 2:20). Together with dying to the world (Gl. 6:14), these terms indicate the primary dedication to God from which the love of neighbour and fellow believer originated and in which it was concretely proven.

faith in Christ also marks his reception of the Spirit.¹ He does not speak of two events. Add to this his use of the antithesis between Spirit and flesh in Gl. 2:20 and 3:3 that would have been more obvious to his readers with a second reading. In Gl. 2:20 he refers to his life, i.e. as a believer, as a life in the flesh, but by faith in Christ. The reference to a life in the flesh, but qualified by faith in Christ, already alludes to that life not being in accordance with the flesh, but with the Spirit, about which we read more in Gl. 5 where flesh and Spirit are in absolute opposition. There he remarks: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit” (Gl. 5:25). The implication of the distinction between “live by the Spirit” and “walk by the Spirit” is that life by faith in Christ has its beginnings through the Spirit and should be lived through the Spirit.

Being crucified with Christ and His living in the believer is equal to living by the Spirit. One is reminded of Paul’s remarks in Gl. 3:6-20 referring to the promise God made to Abraham and the blessing he would bestow on his offspring. Without any further discussion on the matter, one is impressed by how the Spirit and Christ are interwoven. In the same vein, Paul identifies the two extremely closely when he refers to the Spirit in Gl. 4:6 as “the Spirit of his Son”. Equally, in Gl. 5:5 he draws a very close relation between “through the Spirit” and “by faith (in Christ)”.² The point being that Paul’s elaborate arguments regarding new life since the advent of Christ, cannot be read in isolation from the advent of the Spirit. The deliverance from the present evil age through the advent, cross and resurrection of Christ, is equal to beginning that new life through the Spirit. The Christian obtains existential value resulting from the advent of the Spirit through whom we call: “Abba, Father!” New creation in Christ is equally new creation through his Spirit.

We return to the specific matter of new creation and the Spirit. Hubbard puts forward two extremely important questions begging an explanation. *Firstly*, why does Paul, after nowhere in the rest of his letter employing *καὶ νῦν κτίσις*, suddenly do so in his *recapitulatio*? Did it just pop into his mind from nowhere? If the *recapitulation* is intended to conclude the letter and summarise the main arguments, should it not have featured somewhere previously in the letter? *Secondly*, after having dealt with the Spirit very extensively throughout Gl. 3-5, and very expressly so in Gl. 5:16-25, why does he seem to ignore the Spirit in the *recapitulatio*?³ He revisits circumcision and law; gives great prominence to Christ and his cross, as well as to the triple crucifixion; and even fleetingly refers to the flesh, but most surprisingly makes no mention of the Spirit. Keep in mind that already in Gl. 4:3, 8 & 9, together with his emphasis on both the law and the elements of the world being enslaving and holding man in bondage, Paul was actually placing Judaism and paganism on the same level. They had

¹ Lull, 1980, 153-61.

² Gordon, 1984, 125-8.

³ Hubbard, 2002, 210.

a common plight.¹ One should add that this is with reference to their positions since the advent of Christ. Law was now nothing more than *another element of the world*, although originally divinely given. Because faith was now oriented to Christ and no longer to the temporarily given law, law could no longer be regarded as of faith (Gl. 2:16-17; 5:18). In Gl. 6:12-13 Paul associates circumcision and law with glorying in the flesh. He juxtaposes this with glorying in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gl. 6:14) through which the world has been crucified to him and he to the world. Thus we have the alignment of circumcision, law, world and flesh as opposed to that of Christ and the cross. The former accentuates the underplaying of the Spirit in the latter. Furthermore, the former is outwardly orientated and Paul signifies that that mode of life had passed away in the crucifixion of the world and its elements. It therefore seems that the Spirit in us is accentuated precisely by its being underplayed.

It is therefore probable that the term *καινή κτίσις* is employed as the opposite of the world and its life according to flesh. But its use implies the Spirit as the one who determines this new order of things as opposed to the old world or present evil age. No longer could the order be trusted in which outward appearances such as circumcision or non-circumcision determined one's standing with God. It was now about inward orientation. It was about the new creation changing man's heart and orientation to life outside himself. The long awaited Spirit who would write God's law on man's heart had come. Placed alongside its parallel text in Gl. 5:6, it means that new creation is about faith working through love. This would not be imputed by law, but by the Spirit.

In conclusion, new creation is about a life according to the Spirit and producing the fruit of the Spirit characterised by love. It is about a life in which external markings are of no essence. It is an indication of the mode of living of those who have been crucified with Christ and no longer live other than with Him living in them through his Spirit.

(vi) *New creation as life in hope*

After the above discussion of Paul's "already-not yet" conception of new creation one cannot simply pass by Gl. 5:5, which is part of our chiasmus.

"For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness."
(ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.)

Bear in mind that Paul speaks of persecution and the cross as a stumbling block. He bears the marks of persecution. One is reminded of the Spirit's call in believers: "Abba! Father!" There is the promise of inheritance (Gl. 3; 4; 5:21) and reaping of eternal life (Gl. 6:8). One already hears the early chords of Paul's hymn in Rm. 8. We should not forget that the new creation, although it

¹ Hubbard, 2002, 205.

has irrevocably come and cannot be undone, has replaced, but not yet displaced, the present evil age.

In Paul's view the present evil age exists, but has been dealt a death blow by the crucifixion of Jesus. All of the world's basic values and assumptions and operating procedures have been put on notice that they are passing away (cf. 1 Cor. 7:31). What really matters are the new eschatological realities brought about because of the death of Christ. In Paul's view, even the Law, as well as other good things about the material world, are part of the things that are passing away or are fading in glory (cf. 2 Cor.3). Having lost their controlling grip on a human life when Christ came and died, one must not submit to such forces again, but rather live on the basis of the new eschatological realities. The new age has already dawned and Christians should live by its light and follow the path it illumines.¹

One is therefore compelled to hold onto new creation as a present and future reality – the so-called *already* and *not yet* concepts. Bultmann, with his typically individualistic and existentialistic approach says of this concept:

...salvation is determined by the salvation of the individual who is a new creature in Christ (II Cor. 5:17). And this salvation is present for the believer who is 'in Christ.' It is true it will be perfected by the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of the living...²

Adams reflects the conviction of many in this regard, when he writes:

In the event of the cross, God has declared that "this world" is on its way out and that a new cosmic order is on its way in. Believers, through participation in Christ's death and resurrection, have already been separated from the old world (cf. 1:4) and are in some proleptic sense already participating in the life of the new world.³

Paul uses the perfect tense of ἐσταύρωται (Gl. 6:14) and the present tense of ἐστίν (Gl. 6:15). The cosmos has therefore been crucified. It is a past event with present effect.⁴ New creation is a present reality. On the other hand, from other Pauline references (1 Cor. 7:31; 15:27-28; Rm. 8; 19-22; Phlp. 3:20-21) it is clear that although Galatians stresses the renewal in the cross and resurrection of Christ, Paul had a future hope of an inevitable cosmic change at the *parousia*, and initiated by the Christ event. In Galatians Paul speaks of a reality of some kind, but clearly not of the created cosmos having been physically renewed. This lay in the future with the arrival of the *parousia*. This renewed reality, however, correlates with the expected physical renewal of the cosmos.

The new age, in some undefined (and non-physical) way, has dawned (1 Cor. 10:11). Hence Paul can declare that "this world" has already been judged and cast aside in the cross (1 Cor. 1:20-21). The liberation of believers from this present evil age is presently underway (Gl. 1:4). The tenses of Gl. 6:14-15, therefore, reflect Paul's modification of the apocalyptic cosmic schema. For Paul, the cross has not brought about the expected cosmic transformation or recreation, but it has in some way started the ball rolling toward that end.⁵

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 450.

² Bultmann, 1954, 13.

³ Adams, 2000, 227.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 295.

⁵ Adams, 2000, 227.

In Gl. 6:16 Paul wraps up the point with his benediction “upon all who walk by this rule” (ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν). The word κανών is very significant. It probably has the meaning of “measure” or “norm”.¹ He is clearly referring back to Gl. 6:15, stating that the norm is no longer to be taken from the old dispensation under slavery of the flesh in which circumcision and uncircumcision (for that matter law as such) was determinative. In the new eschatological dispensation the question is whether life is lived according to its having been renewed, in fact, remade. New eschatological realities had arisen in the new eschatological dispensation. The glory of the previous dispensation, inclusive of the law, had faded and the way of life had to change accordingly.²

(vii) *Conclusion on new creation in Galatians*

Very briefly, new creation is an *aeneological-soteriological concept* describing the new dispensation brought about by the advent of Christ and his Spirit. In this sense it is in juxtaposition to the present evil age from which Christ delivered believers (Gl. 1:4). The deliverance from the present evil age, according to God’s will, resulted in the new creation in which the believer was free and free to partake in. In this new dispensation believers were not only free from the elements of the world, including law, but equally, free to live according to the guidance of the Spirit. The result would be a life lived in loving service. It would also be a life lived in hope, because the final fulfilment of the new creation, also its cosmological fulfilment, would only occur at the *parousia*.

Freedom and new creation, although not synonyms, are inextricably connected. Without new creation from God’s side, there is no freedom. Equally, without freedom the believer is not new and does not partake in what is new. In Christ Jesus a new world was opened for believers. In this world they were to live anew and free, but only in relationship with Christ and his Spirit. Without them there is no freedom.

4.4.1.5. *Preliminary conclusions on the uniqueness of freedom*

The reader is reminded that we are currently investigating Paul’s use of the definite article. This having been said, it seems reasonable to accept that Paul used the definite article to alert his readers to the fact that a new type of freedom, a uniquely Christian freedom, had entered their lives. He wanted to orientate them to this specific freedom and this one only. Had Paul not intended it that way – and this is doubtful – it would have had that affect on them anyway. Being from predominantly Gentile origin, the conceptions of freedom from the *Umwelt* would have been well entrenched in their thoughts in varying forms, and Paul’s version of what was uniquely Christian freedom would have fallen heavily on their ears. It would have been solid food for thought.

¹ Beyer, 1965, 597-8; Dunn, 1993², 343.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 450.

Paul describes this freedom as part and parcel of the benefits befalling those of faith in Christ. It is unique to this disposition.¹ This freedom is *firstly*, founded on the advent, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Secondly*, that from which the believer is freed is, in the first instance, the bondage by the flesh, which is characteristic of the present evil age; and in the second instance, law and other elements of the world bent on assisting man to live a meaningful life, but being unsuccessful in dealing with flesh. Paul does not use the expression “freedom from the law” in Galatians. He merely speaks of freedom. It is a more encompassing way of speaking than simply bogging freedom down to being free from law.² The fact that law is so prominent in his discussion on freedom in Galatians is due to the context in which he was reacting. *Thirdly*, to such an extent has the advent, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ liberated the believer, that he is now a new creation together with the rest of the believing community and creation. The hallmark of this believing community is its freedom from the flesh with its unloving and self-serving orientation, and its newfound willingness, through the Spirit, to love. But, since the *parousia* has not yet been realised, it still hopes for the final measure of righteousness. Freedom in Christ had changed everything irre-vocably.

Der Übergang vom Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes zum Gesetz des Geistes und des Lebens ist demnach der Übergang von einer Seinsordnung zur anderen, der Übergang von der hoffnungslosen Unfreiheit in die hoffnungsvolle Freiheit.³

One could conclude that freedom is a specific take on the salvation God provided in Jesus Christ. It is not a side-issue, or even worse, a nice to have. It is indispensable! It is part and parcel of salvation. It is salvation!⁴

4.4.2. *Τῆ ἐλευθερία: dative of instrument or of purpose?*

The possibility of τῆ ἐλευθερία before ἠλευθέρωσεν, making the expression an intensive form in the same way as ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα (Lk.22: 15) and προσευχῆ προσηύξατο (Jas.5:17), to read something like: “Christ has set us completely/ultimately free,” is excluded, because of the use of the definite article.⁵ The remaining question then is: what type of dative is τῆ ἐλευθερία?

4.4.2.1. *Dative of instrument?*

There are commentators of note who regard τῆ ἐλευθερία as a *dative of instrument*,⁶ in which case it would read something to the effect that Christ set us free “by means of freedom” or “with freedom” or “in freedom.” It is argued that Gl. 5:1 and 5:13 are parallel texts. In Gl. 5:13 the use of ἐπ’ before ἐλευθερία is meant to denote destiny or purpose. The argument being that if Paul wanted to denote purpose

¹ Gerhardsson, 1987, 14.

² Jones, 1987, 102.

³ Niederwimmer, 1966, 174.

⁴ Gerhardsson, 1987, 13.

⁵ Bruce, 1982¹, 226.

⁶ Amongst others Lightfoot, 1890, 202; Bruce, 1982¹, 226.

in Gl. 5:1 he would have used ἐπὶ instead of τῇ as he does in Gl. 5:13. Taken by itself this argument is rather flimsy. Why could Paul not take the liberty of using different forms to denote purpose? It is argued that changes had been made in the textual tradition to make an instrumental reading easier. In this regard it has been suggested that the text read τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡ.¹ Seen this way, it would read: "Through the freedom by which Christ has set us free, stand fast!"

The use of an instrumental dative would obviously enhance the notion of the divine initiative and origin of freedom. It would also underline Paul's notion that the freedom of which he speaks, is radically different from what had been known up to then. However, a dative of instrument does not make enough sense. Why would Paul feel the need in the current context to express Christ's freedom to free? Cognisance should be taken of a variety of ways in which the Greek dative can be used before turning to this option.²

4.4.2.2. *Dative of purpose!*

Most commentators today prefer the *dative of purpose*.³ Moule judges that it cannot be read in a strictly instrumental sense and that it seems to be used in an *emphatic sense*.⁴ Adolf Deissmann is renowned for his discovery that τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ was used as a formula in the "sacral manumission procedures."⁵ According to these procedures a slave could, as we have seen, save his money in order to buy his freedom. However, a slave did not have the right of purchase, because he lacked the basic right to initiate or negotiate a legal contract.⁶ His only recourse was to go to the temple and make his wish known to the priest. He would hand him the money and the priest would arrange for the buying of the slave by the god of that temple. This would give him his freedom, although he would technically be the possession of the ransoming god. What is of interest is the inscription giving public notice of the transaction, namely τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ.⁷ There can be no doubt that the inscription meant to indicate freedom as the purpose of the transaction.

The notion that, according to Gl. 5:1, Christ's advent was for the purpose of freedom for believers, is completely in line with the *praescriptio* stating that He came to deliver us from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4). Freedom was not a mere by-product of or coincidental spin-off from Christ's redemptive work. It was the divinely set intention of his advent. Redemption and deliverance could be described as specific angles on freedom.

¹ Refer to the textual apparatus in Nestle-Alant. Lightfoot, 1890, 202.

² Dunn, 1993², 262.

³ Amongst others H.N. Ridderbos, 1976¹; Bruce, 1982¹; Betz, 1979; R.N. Longenecker, 1990; Dunn, 1993²; Morris, 1996; Witherington, 1998¹.

⁴ Moule, 1953, 44; Jones, 1987, 99.

⁵ Deissmann, 1927, 326-8.

⁶ Witherington, 1998¹, 340.

⁷ Deissmann, 1927, 324.

One is tempted to support this position by referring to a very similar situation in Rm. 8: 24. In Rm. 8: 24 τῆ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν is used. It could be translated with “for hope we were saved.” It is preceded in Rm. 8: 20 by ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι that could be translated as “unto hope.”¹ However the opinions on the matter are even more varied than in Gl. 5:1. As Cranfield writes, τῆ ἐλπίδι (Rm. 8:24)

[I]s probably to be explained neither as equivalent to ἐφ’ ἐλπίδι in v.20, nor as instrumental (whether ἐλπίς be understood as subjective, denoting our hoping, or as objective, denoting that for which we hope), but as a modal dative serving to qualify ἐσώθημεν. Paul’s use of the aorist tense is justified, because the saving action of God has already taken place; but it would be misleading, were it not accompanied by some indication that the final effect of God’s action, namely, our enjoying salvation, still lies in the future: τῆ . . . ἐλπίδι makes this necessary qualification.²

Moule suggests that τῆ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν be read proleptically to mean that we are saved in hope, but not in actuality.³ It seems that the context and operative verbs in Rm. 8 make it impossible to draw a direct parallel to Gl. 5:1. It is best left out of the equation.

We conclude that τῆ ἐλευθερία is best understood as a dative of purpose and emphasis. It is supported by the varied usage of the dative and makes more sense than the instrumental use. Despite advocates to the contrary, Gl. 5:13, which is very much part of the current context (Gl. 5:1-6:10), enhances the notion of purpose in Gl. 5:1. Importantly, contemporaneous inscriptions provide support making it compelling to accept the dative of purpose. Freedom was not merely a spin-off of Christ’s redemptive work. Paul emphasises that it was the divinely set intention of Christ’s advent.

4.4.3. *Paul’s Conclusion: “For freedom Christ has set us free”*

Till now in the discussion on Gl. 5: 1 it has been concluded that Paul’s use of the dative, inclusive of the definite article, was intended to convey the radical uniqueness of the freedom brought about by the advent of Jesus Christ. The freedom he speaks of is only in Christ. Further, it was concluded that Christ came to the world exactly for this purpose. It was divinely intended. We now move on to explain the christological formula in its completeness as it operates in its context at the beginning of the *exhortatio*.

“*For freedom Christ has set us free*” summarises into one formula the entire indicative and imperative of the Christian message of salvation. It describes salvation itself and what it entails. Betz states it very precisely when he says

Christian freedom is the result of Christ’s act of having liberated those who believe in him (the “indicative”), but this result is stated as a goal, purpose, and direction for the life of the Christian (the “imperative”). Thus the sentence sums up the “logic” which relates the argumentative section of the letter (in principle including the whole of 1:6-4:31) with the parenthetical section

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 224.

² Cranfield, 1975, 419-20; Käsemann, 1980, 238.

³ Moule, 1953, 45. H.N. Ridderbos, 1977, 186 and 189, is basically in agreement with him.

(5:1-6:10). Theologically, Paul states that there can be no existence in freedom unless man is first given the opportunity of freedom, but that the opportunity of freedom is given only as the task for freedom. This task is then defined as the preservation of freedom.¹

Paul is well known for his multi-faceted description of salvation in Christ.² He describes salvation in Galatians in terms of deliverance (ἐξαιρεῖν - Gl. 1:4); God calling (καλεῖν - Gl. 1:6); justification (δικαιοῦν - Gl. 2:16, 17; 3:8, 11, 24; 5:4); being crucified with Christ and no longer living, but Christ living in the believer (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμα· ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός - Gl. 2:19-20); living by faith in the Son of God (ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ - Gl. 2:20); adoption as sons (υἰοθεσία - Gl. 4:5); being sons of God (πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε - Gl. 3:26; 4:6, 7); redemption (ἐξαγοράζειν - Gl. 4:5); being in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ - Gl. 5:6); belonging to Christ (οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ - Gl. 5:24); living and walking by the Spirit (εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν - Gl. 5:25); being a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις - Gl. 6:15); and others.³ One of his descriptions for salvation is *freedom*. It is significant that, although he applies other descriptions for salvation in Galatians, he chooses to give freedom great prominence. One could say it is his main soteriological metaphor in Galatians, applying it at this critical point of summary, conclusion and *exhortatio*. Just as significant is the fact that amongst Paul's letters it is only in Galatians that he gives this type of prominence to freedom as description of salvation.⁴ In Galatia it was obviously sparked by Paul's indignation with the situation that some Galatians were considering circumcision and, by doing this, giving law and its obligations a central position in their understanding of Christianity and their practice of faith in daily, concrete living. He viewed it as a threat to the very salvation that had been given to them by God in Christ.⁵

Tolmie draws attention to rhetorical techniques in Gl. 5:1 that place an almost excessive emphasis on freedom as metaphor for salvation.⁶ He mentions Paul's use of *repetition* when he uses the notion of freedom in Gl. 4:31 and repeats it twice in Gl. 5:1. This is enhanced by an immediately following *command* in the form of an opposite to freedom, namely slavery.⁷ He also uses *hyperbaton* by placing the notion of freedom more predominantly at the beginning of the sentence. He further uses *anastrophe* by beginning Gl. 5:1 with the last word of the previous sentence (Gl. 4:31). Once again, it is about the notion of freedom. He also uses *kyklos* by beginning and ending the same sentence with the notion of freedom.⁸ Thus, freedom in its multiple applications in Gl. 4:31-5:1, as well as its pivotal position in the letter's structure, is clearly elevated to being the primary metaphor for salvation in

¹ Betz, 1979, 256.

² Kümmel, 1973, 185.

³ Textual references are not done extensively. They merely serve as examples.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 150, writes that "the adoption as sons and the granting of freedom amount to the same."

⁵ Morris, 1996, 153.

⁶ Tolmie, 2004, 161.

⁷ Malan, 1992, 438.

⁸ Tolmie, 2004, 161.

Galatians. Life in Christ is a life in freedom and it has to be preserved from any form of slavery.

Freedom was something given by God in Christ. Only in Christ was this freedom possible. It was obtained by divine initiative and by Christ's putting into practice that which God willed. In the same vein, this obtained status was not to remain but a theory on freedom. It had to be put into practice by believers in as much as Christ had to put into practice that which God willed for the purpose of saving us. Indicative and imperative had to be enjoined in the believer's daily existence. Only by taking up the freedom Christ had obtained and by sharing in his act, could freedom really come to fruition.

In a Pauline sense, "to be free," means to participate in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.¹

If Paul had meant to say that Christ set us free for the purpose of setting us free, it would not only have been unnecessary tautology, but also nothing short of nonsensical. Would Christ have set us free for any other reason than to attain the objective of freedom?² Christ attained what He set out to do. The emphatic use of the dative of purpose only really makes sense if it is understood as an imperative to those who have been freed to live that freedom. In other words, if we were to paraphrase the sentence it could very well read: "Christ set us free with the intention that we exercise our freedom."

Betz makes the very relevant observation that Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit (Gl. 5:22-23) excludes any mention of freedom. Since it takes such a prominent position in the *exhortatio* it would be expected that he would mention it. He does not, because freedom lies at the heart of the fruit of the Spirit. The freedom believers were given in Christ, and which they experienced through the Spirit, is both the basis of the fruit of the Spirit and its result.³ We will be returning to this subject in greater detail in Ch. 6. Suffice it to say that when the Galatians experienced the Spirit of God in all his wonder (Gl. 3:1-5), it was not an experience unrelated to Christ's work of salvation. On the contrary, the Spirit was presented to them, and it can be accepted that they took it for granted, as nothing less than the Spirit of Christ (Paul refers to Him in Gl. 4:6 as the Spirit of God's Son). Furthermore, Paul depicts their experience of the reception of the Spirit in Gl. 3:1-2 very vividly ("before whose eyes") as a portrayal of Christ's crucifixion. Because of Christ's Spirit having been sent to them, they could partake in his redemptive act of liberation; that is, his crucifixion and resurrection. It was because of the Spirit's mission to them that they were able to confess what Paul himself does in Gl. 2:20 – "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Put differently: "For as many of you who have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Gl. 3:27).

¹ Betz, 1979, 256.

² Ridderbos, 1976¹, 186.

³ Betz, 1979, 256.

This is such a life changing experience that Paul also refers to the believer's new status as "new creation" (Gl. 6:15). In other words, he has been re-oriented to life. Because of this change he can no longer merely live life as before. Because he has been recreated he lives it differently. Through the Spirit's baptising of the believer into Christ and his salvation the believer is free from the slavery of the elements of this world in all forms.¹ Because of this freedom the believer can produce the fruit of the Spirit.

Why does Paul make these statements at the beginning of his *exhortatio*? It is highly likely that he wants to state a very important ethical point before discussing ethical specifics. Soteriologically speaking, the believers have been set free by Christ. They are no longer under all sorts of slavery, such as flesh, law, elements of the world, sin, unrighteousness, guilt, death and hopelessness. They had been freed! This is the indicative. But it does not end there! It is not only about soteriology. It is not only about how one comes to be saved and freed, namely in Christ. It is not only about having a new status in Christ. It is equally about how those who have been freed should live. They should live their lives in freedom. Their ethical choices have to be taken in freedom and should reflect in their maintenance of their freedom in Christ. Hays has emphasised the profundity of Christ's story as the seedbed from which Paul's exhortation stems.² He very convincingly motivates that the expression ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gl. 2:16) should not be translated as "if not through faith in Jesus Christ," (objective genitive) but as "if not by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ" (subjective genitive).³ However, although he acknowledges that Gl. 2:16 is difficult to decide on, he is correct in asserting that this expression and ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ in the same sentence cannot both be translated in an objective sense without one of them being redundant.⁴ Obviously, the intention is not to downplay the importance of the believer's acceptance of Jesus' salvation through faith. Of this there is clearly enough evidence in Galatians (Gl. 2:17-20). But, in Gl. 2:15-16 Paul is concerned with the ground for justification, not the instrument through which it is partaken in. Regarding these grounds he stresses that it is the subjective faithfulness of Christ and not the human works of law on which justification is founded. In as much as the faithfulness of Christ is the ground for the believer's soteriology, it is equally the basis from which his ethics follow. The faithfulness of Christ in the Christological narrative (Gl. 3-4) is at once the basis of salvation and the enactment of the life-pattern expected of those who are crucified with Him.⁵ In this way indicative and imperative are both wrapped up in Christ's

¹ Refer to my Ch. 4.

² Hays, 1983, 248.

³ Hays, 1983, 157-76. There is no unanimity on this subject. In further support of Hays, read Witherington, 1998¹, 178-82, where he refutes Dunn, 1990², 212 and 1993³, 138-9. Also Hooker, 1989, 321-41; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 87-9; B.W. Longenecker, 1997, 133. Also the earlier work of R.N. Longenecker, 1974, 146-7.

⁴ Hays, 1983, 175.

⁵ Hays, 1983, 248-9.

faithfulness.¹ The narrative sub-structure is the logical link between the parenetical section and the theological arguments of the central section.²

Christ's victory in the topical sequence has won freedom for humanity, but this freedom is neither an end in itself nor the end of the story: it is the necessary precondition which enables those who are redeemed to complete the story by carrying out their own mandate, by becoming active subjects who fulfil God's original purpose by loving one another.³

We conclude that the christological formula in Gl. 5:1 strongly emphasises the Christ event as the advent and decisive, divine act of liberation. He did this not merely to give believers the gift of freedom, but especially that they might actively live in Christian freedom. It is a life that can also be described as being in the Spirit and producing his fruit, as will be discussed in Ch. 6. The emphasis with which Paul expresses it enhances the notion that for Paul the freedom to which Christ set us free was no mean matter. It was not a mere spin-off from the Cross; neither was it a fringe benefit, as it were, to be applied when and as needed according to human discretion. It was salvation itself! It was the Gospel truthfully described! Not only had it to be protected, it had to be treasured and, above all, it had to be lived. Anything less than this would be a compromise rendering the Cross useless to man (Gl. 5:2-4). So dearly was it to be treasured and fervently lived that one would even bear the marks of Christ for doing it (Gl. 5:11; 6:12, 17).

5. THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPERATIVE: DO NOT SUBMIT TO SLAVERY!

On the verge of moving from Paul's soteriological to his ethical section, a few cautionary notes on hermeneutics are called for, although the full value of such a cautionary note might only be realised in the next chapter. There is a real danger of coming to a different ethical conclusion or application on christological freedom than Paul, because of preconceived positions having to be justified, or harmonised with Paul's in some way or another. The following are a few obvious problematic positions.

- *Problem 1.* The fear that Paul's compelling arguments against legalism, and therefore his objections to law, might lead to amoralism and libertinism. In other words, it is feared that the soteriological rejection of law, if followed through onto the field of ethics, would not only leave an ethical void, but lead to amoralism and libertinism, which obviously is not in tandem with the teaching of either Jesus or Paul. It will be argued that one should not regard anomism and libertinism as synonymous. Whilst libertinism implies freedom to do as one wishes, including amoralism and immorality, anomism need not at all lean towards amoralism. For instance, and it will be argued that Paul follows this line in Galatians, an anomistic ethic is one that is not conducted along nomistic lines. It finds its guidance from another source

¹ Hays, 1983, 261.

² Hays, 1983, 264.

³ Hays, 1983, 261.

than law. Therefore one should not necessarily fear the logical movement from an anomistic soteriology to an anomistic ethic.

- *Problem 2.* On the same plane as the first, is the notion that freedom be understood only as a soteriological concept. With regard to ethics freedom no longer holds. I hold that freedom involves more than merely freedom from law. When the broader picture of freedom from the flesh and sin is taken into account, together with the guidance of the Spirit in the new creation, freedom ceases to be a threat to morality.
- *Problem 3.* The fear that the removal of law in its totality from Christian ethics will cheapen faith. It is argued by some that law should be retained in some form in order to give substance to faith. The question is whether law is necessary for this? Paul rejects law as a soteriological addition to faith. There could be no synergism with regard to salvation. If salvation may not be understood in terms of synergism, why should ethics be comfortable with a synergistic effort between faith and law in some form?
- *Problem 4.* Paul's perceived positive view on law in Romans, as opposed to a negative view in Galatians, is a heavy-duty problem and presumably not totally unrelated to the above. Far too often it is accepted that Romans has priority over Galatians: be that because of development in Paul's thought and a softening in his approach from Galatians to Romans; a change of mind; or changed circumstances. For some reason, it seems that on the issue of law many scholars accept Romans' priority over Galatians. Paul's very clear reasoning and uncompromising stance in Galatians at a very critical time in the founding days of the Gentile church should not be blunted or softened under duress of the letter to the Romans. The Galatians did not have the "luxury" of the letters to the Romans and the Corinthians. One should not approach Galatians with a view to harmonise it with Romans. One should rather allow each letter to speak for itself in terms of the occasion it hoped to address.¹

This thesis will aim to lend Galatians the opportunity to speak for itself. Paul's perceived different reasoning in the other letters will be explained from this vantage point.

5.1. "Stand firm." Defining an imperative against its indicative

Gl. 5:1 expresses a profound sense of urgency. We noted Paul's enigmatic, but effective use of the dative in Gl. 5:1a. After having debated the fulfilment of God's

¹ I find it strange that so many scholars lend priority to Romans and then try to harmonise Galatians with it, whilst few even consider doing it the other way around. After all, if Paul wrote his letter on the eve of the Jerusalem council and with the express view of dealing with the issue of law, why should Romans dictate the outcome of a reading of Galatians?

promises to Abraham in the advent, cross and resurrection of Jesus, and that those who are of faith are of the free one (Gl. 4:21-31); and after concluding that they as believers were thus free (Gl. 4:31), Paul bursts out in a confession of Christ having come expressly to free the believers from the present evil age in order for them to be part of the new creation. In the same breath he adds: “Stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gl. 5:1b - *στήκετε οὖν καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῶ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε.*)

The use of οὖν (“therefore”) is extremely important. In Gl. 5:1a he stated the essence of the Christological-soteriological indicative in terms of freedom; in other words, that which Christ had done according to the promise and will of God. Now, because of this Christological-soteriological indicative, the onus was on the believers to react positively by standing firm in preserving that very freedom in their daily existence and not reverting in any way to a yoke of slavery of any kind (circumcision being the one at hand in Galatians).¹

The imperative *στήκετε* (“stand firm”) sums up the ethical consequences of the liberation through Christ as Paul had defined it in v1a. It should be understood as saying: “stand firmly in that freedom, and preserve that freedom.” If Christ has brought the Christian freedom, this freedom exists only if it is lived by those who have been enabled to exist in it.²

Betz states that Christian ethics has the task of preserving its freedom. This implies that Paul does not hold the Jewish notion of ethics, i.e. the prevention of transgression and fulfilment of Torah requirements. There is no longer a law. Christ is the end of law. Therefore, equally, there is no longer transgression against law.³ Paul is equally averse to the Hellenistic notion of ethics bent on the improvement of human raw material by way of training and the gradual mastering of certain virtues. What was needed could not be attained by human endeavour. Christ came in order to achieve it for the believer. This salvation and freedom obtained by Christ, has to be preserved by exercising it.⁴ One either stands firm (*στήκετε*) in one’s ascribed freedom or one allows oneself to be yoked into slavery (*ζυγῶ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε*) in daily ethical living. There is no other position.

What does Paul have in mind with *ζυγῶ δουλείας* (“yoke of slavery”)? Was it always seen as a burdensome yoke? Was Paul not re-interpreting a situation he himself in his pre-Christian life did not regard as a burden? Obviously, Paul does not share the positive experience of the yoke of *Torah* any longer. He even bundles *Torah* and *στοιχεῖα* together. The obvious reason is that he, after being realigned with God through faith in Jesus Christ, no longer defines the relationship with God in terms of *Torah*, but in terms of faith in Christ and the new-found freedom. Paul

¹ Bauer, 1979, 767-8, advises that “in freedom” should be added or implied with *στήκετε*. See also Grundmann, 1971, 646-53 stressing the profound sense of steadfastness, foundation and authority. The latter was appropriately associated with the law (649).

² Betz, 1979, 257.

³ Betz, 1979, 257; Gerhardsson, 1987, 16.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 257-8.

probably meant that since the advent of Christ *Torah* could no longer be viewed in any other way than as a yoke of slavery.

Betz notes that Paul had mainly two modes in mind in which this yoke of slavery could present itself. Firstly, the yoke of Torah with which he deals immediately following his remark (Gl. 5:2-12). Secondly, the corruption of the flesh with which he deals in Gl. 5:13-24. Betz mentions in passing that Paul intended to imply *στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* by his use of *πάλιν* (“again”). The Galatians could obviously not be subjected to the Torah *again*, because they had not been subjected to it at all in their pre-Christian days when they were enslaved by the *στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* (Gl. 4:1-10).¹ This seems correct. However, caution is called for. One should not think of flesh and law as two opposing entities, Torah being a yoke of slavery from the conservative right and *σάρξ* a yoke from the libertarian left, with freedom in Christ to be found in a balancing act between the two. In other words, in Christ you are free from the law, but don’t go overboard! Remember the moral laws. This would actually compromise Christian freedom dramatically.² It has been argued up to now that the primary threat to mankind as a whole is *σάρξ*. The present evil age (Gl. 1:4) is characterised by a life in the flesh – a life of dependence on man in his transitoriness, corruptibility and corruption. The *στοιχεῖα*, seen from a more positive angle,³ were largely a human way of dealing with *σάρξ* and creating some kind of order in life. Torah, on the other hand was God’s very special gift to Israel – albeit a temporary emergency measure – to deal with *σάρξ* till Christ came (Gl. 3:23-24).

Torah (obviously the *στοιχεῖα* in a positive sense too) would never deal successfully with *σάρξ* in all respects. Yes, Torah provided guidelines and remedies, but it would never change man’s heart to seek only God’s will. Christ would be the only one to deal effectively with *σάρξ*, indeed vanquishing it. Thus, when Paul deals with the threat to freedom from the side of flesh (Gl. 5:13-24), he actually deals with the fullness of the onslaught of the present evil age (or world) to which Paul confesses that he had died through being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:19-20). When dealing with the threat of freedom by Torah, he deals with a very specific manifestation of the threat by *σάρξ* after the advent of Christ and in the Christian community, but also as seen within Judaism. Because of the situation in Galatia, Paul was forced to give great prominence to Torah. This he also did effectively up to now (Gl. 2:15-4:31). Resorting to Torah would be nothing short of relying on a mechanism

¹ Betz, 1979, 258. Betz provides no motivation on Paul’s part for not dealing with the *στοιχεῖα*, but only with law and flesh. In terms of Betz’ choice it could probably be argued that the *στοιχεῖα* did not really pose a threat to the Galatians. The debate was not about *στοιχεῖα*, but about the Galatians wanting to observe law requirements to which Paul, in the course of the debate, refers as *στοιχεῖα*.

² This is definitely not Betz’ position. He could be described as a champion for Christian freedom as radically different from any other position on freedom (1979, 256-8). He would especially be opposed to any description of Christian freedom being defined primarily in terms of its position to Torah or flesh. Unfortunately there are other scholars who, for fear of a libertarian, amoral position, choose to redefine freedom in terms of Torah. It will be indicated that Dunn is of this school.

³ Obviously, Paul had a heavier emphasis on the negative aspects as discussed in Ch. 4.

that had been proven ineffective against flesh, and, in fact, had become a divisive and derogatory instrument in the hands of flesh. This would boil down to willingly being bound down under the yoke of slavery, which is characteristic of the present evil age and a reversion from being a new creation.

5.2. Reverting to slavery to law is absurd and fatal! (Gl.5: 2-12)

Once again, just as law is only the point of departure in dealing with a much bigger issue, namely *σάρξ*, circumcision is merely Paul's point of departure in dealing with the whole of law as a yoke of slavery from the *σάρξ* stable. Paul makes the connection between law and circumcision very clear in Gl. 5:3. In very forceful language he states:

"I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law" (μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι)

In keeping with his profound sense of urgency in Gl. 5:1, Paul uses the rhetoric usually associated with the making of oaths. Although Paul uses *μαρτύρομαι* sparingly, it is spread widely across the whole range of his correspondence.¹ He speaks with authority,² not as an apostle, but also as a former Pharisee of the rigid school. In line with this notion there is also the very real possibility of Paul alluding to revelation and divine disclosure.³ Obviously, there is the danger of illegitimate totality transfer, but given Paul's heavy emphasis on apocalyptic in Galatians, it is probably his intention. All things being equal, however one understands it, Paul's urgency (almost desperately so) is underlined.

Paul is exceedingly uncompromising with regard to circumcision, and implicitly, also with regard to law. He himself, having discussed the demise of law earlier on in Gl. 2:15-4:31 and now returning to the initial controversy on circumcision, makes the connection between circumcision and law quite clear in Gl. 5:3. Circumcision binds the circumcised to the whole law (*ὅλον τὸν νόμον*). There is no half measure. The one implied the other and both had become obsolete.

From his own ("Pharisaic") point of view Paul reminds the new "converts to Judaism" of what they are getting themselves into: that receiving circumcision makes sense only if they take up the yoke of the Torah seriously, i.e., observe all its requirements, in order to be acceptable to God at the Last Judgement. "Doing" the whole Torah, means doing every one of the requirements, because the transgression of even one may endanger the whole effort.⁴

¹ Rom. 10:2; 2 Cor. 8:3; Gl. 4:15 and Col. 4:13. In Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8; 1 Th. 2:5, 10 and Gl. 1:20 Paul uses *Θεὸς μάρτυς* ("God is my witness") or similar forms.

² Stählin, 1962, 115-43. Strathmann, 1967, 491, draws attention to the fact that Paul, as in the above cases, in addition to *μαρτυρέω/μάρτυς*, often calls God in as witness. This obviously enhances the notions of oath swearing and authority.

³ Coenen, 1978, 1040-3 stresses Paul's use of the word-group as very much in keeping with that of the LXX (especially in Ex., Lv., Nm. and 1 and 2 Chr.) with God revealing his will and expecting them to observe it. Equally, the LXX uses it as a legal term. He also stresses John's similar use of the terms (1044-7).

⁴ Betz, 1979, 261. K.G. Kuhn, 1968, 739, also emphasises that this would be Paul's position, given the fact that even though they were formerly Gentiles, even proselytised Jews were required to keep the whole Jewish Law. So also Esser, 1976, 444.

Dunn observes that it is highly unlikely that the agitators in Galatia required only circumcision and downplayed the necessity for further law-observance. He argues that such a position would hardly be thinkable for a society drenched in a “covenantal nomistic mind-set”. Within the policy of “gradualism” the proselyte would usually have complied with law-observance to such an extent that circumcision would be the last demand to be fulfilled towards full proselyte status. Circumcision was about accepting the whole Jewish way of life and its identity.¹ What can certainly be accepted is that it is impossible for Paul to ponder a position in which only part of the law is to be observed. Against the background of his indiscriminate use of the term “law” in Gl. 2:15-4:31, and his unspecified use of it in Gl. 5:3, there is reason enough to accept that Paul had the entire law in mind, inclusive of ethnic boundary markers, cultic requirements and moral laws.

Paul was so serious and uncompromising on the matter that he clearly stated that if a believer were to opt for circumcision Christ would no longer be of any benefit to that person (Gl. 5:2). He would be severed from Christ (κατηργήθητε ἀπο χριστοῦ - Gl. 5:4), which is described as Christ’s salvific work being rendered inoperative in favour of law.² Is this only Pauline rhetoric, or is it really the consequence of the opposition’s stance? Betz is correct in assuming that the opponents probably did not consider circumcision and other law-observance as apostasy. If that were the case it would boil down to reverting to Judaism, which was unthinkable.³ On the other hand, one should not play Paul’s words down as mere rhetoric. There is logic in his reasoning. Christians of Jewish decent could continue living a Jewish life-style, because by accepting Christ they had acknowledged that Judaism could not provide them with salvation. They would, should they opt for carrying on living according to that life-style, not jeopardise their faith, because they attached no salvific function to that life-style, even though it is characterised by law-observance. Obviously, this implies that it should not be regarded as obligatory, and that they were in no way to revert to an ethic of “works of law”. The Gentile’s position was different. By accepting Christ and then supplementing Him with a Jewish life-style implied that salvation in Christ and by grace was not sufficient. Such a viewpoint would render grace no longer to be grace, and Christ no longer the sole saviour of mankind.⁴ Either Christ is the only salvation, or He is absolutely not the Saviour. Blemishing salvation in Christ with any other entity would imply severance and apostasy, even though unintentional and well meant.

¹ Dunn, 1993², 266-7. Although Dunn, more than is accepted in this thesis, stresses Jewish identity and law as identity marker as main cause of division between Jewish and Gentile Christians, at issue here is the fact that he supports the notion that in circumcision the whole of law is implied.

² Delling, 1964¹, 453.

³ This is obviously beyond consideration. It would imply that the opponents, accepting that they were Jewish Christians, would not have made any significant move from Judaism. At the most, this would diminish Christ to merely (one) of their most revered rabbi(s).

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 226; 1964, 245-67; also Betz, 1979, 261.

The Judaizers must have assured the Galatians that in accepting supervision for their lives from the prescriptions of the Mosaic law they were not forsaking Christ or renouncing grace, but rather were completing their commitment to both. Paul, however, tells them just the opposite: commitment to Christ and commitment to prescriptions to righteousness, whether that righteousness is understood in forensic terms (i.e., “justification”) or ethical terms (i.e., “lifestyle” and expression), are mutually exclusive; experientially, the one destroys the other.¹

Consequently, to make circumcision necessary in addition, was so to shift the focus from Christ as to abandon that solid foundation, so to modify the unconditional character of the grace expressed in the gospel, as to nullify the benefit of Christ completely.²

It would be about making a drastic choice between law and faith (Gl. 5:6). It would hinder him from “obeying the truth” (Gl. 5:7). He would be deflecting to a belief that was not “from him who calls you” (Gl. 5:8), but from a dangerous influence (Gl. 5:9). Such a person would be under God’s judgement (Gl. 5:10), because of the removal of the cross’ σκάνδαλον (Gl. 5:11).

From a structural point of view, one should see “stand firm” (στήκετε - Gl. 5:1) in juxtaposition to “they who unsettle you” (ἀναστατώω - Gl. 5:12a), involving the whole matter of circumcision and law-observance as detrimental to and destructive of faith and the gospel. In his fiery encouragement and exhortation of the Galatians to stand firm, he equally heavy-handedly casts judgement on those who advocate circumcision as unsettling the Galatians’ firm position in Christ. In fact, he adds that he wishes they would mutilate themselves (Gl. 5:12b). Most modern scholars understand Paul as having castration in mind. Obviously, Paul did not mean this literally. However, should it be understood as a rhetorical mechanism to ridicule and discredit the opponents,³ or as a curse? We cannot be sure. What is certain is that Paul is disgusted and disturbed about the opponents’ position. Wrapping up his arguments, he does not withhold himself from being scathing. For Paul this was no trivial matter. The truth of the gospel and the Galatians’ salvation depended on the position they took on circumcision and law.

Could “castration” be more significant than it seems? Does he mean to reflect the end result of circumcision and a continued life under law as fruitless? Could he even be reflecting the absurdity of considering this position? I am of the opinion that this is the direction in which to look. Emasculation was viewed extremely negatively in Judaism, being regarded as an offence against God, the covenant and true worship.⁴ In line with this position, Paul being a former Pharisee probably had a negative perception of emasculation. He climaxes his argument by logically moving from circumcision to castration. Just as he earlier stated that circumcision lead to having to stick to all of the Torah, he now says that if one wanted to go all the way on this track, one might as well castrate oneself. The result would be the same as in the

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 228.

² Dunn, 1993², 265. It must be interjected at this point though, that Dunn lays heavier emphasis on law as identity marker than this thesis is willing to accept. It will, however receive due attention in due course.

³ Betz, 1979, 270, refers to these words of Paul as a “bloody joke” and sarcasm. This is doubtful. Paul was all but in a mood for joking, not even in a crude way.

⁴ Stählin, 1965, 854.

case of law-observance. One would fall from grace. God abhors emasculation¹ as much as the practice of people cutting themselves from Christ and grace by seeking extra help from law-observance. Castration would be a radical surpassing of circumcision, leading to legalism (in whatever varying degree) contradicting the true meaning of law, since it incurs the verdict of Dt. 23:2. This is the very point that Paul wished to make. His opponents were in conflict with the will of God.² Their efforts would be fruitless in terms of doing God's will. Circumcision is as unable to provide spiritual blessing as castration is to provide the physical fruit of progeny. As castration leads to physical fruitlessness, circumcision leads to spiritual fruitlessness. In this sense there might even be an antithetical connection between the fruitlessness of circumcision and the fruitfulness of a life in the Spirit. Circumcision leads to severance from Christ and spiritual barrenness, whilst a life of being crucified with Christ, and therefore living in the Spirit, leads to the bearing of the fruit of the Spirit. Scholars like Ramsay rejected translations referring to castration or emasculation on the grounds that Paul would not have used such foul language.³

Yet as insulting and disgusting as it may seem, Paul's comment should be understood as a sarcastic way of characterizing the Judaizers and his attitude towards them...Indeed it is the crudest and rudest of all Paul's extant statements, which his amanuensis did not try to tone down...Underlying the sarcasm and crudity of the comment, however, is Paul's understanding of circumcision as purely a physical act without religious significance...⁴

6. CONCLUSION: FREEDOM AS A TOTALLY NEW BALL GAME!

We started off with a structural orientation emphasising the tremendous importance of the largely parenetical Gl. 5:1-6:17. We found it would be utterly erroneous to regard the autobiographical (Gl. 1:11-2:21) and theological arguments (Gl. 3:1-4:31) as in disjunction to the ethical section (Gl. 5:1-6:17). Paul wrote one letter with one overall argument.

i) *Gl. 5:1-12 pivotal in Paul's movement from theology to ethics of freedom*

There can be no integrity in Paul's theological arguments if they do not translate into ethics. Equally, ethics without a theological foundation is without motivation and direction. Paul is renowned for never separating the theological indicative from its ethical imperative. His ethic is the practical concretising of the existentially experienced salvation through faith in Christ. Paul deals with one subject throughout the letter: the believer's deliverance by Christ from the present evil age, or as he formulates it in Gl. 5:1, his freedom in Christ, and how it relates to his daily living or ethos. The parenetical section is not an addendum aimed at a libertinistic threat. It is the culmination and climax of his argument.

¹ That is, in terms of Judaism.

² Stählin, 1965, 854-5.

³ Ramsay, 1900, 438-40.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 234. Morris, 1996, 162 also warns against softening the expression.

It was also determined that Gl. 5:1-12 is a transitional section concluding the preceding theological arguments, but also introducing the ethical section proper (Gl. 5:13-6:10), following onto the former. Because Gl. 5:1 is so dominant in this section, it stresses the pivotal role of Gl. 5:1 in the argument as a whole. Paul summarises the whole soteriology of the theological section in the notion of freedom. Equally important, he also characterises the accompanying ethic as one of freedom. Christ set the believer free in order that he should be free, and obviously, that he should live freely. This notion of an ethic born from freedom is enhanced by Paul's return to his theological arguments in Gl. 6:11-17, where he reiterates the conclusions of Gl. 5:1-12. He stresses that ethics is not about law (Gl. 5:3, 6; 6:13a, 15), but about allegiance to the cross (Gl. 5:11; 6:12), faith working through love (Gl. 5:6) and being a new creation (Gl. 6:15). In other words, his ethic is enveloped in the christological-soteriological indicative. Freedom in Christ is as essential to ethics as it is to soteriology. Paul's movement from the indicative of deliverance from the present evil age to the indicative of the freedom of the new creation implies the imperative of an ethic of freedom, in opposition to one of bondage and slavery.

ii) *Freedom to move from slavery to the present evil age to slavery of Christ*

We then moved on to a brief discussion of the metaphor of slavery, determining that Paul used it both negatively and positively. Negatively speaking, he used the metaphor to illustrate man's bondage in the present evil age. Man's corruption had led to his being dominated by flesh to such an extent that he could only be freed from this domination from outside his being, indeed, by divine intervention. It was so intense that even Yahweh's gift of *Torah* could not help man to fulfil the obligation to love the neighbour. In fact, the *Torah* itself became a yoke of slavery in flesh's hands. Another aspect emerges from the negative use of slavery. Israel, because of the elaborate expansions on law, was robbed of an accompanying acceptance of responsibility for their ethical choices. It could simply be read from the codices. The ordinary Jew need not have taken responsibility for determining God's will in a given situation. He had merely to take the necessary laws into account and obey them. Lastly, because law emphasised dedicated Jews' plight before Yahweh, it was experienced as a yoke or burden. Paul refers to this burden as a yoke of slavery in order to emphasise the curse of living under law.

Positively, Paul uses the term to indicate the very special relationship between himself and God, referring to himself as a *slave of Christ* (Gl. 1:10). He also uses it in reference to believers in their relationships to one another. He admonishes them to be slaves of one another in loving service (Gl. 5:13). Service to God and neighbour was part and parcel of being part of the new aeon. It was not a matter of option. Neither was it a matter of involuntary service. It was about a fulfilling relationship in which the Owner took to the slave like an own son (Gl. 4:4-7) and the latter felt privileged to serve.

Against this background, freedom should not be understood as unbridled freedom of choice. It is about being free from the present evil age with flesh and law as en-

slavers, to freely serve a new Owner. We have argued that freedom is another description for salvation and the believer's newfound status in life.

iii) *Freedom: delivered from the present evil age to live as new creation*

Paul emphasises that salvation is about being free from the present evil age and its enslaving powers through Christ Jesus. He emphasises that it is not through law, but through faith in Christ and by the quickening of the Spirit. The present evil age with the power of the flesh has lost its hold on the believer. The believer is now under the guidance and enablement of the Spirit and able to live to God's glory.

In as much as the believer was delivered from the present evil age without the aid of law, but by faith in Jesus Christ and through the Spirit, his life as a believer is also lived without law and through the Spirit. The believer is a new creation. The Spirit lives in him and quickens his heart to seek and do the will of God. The believer has been changed by the new relationship. No longer being bound by flesh he can do the will of God as conveyed by the Spirit.

In conclusion, then, soteriologically speaking, salvation is equal to freedom in Christ. Ethically speaking, freedom in Christ is equal to walking in step with the Spirit. For this purpose Christ came, according to God's will, and therefore the Christian should live in this freedom through the Spirit.

CHAPTER 6

NEW CREATION'S NEW ETHIC: WALK BY THE SPIRIT!

Gl. 5:13-6:10 is a much debated section. Possibly most of the discomfort with this section and many of the proposed intricate solutions are born from a hermeneutical distortion. In Ch. 1 it was illustrated that the superimposition of ancient rhetorical models onto Galatians can complicate the reading of Gl. 5:13-6:10 as an integral part of Paul's entire argument. In Ch. 5 the point was made that many approach Galatians via Romans' seemingly more positive stance on law, and immediately work from the assumption that Paul only rejected part of the law, or a certain attitude towards law, but that he still regarded law very much as part of Christian life. A distinction is often made between law's soteriological and ethical functions. Some argue that the soteriological function of law has been abolished, but – given some distinctions and exclusions – not the ethical function. The issue is sometimes clouded by those who do not define what they mean by the validity of law, giving the impression that by law they actually mean morality or high Christian morals, or some form of OT law as a canon within a canon. I contend that, although Paul advocated and pursued high Christian morals, he did not equate law and morality, and did not support the introduction of a reduced or adapted OT canonical law.

One will be forgiven for deducing from the way freedom is dealt with in much of Christian scholarship, fellowship and daily societal interaction that, although it has been obtained in Christ, one dare not practice it for fear of succumbing to flesh and not doing God's will. In this respect Gl. 5:13 is sometimes wrongfully quoted. More often than not it leads to Christians reverting to some form of external code, usually historically chiselled in stone, to replace Mosaic law with an equally expanded list of do's and don'ts. It must be reiterated that there is much significance in the fact that Paul introduces his ethical section proper with the reminder that believers are called to freedom (Gl. 5:13).¹ It is like a banner spread over his exhortative section: "Remember your freedom! Practice it!"

Paul was not caught unawares by the implications of his argument against law, reaching Gl. 5:12 suddenly realising the believer's ethical flank had been left open to the threat of *σάρξ*, and then forced to add Gl. 5:13-6:10 on second thoughts as a cautionary against flesh. His letter is an integral unit in which *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα* fulfil a primary role throughout his arguments. We have determined that Paul was presented with a problem concerning circumcision and dietary and calendar laws. To his mind the implementation of any form of law threatened a much bigger picture with ruin. He was concerned that the Galatians failed to understand the *grandeur of the new dispensation* or profundity of the *radical change* brought about to the world and lives of believers by the Christ event. Therefore, as early as his introduction, Paul makes two extremely significant remarks. *Firstly*, Christ's resurrection introduced the arrival of the long awaited apocalyptic

¹ Jones, 1987, 102.

new aeon – the time of the fulfilment of God's promises. Israel's plight would be answered with God's solution: the time when He would engrave his will in their hearts (Jr. 31:33-34; Ezk. 36:24-32) and pour his Spirit on them (Jl. 2:28-29). *Secondly*, his soteriological mission amounted to his giving of Himself "to deliver us (ὅπως ἐξέλθῃται ἡμᾶς) from the present evil age." He portrays Christ's advent as the hinge opening the door from one aeon ("present evil age" of plight) to the next, the age of salvation (καλὴ κτίσις - Gl. 6:15).

Soteriology in Galatians is initially, and this sets the tone, portrayed as something more profound than only divine justification (Gl. 3:11) or redemption from the curse of law (Gl. 3:13). It is about deliverance from an age dominated by sin as a supra-human force, influencing man to act against God's will, even to the point of slavery. It even proved law ineffective. In fact, law became slave to flesh. Paul wanted them to understand that a totally new situation had arrived. Salvation could not be obtained by law observance – neither legalistically, nor synergistically – but by being crucified with Christ and having a new life in Him (Gl. 2:19-20). Equally, ethics in the new dispensation could not be defined in terms of law. The immediate question Paul could expect in reaction to his rejection of law as ethical standard was probably something to the effect: "So, if law has been done away with, how are we to be guided morally in this new aeon?" Paul replied by implicitly acknowledging that, although *σάρξ* had been dealt with in Christ crucified and belonged to a bygone era, that era, although replaced in his advent, had not yet been displaced and was identifiable in the *works of the flesh* (Gl. 5:19-21). Its sphere of influence was still real. However, in Christ it could now be withstood and life according to the Spirit could be chosen.

Paul's ethics is solidly based on his theology and, especially in Galatians, his soteriology. No longer is the moral life of a believer determined by law, but by being in Christ and walking in the Spirit whose fruit he bears. No longer is his morality measured by an external code, but by whether it portrays the loving service Christ portrayed through his cross.¹ The restraints and limitations of law make way for a creative ethic guided by the Spirit. Believers are given scope and responsibility to find their ethical way characterised by love, guided by the Spirit, and assisted by the community of faith, between the theological beacons presented in Gl. 1:4 (*deliverance* from the present evil age), Gl. 2:20 (*crucifixion* with Christ), Gl. 5:1 (*freedom in Christ*), and Gl. 6:15 (*new creation*).

1. CALLED TO FREEDOM, BUT NOT OF THE FLESHLY KIND

1.1. Flesh and law are not opposites

Paul, as we have seen in Part II, does not contrast flesh (*σάρξ*) and law (*νόμος*). In fact, it was argued that law, despite Yahweh's intentions, is actually employed by flesh. They are not in opposition, but on the same side: bed

¹ Niederwimmer, 1966, 196, emphasises that the believer is not partially free from sin and law, but fully so.

mates as it were! All things being equal, in Gl. 5:13-6:10 Paul portrays these two as the common enemy of the Spirit. This is emphasised for two reasons.

Firstly, the reader of Galatians should be wary of thinking in terms of two groups in opposition to Paul's gospel. If this was the case and Paul was addressing the two positions in chronological order, it would be in direct conflict with the close relation he draws between the two. One needs mention only Gl. 4:21-31 where Paul explicitly aligns being *under law* (ὕπὸ νόμον - Gl. 4:21) with being born *according to flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα - Gl. 4:23, 29) and *in slavery* (Gl. 4:22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31). Equally, he aligns the three in direct opposition to being born *according to the Spirit* (κατὰ πνεῦμα - Gl. 4:29), *through promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας - Gl. 4:23, 28) and *in freedom* (Gl. 4:22, 23, 26, 30, 31). The same can be said of Gl. 5:16-17 where Spirit and flesh are opposed, and Gl. 5:18, immediately following, where Spirit and law are opposed. In the latter case Paul states: "But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law." The very reason for their not being under law was that they were no longer under flesh's slavery, due to the Spirit by whom they now walked.

Secondly, if one were to assume that in Gl. 5 Paul turns away from law to address the flesh, whether there was an onslaught from a different party, or whether Paul feared the Galatians would allow the moral pendulum to swing from the ultra-right position of law-observance, through the so-called point of perfect equilibrium to the ultra-left amoral position, one would be in danger of considerably weakening Paul's argumentative section (Gl. 1:11-4:31). In the argumentative section he refuted law-observance. He had died to the law by being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:19-20). Christ came to redeem those under the law (Gl. 3:13). He came to deliver us from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4). Law had come 430 years after faith and only for the interim period up to the advent of Christ (Gl. 3:15-20). With the advent of Christ and his Spirit the new age of freedom had dawned on believers (Gl. 5:1). If Gl. 5:13-6:10 were to be read as a new theme, unconnected or loosely connected to the foregoing, one could get the impression that in the absence of law a new enemy, flesh, had come onto the scene. By implication, the reintroduction of a law or statute or two would help against any licentiousness under duress of the flesh. This is tantamount to Paul advocating an ethical position around the point of equilibrium between law-observance and freedom. This would actually place freedom itself in the balance and under threat of not being lived for fear of sinning.

Gl. 5:13-6:10 is not a cautionary note against living one's freedom in Christ. To the contrary, Paul refers to it as a vocation (Gl. 5:13). Strictly speaking, it is not a warning against opening one's flanks for flesh to freely lure one into licentiousness. It is primarily concerned with introducing the Spirit as the One enabling believers to live freely. It is about the role of the Spirit in Christians' lives. It is not about filling a void left by law's abolition. In any case, there was a lack of evidence that law was at all successful in dealing with the self-same flesh before or after the Christ event. It was positively about how those in Christ, with the Spirit in their hearts (Gl. 4:6), were to deal with the now crucified flesh.

In short, the flesh–law alignment must not be severed, least of all in the ethical section. After stating: “For freedom Christ set us free. Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gl. 5:1), he elaborates on how to do this (Gl. 5:13-24). One stands firm in Christological freedom by walking according to the Spirit (Gl. 5:16) and producing his fruit, not by reintroducing law.¹

1.2. Called to freedom

After briefly digressing (Gl. 5:2-12), Paul continues with the freedom theme in Gl. 5:13.² With a little imagination, one could visualise the multi-valenced, enslaving *present evil age* occupying the stage till the dawning of the advent of Christ and his Spirit. Christ dealt with the old age in the fullness of time, replacing it with new creation. Paul argued this at length in his argumentative section. In Gl. 5:1 he bursts onto the stage announcing that freedom in Christ now fills centre-stage. In Gl. 5:2-12, knowing there were Judaisers encoring law to reappear on stage to play some part on the stage of new creation in conjunction with freedom, he chidingly turns to the audience. There is only place for Christian freedom on stage. Re-calling the past would be tantamount to rejecting the new player on the stage. It would be severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4). In terms of salvation and ethics it would be useless, equal to mere castration (Gl. 5:12). It would reintroduce hopelessness (Gl. 5:5) and render the cross futile (Gl. 5:11). He once again focuses the audience’s attention on freedom (Gl. 5:13).

The second time around is quite similar to the first, but also markedly different. It is *similar* in mood and intention and equally indicative of freedom as soteriological and ethical sum total of God’s intention with the Christ event – freedom in Christ. It was not merely a by-product of the Christ event. It was his purpose that man be free in Christ. It is exactly this purpose that is again accentuated by his use of *καλεῖν*. In Gl. 1:6 he refers to God as the one by whose initiative they had come to faith in Christ as “him who called you” (τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς).³ This is reiterated in Gl. 5:8 (τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς). With regard to his own coming to faith and receiving his calling to preach to the Gentiles (Gl. 1:15),⁴ he also refers to God as “he who...had called me” (καλέσας). Paul undoubtedly regards the believer’s coming to faith as God’s initiative and vocation for him.⁵ Equally, when he refers to freedom as something to which the believer is called, and without specifying when it happens, one must assume that it is the very same thing described from a different perspective. Freedom is not an optional extra following on faith. Not only is it part and parcel of the believer’s coming to and living in faith, it is the sum of salvation. Freedom in Christ summarises the whole soteriology. So, once again Paul empha-

¹ Loubser, 1994, 169.

² Betz, 1979, 272; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 238-9, correctly indicate that one should not regard γὰρ as connecting Gl. 5:13 with the preceding verses, but rather with the theme of freedom introduced in Gl. 5:1.

³ Morris, 1996, 163-4.

⁴ Refer back to §4.1.1. and §4.1.2. in Ch. 2.

⁵ Coenen, 1975, 275-6; Schmidt, 1965, 489.

sises freedom as a purpose for the Christian.¹ It is an indicative that must be translated into an imperative and concretised in as much as faith answers to God's call to salvation in Christ. Freedom is *Gabe und Aufgabe*, a gift and a responsibility.

God did not take them out of their pre-Christian bondage, of whatever sort it was, simply to entangle them in another sort of bondage. It matters a great deal to Paul that Christians are freed people. He is not saying that a certain measure of liberty was grudgingly accorded believers. He is saying that freedom is of the essence of being Christian; it is the fundamental basis of all Christian living...²

For all its similarities, it also *differs* from the first exclamation on freedom (Gl. 5:1). *Firstly*, Paul's arguments up to Gl. 4:31 were heavily painted in terms of circumcision and law, taking his departure from the point at which the debate presented itself. This is confirmed by his quick, wrapping-up remarks on law and circumcision in Gl. 5:2-12, just after presenting the believer as free in Christ (Gl. 5:1). But, as we have argued in Ch. 5, Gl. 5:1-12 is transitional, summarising the argument up to there, as well as introducing Gl. 5:13-6:10. The latter is nothing less than an application of freedom from the flesh, since he had now elaborately dealt with freedom from the law. Bear in mind that Paul introduced the letter with the notion of deliverance from the present evil age (Gl. 1:4) dominated by slavery under sin and flesh. This was aggravated by flesh's *secundi*, i.e. law and the elements of the world. When Paul returns to the believer's status of and call to freedom he is not addressing a new enemy from the left as opposed to law as a threat from the right. He is merely returning to the root of man's problem, his being a slave to flesh. He leads the reader past the immediate danger of being re-enslaved to law, to the more fundamental danger, inclusive of the immediate one, of being re-enslaved by flesh. Law was no longer applicable. Believers were no longer and could no longer be slaves to it. As an entity and way of thinking and doing it had become irrelevant.

The problem was, sin and flesh had not stopped operations. Thus, Paul's focus turns to flesh, not as a new threat in the absence of law, but as the actual threat even in the time when law was applicable.³ In fact, turning to flesh he turns to that which "forced"⁴ Yahweh's hand to introduce law in the first place. It is interesting that, with the exception of two references to law (Gl. 5:14, 23) the concepts Paul employs were used throughout the Hellenistic world and in most religions and philosophies. Obviously the meanings and conceptual frameworks were not identical, but the terminology provided his readers with a broader horizon than the strictly Jewish concepts of the opponents. Equally interesting, this is especially true of Paul's list of virtues. I am not arguing that they were strictly Hellenistic or that they were of Hellenistic origin; certainly not! What

¹ Bruce, 1982¹, 240.

² Morris, 1996, 164.

³ One is reminded of the remarks by Pretorius, 1992, 443: "[W]hereas the main antithesis developed in the first part of Galatians (Chs 1-4) is that between law and Spirit, the other big antithesis, in the second part of Galatians (Chs 5-6) is that between flesh and Spirit. Though the flesh controversy is already heralded in the first part (3:3) and the law controversy still echoes in the second part (5:14, 18, 23)."

⁴ It is placed in inverted commas, because Yahweh cannot be forced to do anything. It was his love for sinners and their inability to serve Him properly that created the urge in Him to bless man with the law in the OT.

is undeniable, however, is that these terms were, unlike Torah, not strictly Jewish so that a wider audience could identify with it. It seems reasonable, especially if we consider the fact that Paul was trying to reframe the Galatians' symbolic universe, as argued in my Ch. 2, that Paul, at this point of parenthesis, broke through the old mould and started forming a new way of thinking.

Secondly, Paul's exclamation on freedom in Gl. 5:1 was immediately followed by an exhortation to stand firm in that freedom and not to submit again to a yoke of slavery. Slavery was the negative characteristic of the old age under domination of sin and flesh. Christ had dealt with it and it was not to be revived. On the other hand, in Gl. 5:13, after reaffirming the believer's freedom as a vocation and purpose in life, Paul calls on them to be slaves to one another in love. He uses the very same metaphor to make two diametrically different points. In the first case he warns against the yoke of slavery from the side of the present evil age. The context is that from which man had been freed and which formerly deprived him of life. In the second case he turns away from that to which they were formerly enslaved and from which they had been freed to that with a view to which they were freed. They had been set free to love and serve one another. Paul touched on this subject in the previous section as well (Gl. 5:6). The one is about having no life at all, and the other is about experiencing life in the giving and receiving of loving service.¹

The freedom that Christians have been called to is new life in Christ: a life of selfless and other-directedness, which automatically places them at the disposal of others. A community of Christians, therefore, is ideally made up of persons "enslaved" to each other, but even if some relationships are not fully reciprocal the attitude should be maintained.²

It should be clear that Gl. 5:1-12, being a transitional section, is more focused on the believer's freedom from multiform slavery and only touches on love as its goal (Gl. 5:6). Gl. 5:13-24 is focused on that towards which the believer has been freed, employing the metaphor of flesh only to define more clearly the goal to which he is called. Thus, in Gl. 5:13-24 Paul moves to ethically more positive terrain, defining how Christian ethics works in the paradigm of freedom.³ It is also significant that Paul does not at this crucial point warn the Galatians against "lawlessness". He specifically speaks of "opportunity for the flesh." There might be a hint behind this use, namely that law is no longer in the picture – not even when speaking of sin. Not even sin is any longer defined by law! Everything boils down to the flesh-Spirit opposition.⁴

¹ Carter, 1997, 62, is quite right, remarking that the reciprocity involved in "become slaves to one another" should not compromise the radicalism of being a slave to others, as if the lack of reciprocity on the other party's side makes it less obligatory upon the believer to serve that party. I do, however disagree with her on her criticism of Betz, 1979, 274. She suggests that Betz emphasises the reciprocity at the cost of unblemished service. My observation is that Betz emphasises reciprocity in contrast to the slavery of the former state before the Christ event. He does not do it with a view to adding a qualification as to how far that slavery should go in the sight of adverse relations. In fact, he writes: "Love is voluntary and reciprocal, but it involves commitments to be maintained even under difficult and strained circumstances."

² Carter, 1997, 63.

³ Jones, 1987, 102f.

⁴ Read Fee, 1994¹, 205-6.

1.3. Flesh has been crucified, remember!

In our current section (Gl. 5:13-24) a few interesting observations relating to structure can be made (*fig. 6.1*). The main subject matter and theme of the section is in Gl. 5:13a (“You were called to freedom, brothers!”), followed by the call on believers in Gl. 5:13b (B) not to use freedom as an *opportunity for the flesh*. It is revisited in Gl. 5:24 (*B) stating: “those who belong to Christ Jesus have *crucified the flesh* with its passions and desires.” Read as a chiasmus revolving around flesh, these two seem to say that believers should not fear even the possibility of flesh leading them into licentious freedom, as if flesh were on a par with the Spirit. In their belonging to Christ and being crucified with Him, flesh had also been crucified. In fact, Paul emphasises flesh’s impotence, adding it had been crucified “with its passions and desires” (Gl. 5:24). He frames the ethical Spirit-flesh dualism and the call to loving service with flesh’s defeat by Christ’s cross. The believer is not dealing with two equals. Flesh has already been crucified.

But, is Paul not being naive? Did he regard flesh as inoperative in Christians? Evidently not! In the centre of this chiasmus (Gl. 5:17) he clearly states flesh and Spirit’s opposition, speaking in a much personified way of flesh and Spirit desiring the opposite of each other and preventing believers from doing what they want. Clearly, flesh desires to frustrate the believer ethically. There is always the danger of succumbing to its allure. However, he follows by placing a positive frame around this picture of flesh and Spirit’s opposition, calling on believers in Gl. 5:16 (E₁ and E₂) to walk by the Spirit and not to gratify flesh’s desires. With $\Lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \delta\epsilon$ he indicates the absolute importance of the following statement.¹ At the other end of the frame (Gl. 5:18- *E₁ and *E₂) he restates the notion, although differently. He replaces the desires of the flesh (E₂) with being under law (*E₂). Clearly, he underlines the alignment of flesh and law, not as opponents of each other, but as allies in opposition to the Spirit. But E₁ and *E₁ are more important. Firstly, he calls on them to “walk by the Spirit” ($\pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \pi\epsilon\rho\iota\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon$), an imperative defining the Christian way of life.² Gl. 5:18 (*E₁), although on the same topic, has a slightly different angle, reading: “But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.” The use of the connectors $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\ \delta\grave{\epsilon}$ to introduce the conditional clause is significant. Moule states that if the *protasis* is a present condition in the indicative mood, as in this case, it refers to a matter of certainty,³ an existing condition. Paul is *not* saying *if they were to be led* by the Spirit they would not be under law, but actually, *because they are led* by the Spirit, they are not under law. Thus, in E₁ he calls on them to live according to the status they already have according to *E₁. The sum effect of this frame is to state, al-

¹ Betz, 1979, 277.

² Betz, 1979, 277.

³ Moule, 1953, 150. In the case of a subjunctive mood it would point to a matter of uncertainty or hypothesis.

though there is conflict between flesh and Spirit, with no need to be naïve about it, that the secret to withstanding flesh is to be led by the Spirit.

Immediately around this frame holding the secret to Christian living, Paul places another, i.e. Gl. 5:15 (D) and Gl. 5: 19-21 (*D₁, *D₂, *D₃ and *D₄). He parallels the Galatians' current in-fighting (Gl. 5:15) with the works of flesh (Gl. 5:19-21), in absolute contrast to a life according to the Spirit. Immediately around this frame is another. In opposition to a life without love and according to flesh, he emphasises the sought after life of love. Gl. 5:13c-14 (C₁ and C₂) is explicit about this. Parallel to this runs the *fruit of the Spirit* in Gl. 5:22-23 (*C₃, *C₂ and *C₁). Love being the principal element of the *fruit of the Spirit*, it is quite feasible to regard these verses as parallels. The diagrams below might be helpful.

13a	A	*Υμεις γὰρ ἐπ' ἔλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε, ἀδελφοί·
13b	B	μόνον μὴ τὴν ἔλευθερίαν εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῆ σαρκί,
13c	C ₁	ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις.
14	C ₂	ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπληρωται, ἐν τῷ * Αγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν."
15	D	εἰ δὲ ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε, βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε.
16	E ₁	λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε
	E ₂	καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελήσητε.
17	F ₁	ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός·
	F ₂	ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται, ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε.
18	*E ₁	εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε,
	*E ₂	οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον.
19a	*D ₁	φανερὰ δέ ἐστιν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός,
19b	*D ₂	ἄτινά ἐστιν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια, εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία,
21a		ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθείαι, διχοστασίαι, αἰρέσεις, φθόνοι, μέθαι, κῶμοι, καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις,
21b	*D ₃	ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν καθὼς προεῖπον
	*D ₄	ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν.
22a	*C ₁	Ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός ἐστιν
22b-3a	*C ₂	ἀγάπη, χαρὰ, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις, πραύτης, ἐγκράτεια
23b	*C ₃	κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος.
24	*B	οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ] τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.

Fig. 6.1.

13a. You were called to freedom

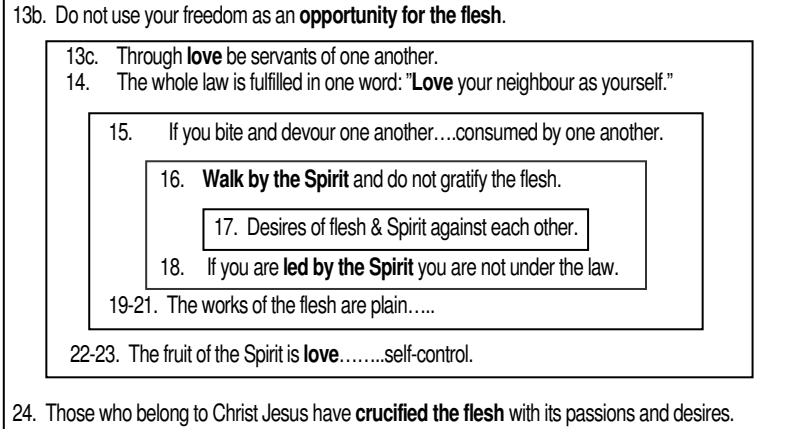


Fig. 6.2.

In sum, Paul accepts that flesh and Spirit are in actual fact in conflict with each other. Believers were not to live in a fool's paradise. They were already free and delivered from the present evil age, but the present evil age had not yet been removed from the world in which they lived. It was, therefore, a matter of waiting in hope of righteousness (Gl. 5:5). The time of reaping (Gl. 6:7-9) had not yet come. However, to succumb to flesh was totally unnecessary and unwarranted, because it had been crucified and the Spirit had been given for the believer to walk by.

He acknowledges flesh's desire to frustrate the believer. Vastly important though, is that it no longer has the dominant role it used to have in the believer's pre-Christian life. It is also in no way on a par with the Spirit. The believer is no longer helplessly exposed to flesh. Now that he belongs to Christ, not only has flesh been crucified (Gl. 5:24), but the Spirit has become the major *Persona* and guiding influence in his/her life. The new life in Christ is portrayed as one that began with the Spirit who worked miraculously in their lives (Gl. 3:3-5). The Spirit of the Son lives in believers. Through Him they call to God: "ἄββα ὁ πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6). Through Him they came to have a new life, and through his guidance they live this life (Gl. 5:25).

One should not think of Gl. 5:13-24 as reflecting an ethical battle between two equals for the winning over of a helpless person, within the believer. Rather, it reflects the responsibility of the believer not to do as flesh desires, because he actually has no need to do so. One must guard against thinking in terms of the battle between Spirit and flesh as one "which inevitably results in flesh frustrating the Spirit-inspired wishes of the believer."¹ Neither are they in stalemate with regard to

¹ Barclay, 1988, 113.

each other.¹ I agree with Barclay that Gl. 5:17, referring to the Spirit-flesh conflict as “to prevent you from doing as you wish” (ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε), does not mean that the believer is a pawn in the hands of two opposing and imposing entities. Rather, it stresses the believer’s responsibility to associate freely with the Spirit and not to be dominated by flesh.²

Thus our study of ‘flesh’ and ‘Spirit’ takes us to the heart of Paul’s ethics in a particularly direct way. It reveals the situation of believers transformed by the power of the new age and enlisted in the service of the Lord and yet required to live out that service in the midst of the lures and temptations of the old age by a constant renewal of their obedience to the truth in faith.³

The believer is in a profoundly different position from his position in the old aeon, when he was naturally inclined to domination by flesh. Now, being a new creation, flesh having been crucified, he enjoys the indwelling of the Spirit orientating him to the Father’s will (Gl. 1:4; 4:6). He has no reason to succumb to flesh’s lures.

2. THE SECRET OF LIVING FREE: WALK BY THE SPIRIT!

It will be argued in this section that Christian ethics operates under the guidance of the Spirit. In Ch. 5 it was argued that the Christian is not oriented to law, but to Christ and his cross. How should the accompanying ethic be shaped and practised? In as much as the foundation, norm and purpose of Christian ethics can be described as loving service of the kind that befell believers in Christ Jesus, and which does not come naturally, the Spirit of Christ is the one who motivates and enables the believer to perform the deeds of love and service to which we are called. One could describe Christian ethics as christologically founded and pneumatologically implemented.

It is this overwhelming presence of Christ, the crucified and resurrected Lord, his Spirit, “the fruit of the Spirit,” which prevents the intentions of the flesh from accomplishing the “works of the flesh” (cf. 5:16, 19-21a).⁴

2.1. Walk by the Spirit

Paul uses three similar sounding expressions to describe the relationship between the Spirit and the new life in Christ in which the Christian partakes. He uses πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε (“walk by the Spirit” - Gl. 5:16) and follows with εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν (“If we *live* by the Spirit, let us also *keep in step with* the Spirit” - Gl. 5:25). Although the latter references are part of the pericope with which we will deal specifically in Ch. 7, it will be enlightening to attend to it at this stage. After all, Paul uses them so quickly in succession that one gets the impression that a difference in meaning of some kind was intended. It is almost inconceivable that Paul would have meant nothing by the

¹ Barclay, 1988, 114.

² Barclay, 1988, 115.

³ Barclay, 1988, 215.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 289.

differences between περιπατεῖτε and στοιχῶμεν, although many translations seem to equate them. I cannot agree with Longenecker that these three expressions, together with εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε (“since you are led by the Spirit” - Gl. 5:18) are synonymous.¹ The mere use of two of these expressions in one sentence (εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν - Gl. 5:25) makes the possibility of synonymy slim.

2.1.1. Εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι

One could describe this as a soteriological expression reminiscent of Gl. 3:3-5 where Paul refers to the Galatians’ coming to faith as an act of the Spirit. Their new life began with the Spirit. Through the Spirit of the Son sent into their hearts, the Galatians themselves became sons of God and call to him, through the same Spirit: “Abba! Father!” (Gl. 4:5-7).² Although Paul had not, at that stage, used the term “new creation” (Gl. 6:15), he had implied it with his reference to the receiving of the promise of the Spirit through faith in Christ Jesus (Gl. 3:14). As we have seen, the OT promised new life in which God’s Spirit would play a major role. Paul refers to that new pneumatological life as new creation. Without much ado we can accept that εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι is a pneumatological-soteriological reference signifying new life through the Christ event as existentially realised in the believer through the activity of the Spirit.³ In other words, it is a phrase heavily emphasising the new status of the believer. He has new life through the Spirit. It is a summary of the soteriological indicative of the Christian life.⁴ By using εἰ (“if”) followed by the indicative ζῶμεν Paul once more confirms life in the Spirit as part and parcel of being a Christian. It is a certainty (“if, as indeed we do”) and not an optional extra.⁵

2.1.2. Πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε

In this expression a different nuance is intended. For a start, it is an imperative. As Betz puts it: “The term expresses the view that human life is essentially a ‘way of life’.”⁶ It is not only about an indicative ascribing a certain status, i.e. living by the Spirit or being introduced to a new life by the Spirit. It is equally about a certain way of life in accordance with the guidance of the Spirit. It is about being governed by the Spirit in one’s daily enactment of faith.⁷ For this reason one could probably

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 244.

² Schrenk and Quell, 1967, 1006, stress that Paul’s use of Ἀββα is more than a liturgical formula. It refers to adoption as son of God. It is about “joyous assurance” in contrast to the position of the slave. The Ἀββα cry is the opposite of nomism. Through his Spirit, Christ has created a Father-son relationship between God and the believer.

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1994, 189, stresses the close association between Christ and the Spirit, so that it is possible to speak of a “change in soteriological order from, (1) the reception of the Spirit to being a child of God as in 3:2-5, 14b and 26, to (2) being a child of God as the basis for receiving the Spirit, as here in 4:6.” Also Hansen, 1997, 224.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 293.

⁵ Moule, 1953, 150; Morris, 1996, 176. Witherington, 1998¹, 412, suggests “since” instead of “if”. This is sound.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 277.

⁷ Ebel, 1978, 944.

equate πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε with its chiasmic double in Gl. 5:18 (πνεύματι ἄγεσθε – “to be led by the Spirit”).¹ It is about letting the Spirit determine one’s conduct.²

“Walk” has a Jewish background. Dunn stresses that it is totally untypical of Hellenism, but typically Jewish. He traces it to OT usage (Ex. 18:20; Dt. 13:4-5; Ps. 86:11; Is. 33:15; also 1QS 3:18-4:26).³ The Hebrew root הלך from which *halakah* (“legal ruling”), is derived, is the operative OT word.⁴ “To walk according to the statutes of Law” (Ex. 16:4; Lv. 18:4; Ezk. 5:6-7) was the Jewish way of referring to the conduct expected of God’s people. By using the OT way of referring to proper conduct, Paul seems to deliberately contrast walking in the Spirit with law, by way of allusion.⁵ It is quite significant that Paul does this, because his main aim, judging from the apodosis, was to explain that the Spirit was the One through whom they were to deal with the flesh. Speaking in the old jargon of law, he was probably, by way of implication, restating law’s inability to deal with flesh. This is especially enhanced by his categorical statement in Gl. 5:18 that the Spirit makes law unnecessary. In this case he uses the parallel phrase to πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε, namely πνεύματι ἄγεσθε.

[T]hose who had been given the Spirit thus also knew the eschatological experience looked for in Jer. xxxi.33-4 – an immediate knowledge of God, an enabling to know what God’s will was in particular instances. This is the basis of a charismatic ethic, depending more on inward apprehension of what is the appropriate conduct than on rule book or tradition.⁶

It is also a metaphor denoting progress along a taken road towards a given destination, denoted by the Spirit. Morris stresses that the use of the present imperative has the force of “keep walking in the Spirit.” Being in Christ and having begun in the Spirit, Paul accepts that they are walking in the Spirit.⁷

Paul constantly speaks of what the Spirit does, so that believers are ‘led’ by the Spirit (5:18), he refers to ‘the fruit’ of the Spirit (5:22), and of ‘reaping life eternal’ from ‘sowing to the Spirit’ (6:8). The apostle is telling his readers what the Spirit does in them, not what they themselves can accomplish if only they try hard enough.⁸

So, at this point we can reiterate that Paul does not change from a soteriological to an ethical course. He is merely taking the course he started travelling in his soteriology, to its ethical consequence. As much as the Spirit is the One by whom the believer lives soteriologically speaking, He is equally the One through whom the believer expresses his pneumatologically given life in a pneumatological ethos.⁹

¹ Bruce, 1982¹, 245.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 243.

³ Dunn, 1993², 295. See also Bertram & Seesemann, 1967, 941-3. Ebel, 1978, 943-4, also provides evidence from Qumran.

⁴ Helfmeyer, 1977, 415-33. Lull, 1980, 121-3.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 393.

⁶ Dunn, 1993², 296.

⁷ Morris, 1996, 168; Lull, 1980, 154-61.

⁸ Morris, 1996, 168. Fee, 1994¹, 204: “Having begun by the Spirit, one comes to completion by the Spirit (cf. 3:3).”

⁹ Schreiner, 2001, 263, writes: “The Spirit who grants new life strengthens believers so that they live in a way that is pleasing to God. Both the commencement and the continuance of the Christian life are animated by the Holy Spirit.”

2.1.3. Πνεύματι στοιχώμεν

Although this phrase is essentially the same as the above πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε, I believe Paul intentionally chose a new phrase to introduce a nuance.¹ Once again he emphasises the indicative and imperative of faith. What makes it more significant is that they are combined in one sentence. Paul thus says that the indicative to live by the Spirit is inseparable from the imperative to be obedient to the Spirit. Christian life is not an idle waiting on the Spirit to provide the fruit, but an active struggle in which the Christian makes manifest that fruit which the Spirit provides.

Returning to Paul's use of στοιξέω, it should be remembered that he previously referred to believers formerly having been enslaved to the *elements of the world* (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου - Gl. 4:3, 9). They were dictated to by and lived according to these elements typical of the present evil age; dictates as to how to order and live their lives in the age dominated by flesh. Paul is probably alluding to these elements according to which they lived – inclusive of law, as we saw in Ch. 4 – to once again point to the radical switch from the flesh to the Spirit. They were not to think in terms of the old paradigm in any way. They had to listen to and follow only the Spirit. The term is also reintroduced in Gl. 6:16. It is a military term meaning “to be drawn up in a line” in order to follow the leader.² This was used in Hellenism with regard to following certain philosophers and their teachings.³ It could mean that just as he used the Jewish way of speaking about ethics by referring to “walking by the Spirit” he now uses Hellenistic terminology to drive the point home with his largely Hellenistic audience. Be that as it may, if Paul was using the verb in its military sense, it would mean that the Galatians were all to fall in line and follow the Spirit.⁴ They were to conform to the ethical leadership provided by the Spirit. This fits the context extremely well, because, as we shall argue in Ch. 7, Paul places profound emphasis on the community of faith corporately and harmoniously acting in accordance with the Spirit's lead (Gl. 5:26-6:10). It could, by way of allusion, already be introducing this ethic of walking according to the Spirit (Gl. 5:16) to the corporate context in which they were not to follow the Spirit simply as each saw fit, but in unison.

The overtones then are that if the Galatians want to place themselves under a sort of martial law, all they really need to do is stay in step with the Spirit and they will receive all the guidance and discipline they need⁵

The Spirit which effects this disregard of self is in no sense legal, still less legalistic; yet in its effect it is entirely moral⁶

The pneumatological ethic of freedom in no way resembles licentiousness or *laissez faire* anarchy. It was about a well-ordered life in the absence of the dictates of law, equally not according to a form of natural ethics (*elements of the*

¹ Betz, 1979, 293.

² Betz, 1979, 294.

³ Delling, 1971, 667.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 294.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 413.

⁶ Barrett, 1985, 77.

world), but according to the divine and loving inner guidance of the Spirit through whom new creation came about in the advent of Christ.

2.2. The fruit of the Spirit

It is not within the scope of this study to pay detailed attention to the different elements of the *fruit of the Spirit* (ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος). We are more concerned with how pneumatological ethics works than with every virtue Paul lists in Galatians. How does the Spirit impact on the individual believer and community? In what way is Christian ethics different from that of Judaism and all the pagan religions and philosophies of the time? Was the content of the Christian ethos different, and if so, in what respect? Was the difference in content the main issue, or was it rather about how it operated.

2.2.1. *Living the life He makes possible*

The Christian ethic differs as radically from any other ethic as Christian faith and soteriology differ from other religions. Christian soteriology is about God taking the initiative and providing believers with salvation through grace alone, leaving no room for self-aggrandisement. This salvation he actualises in the life of believers by his Spirit endowing them with faith in Jesus Christ. It is no different in Christian ethics. It is equally about Christ living in the crucified man through the gracious guidance of the Spirit, and equally without self-aggrandisement. The effortless way in which Paul moves from his theological to his ethical arguments is witness to this. Reading Gl. 4:21-31 one is still aware of the heavy theological element in Paul's argument. One senses that whilst Gl. 5:1 summarises the theological section, it also turns the line of argument to ethics. This is actually true of the whole pericope (Gl. 5:1-12). When reaching Gl. 5:13 one almost suddenly realises that one is in the ethical section boots and all after already having entered it at Gl. 5:1. He does not give the impression that at a certain point theology ends and ethics takes over and that ethics is a totally different ball game. It will be argued that Paul's soteriology of freedom through Christ determines his ethic of living in that freedom under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of the Son.

2.2.1.1. *The fruit of the Spirit as inevitable result of faith in Christ Jesus*

With the term *fruit* Paul says it all. It was not about ethically encoded guidance from outside the believer's being, as in Judaism. Gone were the days that Torah in any form would command believing sinners without providing them with the ability to do as it commanded and heaping guilt upon guilt to be dealt with via the sacrificial system. It was now about an ethic that was as much a solution to man's ethical plight, as its soteriology provides new life. It was about living the new life according to God's promise in which the Spirit would deal with and guide the believer from his inner being. On the other hand, it would also be incomparable to the ethics of pagan religions and philosophies. It would not be about a human endeavour to improve life by arduously striving to live detached from emotion and what was regarded as mundane, and reaching to obtain a

certain level of virtuous living, to be termed freedom. It was about the Christian being endowed with a new character, determining his new ethic.¹

It is evident that Paul wished to create a clear contrast between the notions of *works of the flesh* (Gl. 5:19) and *fruit of the Spirit* (Gl. 5:22). It is also highly probable that Paul, having moved on from his arguments against law and now focusing on the real problem, namely flesh, actually implied the *works of the law* and grouped them together with the *works of the flesh*. There are a few reasons for this assumption. He made abundant use of *works of law* in his argumentative section where life according to law featured prominently and was in the frontline of attack against his gospel. He now moves on to deal with the root problem of all morality, namely flesh, and refers to all deeds done according to the flesh as *works of the flesh*.

In Gl. 2:16 he refers to *works of law* thrice, stating that justification could only be through faith in Christ and not "by works of law" (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) and adds that all who rely on *works of law* are under a curse (Gl. 3:10). Does he not say exactly the same of works of flesh when he states that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gl. 5:21)? Not being part of God's kingdom, especially in apocalyptic sense, is equal to being separated from God and thus not being in the realm of salvation. Seeing Paul's words against the background of Jesus' parables on the kingdom,² this implies being under God's judgement and, therefore, curse.³

There is the added possibility that Gl. 5:14-15 is revisited in Gl. 5:19-23. In Gl. 5:14 Paul states that the whole law is fulfilled in the love command. When we read of the *fruit of the Spirit*, starting with love, ending with self-control and mentioning all the other elements as ways in which the first element is concretised, it rings a bell reminding us of Gl. 5:14. Equally, although not all the *works of flesh*, but definitely a few very obvious ones come to mind when one reads Paul's hyperbole concerning the Galatians biting and devouring one another (Gl. 5:14). The implication is that their in-fighting with regard to *works of law* led them to doing some of the *works of the flesh*, e.g. enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness and envy.

In Gl. 3:2 and 5 he ascribes their receiving of the Spirit and accompanying miracles to faith and not to *works of law*. Thus, speaking of *fruit of the Spirit* (Gl. 5:22) in opposition to *works of flesh* he refers to something as equally unattainable through law as through flesh, placing them in the same company.

It would be stretching the argument too far to assert that Paul equates *works of flesh* and the *works of the law*. They are most definitely two separate entities.

¹ Dockery, 1993, 317. Hansen, 1999, 210-1.

² Amongst others at Mt. 24-25; Mk. 13; Lk. 12:35-48; 13:6-9, 22-30; 14:15-24.

³ This being quite obvious, reference is made of discussions in this regard in Klappert, 1976, 382-9. R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 258, makes mention of Paul's remark on inheriting the kingdom as reflective of earlier Christian teaching.

However, it seems that Paul, at least by way of analogy, groups these two together and that the *works of the law* should be understood as included in his denouncement of the *works of the flesh*. This is even more obvious, considering how Paul regards the law as one of the elements of the world (Gl. 4:3).

Why is this important in the current argument? In the end both of them are driven by human effort. Successes occur here and there in the wider spectrum of ethical behaviour, but in the long run human effort and achievement cannot deal with flesh and succumbs to flesh's lures. In contrast to these works the Spirit produces a fruit in the believer that is otherwise humanly impossible.¹ Being crucified with Christ and Christ now living in him (Gl. 2:20); being dead to the law (Gl. 3:19); being crucified to the world and the world to him (Gl. 6:14); having the Spirit who does miracles (Gl. 3:5) living in him and through whom he has the intimate relationship with God in which he may call "ἄββα ὁ πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6); and, in summary, being a new creation (Gl. 6:15), the believer no longer needs to experience ethics as a never ending struggle that moreover ends in defeat, guilt and curse. There is a profound element of spontaneity in the pneumatological ethic - something effortless! Although, at this stage it must be added that it needs explaining, to which we will return later.

Paul wishes to stress that in those who have been received into the body of Christ, in whom the Spirit of Christ is active and who have a share in the gifts of this living fellowship, the outworking – the fruit – appears naturally, because it is not something manufactured.²

True Christian freedom, therefore, is the experience of this subjective restoration of the image of God through union with Christ so that the objective revelation of God's holiness and righteousness in the person of Christ can be expressed in ethical conduct.³

2.2.1.2. *The fruit of the Spirit as a gift of grace excluding achievement*

The point having been made that the Spirit works in the believer producing fruit acceptable to God and that the believer does not produce good works as an achievement of his own accord, the question arises as to the nature of this divine gift. One must steer clear of the notion that the mentioned virtues are given to the believer as a possession which he/she can merely call upon at random and manifest automatically.⁴ Paul is not saying that the listed virtues are given to believers as "finished products," so to say. He says that the Spirit is in them and that by walking according to the Spirit through whom they live, He leads them and makes them aware of God's will, so that, if they are obedient, these virtues will manifest in their lives. It happens neither automatically nor at gunpoint. Referring to Gl. 5:22 and Rm. 1:16 Deidun puts it well.

What the imperative demands of the Christian is, in essence, only what the Gospel itself demanded of him at the time of his initial believing: docile obedience. For the Gospel itself is δύναμις θεοῦ ... παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι: the present participle indicates the 'yes' by which

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 259; Matera, 1996, 172. Esler, 1998, 226-7, stresses the fact that the believer had access to the best law could provide and more, i.e. love, via a different route, namely the Spirit.

² Hensel, 1975, 723.

³ Hansen, 1999, 212-3.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 286-7.

the Christian, at the time of his conversion and throughout his life of faith, receives God's δύνάμις as the source of his own dynamism in faith and love. A man's salvation...is conditional upon his willingness to be saved.... Even a gift that is already bestowed is conditioned by the recipient's willingness to retain it.

The believer's active involvement is never taken out of the equation. It is about the Spirit enabling believers to produce these qualities and associated deeds that they do not have the capacity for doing. Their responsibility was not to look at the list and then strive to fulfil it, but rather to live and walk according to the Spirit and in the process experience how the Spirit produces such and other virtuous behaviour. The Christian's life is about surrendering to God's work in Christ which He does in us through the Spirit of the Son.²

2.2.2. **What law could not do, it can now only applaud.**

While discussing the Christian ethic as one in which the Spirit provides both the guidance and ability to live an ethic of love born from the relationship with Christ; and focussing attention to the Spirit as the real and only appropriate antidote to flesh's desires, he goes to the trouble of once again mentioning the Christian's not being under law (Gl. 5:18) and law's obsolescence (Gl. 5:23). In fact, he frames the lists of vices and virtues with these remarks. Law could not deal with flesh. The Spirit having been provided, the Christian is now in a position to deal with flesh. Law having had the function of dealing with flesh in the old dispensation and failing, now no longer had a role to play in the Christian's ethical decisions. What law could not accomplish, the Spirit was now doing.³ Law had thus become obsolete. Ironically, the only positive thing law was able to do was to underline man's guilt and emphasise his being under a curse (Gl. 3:5). It could not bring about faith or help man to live according to the promise. In fact, because it rested on man's endeavours Paul referred to it as *works of law* and aligned it with works of flesh. However, Paul did not leave it at that. In case anyone were to wonder about the integrity of the *fruit of the Spirit*, he adds that there is no law against such (Gl. 5:23). By implication, law in its entirety has to applaud the *fruit of the Spirit*. What law could not do, law has to applaud the Spirit for having produced in the believer. Law had become superfluous and obsolete.

It is notable that Paul uses the phrase: "there is *no law*" (οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος). It seems as though Paul might have any ethical system in view and not only Jewish law. The qualities the Spirit works in the believer are above all reproach from any possible source and can only be applauded in any company.

Another point of interest is that Paul, by distinguishing these qualities from law, actually implies that the moral qualities expected of Christians were not in

¹ Deidun, 1981, 82.

² Bornkamm, 1966, 48, stresses the relation between indicative and imperative very well: "...die Dringlichkeit des Imperativs ist erst recht dadurch begründet, dass die Entscheidung gefallen ist: wir sind von der Sünde befreit ... Was die Glaubenden zu tun haben, ist sehr schlicht und einfach das παραστάνειν, das Sich selbst .. Gott überlassen."

³ Westerholm, 1997, 162-4. Bruce, 1984, 63, also indicates that Paul had realised the inadequacy of law, or any external law-code.

themselves a new law.¹ Frankly, these qualities could not be regulated by any kind of law code without being compromised. For instance, how does one enforce love? Does it not, by implication, cease to be love if it is forced to act? Was this not the problem in the old evil age? Flesh could not produce love and law could not force people to love, because love is a quality born from the heart by the movement of the Spirit.

The (somewhat unexpected) mention of the Law in v. 23b – in itself an ironical statement of the obvious – is intended to remind the Galatians that agapê (in all its multiform manifestations) belongs to a sphere in which the Law is simply irrelevant – and not just in the sense that the Law contains no statutory prohibition of agapê, but in the deeper sense that the Christian now lives no longer on the basis of human $\pi\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\upsilon$, but in the power of the Spirit. Not man, but God himself, is the source of the Christian's activity.²

There is no deduction to be made from Paul's utterances in Galatians other than that the law no longer had a necessary function within Christianity. It had lost its soteriological function and, equally, its ethical function. Although Paul, as a former Jew and as an advocate for the fact that Christianity stemmed from Judaism and could never be seen loose from that relationship (Rm. 11), was positive regarding law's divine and necessary function in the old dispensation; and although he would often quote from these obligations in his correspondence, he rejected the necessity of law as an external requirement for guidance in Christian living. Law had now been replaced by the inward activity of the indwelling Spirit of God (Gl. 5:18). The moral demand on the believer was now based on the authority of the crucified and risen Christ (Gl. 2:20).

At this stage it should be stressed that the implication of this notion is not that there would of necessity not be a material continuity between Mosaic moral demands and the moral demands of the Spirit based on love.³ We will indicate later how Paul himself called upon former Mosaic commands when dealing with the ethics of a specific congregation. However, one should equally stress that Paul did not do this as if Mosaic law provided this enlightenment. These demands were obviously so in accordance with what Yahweh meant with love that it was required of believers to abide by them as far back even as Moses, as a matter of *spiritual commonsense*.

3. THE NORM AND PURPOSE OF FREEDOM: LOVING SERVICE!

3.1. Less is more. No longer doing law, but fulfilling it!

In Judaism there was no question about what was morally acceptable or not. Law was available, undisputable and bigger than life. There were discussions about interpretation and even different rabbinical schools of thought. But, truth be told, no Jew doubted the validity of law as moral standard. It was their claim to fame as nation. God had graciously given them the law. They would follow its requirements scrupulously. They could argue that in terms of law's requirements they did well in the Second Temple period, distinguishing themselves

¹ Betz, 1979, 288.

² Deidun, 1981, 118.

³ Deidun, 1981, 154.

morally. Those who became Christians from Judaism would have argued that law served them well in the past and would do so still.

The question is: did their moral standing in terms of law's obligations meet with law's intention, i.e. were their morals born of and borne in love? Was it initiated from and carried out in love? It was possible to do the right thing, but for the wrong reasons, or with a heart as cold as stone. Law could not change hearts. Law could not enforce love. In fact, the ground for law's existence was essentially that society lacked love. It had to enforce on society that which was not common cause, and eradicate that which was. Law was needed to provide society with what it lacked and did not seek of itself. We have seen in Ch. 4 that law underlined Israel's plight before God. It was this plight that inspired prophets to speak of an eschatological future in which God would place his Spirit in men and write his words upon their hearts. It was the same plight that initiated apocalyptic writings about a better future for Israel to hope for.

In Gl. 5:14 Paul very clearly reminds the readers of the ethical maxim well-known in Judaism (Lv. 19:18) and reiterated by Christ (Mt. 19:19; 22:39; Mk. 12:31) as the maxim according to which one should live in relation to others:

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."¹

This was probably in stark contrast to what they were experiencing at that stage of the Galatian polemic. Paul probably made use of hyperbole in Gl. 5:15,² but using it immediately after the aforementioned maxim indicated that he probably meant to illustrate exactly this point. Despite the implied pursuit of law-observance via circumcision, diet and calendar, the Galatians were probably at odds with one another and illustrated how inadequate law was in fulfilling its own goal, namely to enhance love towards one another. He hints at this possibility again in Gl. 5:26. If anyone were to consider accusing Paul's stance on Christian freedom from law as an opportunity for the flesh and as morally bankrupt, Paul could equally reciprocate and probably did, by implication. Judaism had proven that moral bankruptcy was possible and rife in the midst of, and sometimes even via, law. They aimed to do the law, but grievously failed to fulfil it in love. However, steering clear of such a direct accusation and the possibility of dignifying such a position, Paul resorts to positive argumentative territory. He sets the Christian moral goal as the fulfilment of law's intention. What law could not attain because of its inability to deal with flesh, believers, without the stipulations of law, would now pursue by living according to the guidance of the Spirit (Gl. 5:16-18, 22f.).

3.2. An ethic of loving service to one another

¹ Deidun, 1981, 143, draws attention to the fact that this sole demand of love for the neighbour in no way implies or weakens the fundamental demand to love God (Dt. 6:5). One should rather regard the two at different levels. Love for God is fundamental and implied in faith. One believes in God, because one loves Him in response to his overwhelming love. The love of the neighbour is also wholly impossible if the subject of that love is not authentically surrendered to God.

² Betz, 1979, 277.

Although this subject will be revisited in Ch. 7, it needs to be given some prominence currently. Paul makes four statements concerning love. *Firstly*, in Gl. 2:20 he refers to the life he lives in the flesh as lived “by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἔμοῦ). This is extremely important. It refers to the basis of Christian faith, salvation and ethics. Paul states that at the heart of Christian belief, the foundation on which it is founded and according to which it is lived lies the divine initiative, drenched in the love of the Son of God who gave Himself unto death on the cross for the sake of delivering sinners. This was not only the ultimate token of love and most profound example of self-sacrificing service, but also the basis and motive of Paul’s and all Christians’ love and service. Faith was founded in this loving sacrifice, and ethics would equally flow forth from it. The faithfulness of Christ is the ground of salvation.¹

Secondly, Paul is clear in Gl. 5:6 that the main issue of faith in Christ is far removed from the debate on circumcision. It is much rather about “faith working through love” (ἀλλὰ πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη). By juxtaposing circumcision with love Paul enhances the importance for the Christian to love. If circumcision was the most prominent mark of the true Jew,² the believer in Christ would be identified by his/her faith characteristically translating into love. It is interesting that Paul speaks of neither circumcision nor uncircumcision (or non-circumcision). Could it be that by juxtaposing these opposites Paul is indicating that the whole issue, wherever it leads to, actually boils down to nothing – a non-event as it were? On the other hand, believers in Christ wish to translate their faith into love, because it is essential to faith in Christ.

The two concepts come together because they are the two sides of the same orientation of a man. Faith denotes the attitude of openness or simple trust on the basis of which alone he can relate truly to God. Love denotes the generous self-giving which follows from it. Faith is a disposition of the whole person, love the moral impulse to which it gives rise; for to respond to God’s love in simple trust must impel a man to be open to his neighbours’ needs. Open self-giving must characterize a man in both dimensions – towards God and towards others.³

It is neither an optional extra nor a territorial hassle. Unquestionably, it comes with the territory, but love being what it is, makes it impossible for the one who loves to regard it as optional or as a hassle. It is simply the logical and “natural”⁴ thing to do.

Thirdly, in Gl. 5:13 he calls on believers to put their freedom to *service through love* (ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις). Here Paul places love and service in the context of freedom in Christ as a vocation. The Christian had not been set free as a goal in itself. He was set free from the enslaving bonds that made it nigh impossible to look beyond the self and be other than self-serving. He now, after being freed, had the vocation to rise above flesh and serve in

¹ Hays, 1983, 157-76.

² Circumcision was probably only mentioned as the marking inclusive of, or implying the rest of law.

³ Houlden, 1992, 29.

⁴ Obviously, natural does not refer to man’s corrupted nature, but to his new orientation through the Spirit.

love.¹ In a helpful article concerning what Christ did to the law and how law had been fulfilled in Christ's loving service and should continually be fulfilled by believers in everyday living, Martyn writes

Reading Gal 5:14 in its own letter, then, we are reminded in two regards of Paul's ubiquitous concern to differentiate anthropological possibility from christological power. First, we sense that for Paul the difference between anthropological possibility and christological power is nowhere more evident than in the daily life of the church (cf. Gal 5:22-24). Second, we see that in the church's life, that difference emerges precisely in relation to the question of the pertinence of the law. In Gal 5:14, that is to say, the guiding imperative of the law, Lev 19:18, is not the result of an insightful deed of Paul, his act of reducing the law to its essence (his achievement of the *reductio in unum*). On the contrary, that guiding imperative is the result of the powerful deed of Christ, his act of loosing God's law from the law of Sinai, thereby addressing it to the church. The law taken in hand by Christ (Gal 6:2) is the law that Christ has restored to its original identity and power (Gal 5:14).²

Christ removed the link between the believer's morality and law, grounding it in his love demonstrated on the cross. Christian morality had to take its cue, not from law, but from Christ's love and faithfulness. Marxsen refers to Christian love as lived Christology.³

Fourthly, in Gl. 5:22 Paul introduces the *fruit of the Spirit* and places *love* (ἀγάπη) at the very prominent and important top position heading the list of Christian "virtues".⁴ At this stage it should be added that the very prominent and also important last position is assigned to so-called *self-control* (ἐγκράτεια). *Firstly*, despite differences of opinion concerning an identifiable structure of some kind in Paul's list of virtues, there is extensive agreement amongst scholars that the first, i.e. love, is the all controlling quality from which the others flow and from which they take their cue.⁵ This once again illustrates love as the overriding Christian orientation from which the others are born and through which they are carried. It is this orientation to love that bears with others and shares their burdens, giving them direction and a specifically Christian content. *Secondly*, the element of service is introduced into the equation by ἐγκράτεια. It is enough only to mention at this point that Paul's view on self-control is far removed from that of Hellenism. Broadly speaking, Hellenists took it to refer to man's ability to discipline himself, gaining control over his bodily and emotional being, so that he would not be dictated to by them, or even merely pleasure them. His main focus was mental and intellectual control of his life.⁶ Obviously this lead to a dispassionate disposition and disconnectedness from society⁷ and the

¹ Guthrie, 1981, 696.

² Martyn 1996, 60.

³ Marxsen, 1993, 217.

⁴ I would prefer the word "quality", although it also needs qualification. A virtue gives the impression of something objective to be achieved. With quality I mean it as an expression of the gift of love that the Spirit works in the believer. Thus, quality as an expression of love. This is also why I am in agreement with most scholars that the use of the singular for fruit points to this notion of the fruit of the Spirit being love expressed in different ways according to contextual need, and that all these ways must manifest in the individual Christian's life.

⁵ Dunn, 1993², 309.

⁶ Breidenkamp, 2001, 48.

⁷ Klauck, 2003, 383-4.

world at large (ἀπάθεια or ἀπαθής).¹ In fact, it lead to those successful in practising ἐγκράτεια regarding themselves and being regarded by others as a notch above the ordinary citizen.² Paul, on the other hand, follows a more relational understanding of ἐγκράτεια. It is not about mere control over one's emotions and desires. It should be seen more in the light of love and freedom, hinting towards being willing, through love, to hold back on one's freedom so that it does not impose on the freedom of another believer or of the community.³

It simply tells us that for the sake of the goal toward which he strives, the commission he has been given, and the task he must fulfil, he refrains from all the things which might offend or hamper.⁴

Once again, Christian freedom is not the freedom to do whatever one wishes, even if it would not necessarily be licentious. It is about being free to love and serve others according to God's will. It should be clear that Paul regarded Christ's love shown to him as foundational for the life and ethics of the believer. It should be clear that this very love of Christ would be the driving force behind his ethic, as well as its norm and its purpose. It would not be a love of lip-service, but one actively working in a spirit of service.

3.3. The law of Christ is no new law

All being said, Paul's positive remarks on law and his quoting of Mosaic commands in other correspondence calls to mind whether Paul does not in some way make provision for Mosaic moral laws in Christianity. Because the expression "law of Christ" (Gl. 6:2 - τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) is usually brought into play in this discussion and for other reasons that will become evident as we move along, we will deal with it in this chapter.

3.3.1. Why is Paul positive about law in some instances?

This is obviously a profoundly important question. If one accepts that Paul, in Galatians, argues that an ethic centred on law is incompatible with the Christian's true existence of being in Christ and living and walking by the Spirit; and if one accepts, as we argued in Chapters 1 and 2, that Paul had made up his theological and ethical mind on these matters even before he wrote to the Galatians, would the touchstone for the notion that Paul rejected any necessity for an ongoing function for law in the new dispensation not be Paul's own application of ethics in his correspondence? Many have argued that Paul divulges from his very law-exclusive position in Galatians to a more law-inclusive or law-positive position in his other correspondence,⁵ giving rise to a wide variety of

¹ Liddell & Scott, 1975, 86; Gärtner, 1978, 719.

² Bredenkamp, 2001, 49.

³ Bredenkamp, 2001, 195-8.

⁴ Grundmann, 1964, 342.

⁵ Because it is not fundamental to the argument, I refrain from citing Paul's negative references to law in the Roman and Corinthian correspondence. Instances of note where Paul refers to law positively are: (a) 1 Cor. 7:19 where he claims that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but "keeping the commandments of God"; (b) 1 Cor. 9:20-21 where he cuts it both ways; (c) Rm. 3:31 answers to the question whether faith overthrows law by stating: "On the contrary, we uphold the law"; (d) Rm. 7:7-12 explains how the law positively made

explanations of which not one is without limitation. Because others have done so competently, I will refrain from dealing with each of these positions in detail.

- *Paul was merely being inconsistent*,¹ or he changed his mind as time went by and libertarian tendencies in different communities forced him to step down from his principle ethic and introduce certain laws as still operative.² One should argue against this notion. Paul had taken a very strong stand in Galatians with regard to law having come to an end for the believer (Gl. 2:19; 3:26; 5:18). All these arguments against law are even repeated in the letter to the Romans – sometimes even more elaborately.³ If Paul had made up his theological, soteriological and ethical mind before writing to the Galatians and was so expressed in what he said, as we have argued, one would have expected Paul to explain his change of heart and mind in later correspondence. He would not have been careless in what he wrote to the Galatians or any of the other congregations and failed to pick up his different opinion himself. Equally, had he changed his mind one would have expected him to argue his case, especially after his harsh words to Peter at Antioch and the Jerusalem council. One is tempted to mention that many of those who argue thus accept that Galatians was written at a later date than accepted here. If this were the case it would be even more paramount for Paul to explain a possible change of view, because the lapse of time between the letters would be much shorter.
- *Paul only rejected those laws regarding ethnicity and ceremonial matters*, but still retained the moral laws about which he was positive. Dunn is well known for his so-called *new perspective on Paul* according to which Paul's references to *works of law* are to Jewish exclusivism, particularism and ethnocentrism. According to him it had precious little to do with legalism or

man aware of sin. Law itself was not sin, but revealed sin as caused by flesh. In this context he adds that "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good"; (e) Rm. 7:14 refers to the law as "spiritual"; (f) Rm. 7:16 says "I agree that the law is good"; not forgetting the instances in Galatians, e.g. Gl. 3:19 which, according to my understanding refers to divine origin; Gl. 3:21 which confirms that law was certainly not against the promise; Gl. 3:23-24 describes law as a "custodian" to help keep the believer from sinning for the limited period until Christ would come. There are also instances where he refers to the law or a commandment in his dealing with ethics in the different congregations. According to Deidun, 1981, 157, there are only seven such references or allusions to prescriptions of the law in Paul's correspondence, namely: (a) 1 Cor. 7:19; (b) 1 Cor. 9:9; (c) 2 Cor. 8:15; (d) Rm. 7:7; (e) Rm. 12:19-20; (f) Rm. 13:9; (g) Rm. 15:14.

¹ Räisänen, 1983, 62-73.

² Hübner, 1984, 55. Taylor, 1997, 47-67, is a most readable article endeavouring to explain the seemingly contradictory elements in Paul's view on law in terms of cognitive dissonance. If I understand him correctly, he argues that Paul's conversion created great dissonance with his convictions at the time. Of course, this is without question. However, according to Taylor, the incident at Antioch had such a profoundly negative, disillusioning impact on Paul that he had once again to clarify his position on law. Galatians was his reaction to this rethink. In the process he radicalised his position, but moving on in time he came to temper down. In the letter to the Romans he re-evaluated his heritage in terms of God's grace and came to a "renewed attachment to his ancestral heritage." Although the dissonance remains unresolved, Taylor sees it as possibly explanatory of Paul's discrepancies regarding law from Galatians to Romans. It is a most enlightening article and a very good application of cognitive dissonance theory. However, it remains speculative and does not provide a satisfactory explanation for Paul's negative remarks on law in Romans that are largely a reiteration of those in Galatians.

³ Rm. 3:21-4:25; 8:1-17.

salvation in general.¹ Currently, this is a widely held view amongst scholars. The most important point of criticism against this view is that neither the OT, nor Judaism, nor Paul makes such a distinction. Paul speaks of law as a complete entity that had to be wholly observed.²

[W]orks of law refers to the deeds or actions demanded by the law. The term works of law is not used often in Jewish literature previous to or contemporaneous with Paul. In the texts in which the term appears, the reference is to the entire law. For example, in the Dead Sea Scrolls the phrase works of law refers to the whole law (4QFlor 1:7), for there is no contextual indication of any limitation or focus on part of the law (cf. also 2 Bar. 4:9; 57:2). The similar phrase in his works of the law (1QS 5:21; 6:18) also broadly designates the whole law. We find support for this in 1 QS 5:8, where the adherents pledge to “return to the law of Moses according to all which he commanded.”³

Together with this, one might add two points of interest. *Firstly*, if Paul’s dealing with law in Galatians has very heavy ethnic and ceremonial overtones, it is because of the way in which the problem of law presented itself in Galatia. Paul had to take his departure from that point and frequently return to it. Paul operated from a specific context. This in no way suggests that it was only with these ethnic indicators that Paul had a problem. In fact, given the context, if Paul had only ceremonial law in mind, it seems very strange that he so seldomly refers specifically to such laws, as opposed to his many references to law as such. *Secondly*, and associated with the first, Paul most definitely refers to moral laws when he echoes the so-called love command in Gl. 5:14 and states that the whole law is fulfilled in this one word.

- *Paul only rejected law as a means of “getting in” the right relationship with God, or righteousness.* In other words, with regard to soteriology Paul no longer accepted law as a requirement. However, when it came to staying in, or ethically living up to the right relationship, Paul envisioned a role for law.⁴
- *Paul merely rejected a certain attitude towards law* and wanted believers to redefine their attitude in order for law to have moral significance and effect, compatible with the period since the Christ event and the advent of the Spirit.⁵ In this regard Dunn has shown a renewed interest in the relation between three phrases Paul uses in positive reference to law, i.e. “the law of Christ” (Gl. 6:2), “the law of faith” (Rm. 3:27), and “the law of the Spirit” (Rm. 8:2).⁶ He credits Furnish for having connected these phrases as equivalents⁷ and also for connecting it to “the law of love” and to “the sum and substance of the law of Moses.”⁸ He also refers to Eduard Lohse who does the same and adds that through Christ the law can now serve its original purpose.⁹ Wolfgang Schrage also makes a connection with *To-*

¹ Dunn, 1990², 188-203; 1998, 354-71.

² Refer back to Ch. 4 at § 2.1.2. and § 3.3. .

³ Schreiner, 2001, 111.

⁴ Authors of this conviction abound.

⁵ Dunn, 1990², 224.

⁶ Dunn, 1996, 62-82.

⁷ Furnish, 1973, 100.

⁸ Furnish, 1968, 235.

⁹ Lohse, 1991, 161-2.

rah, but then as reinterpreted in Christ.¹ Ferdinand Hahn follows Lohse's approach, but without the tripartite connection between "law of Christ", "law of faith" and "law of the Spirit". His emphasis is on the demanding aspect of law.² It is indeed doubtful that these scholars have in mind that Torah was revived and reinterpreted by Christ to be anything near what it was before the reinterpretation. It is also unthinkable that Paul had in mind that this very same Torah, although reinterpreted, should be continued in the Christian community in some form or another. It seems these scholars actually refer to law with the intention to indicate that the Christian's moral life is such that it fulfils the moral requirements of Torah. But, the point being that the Christian in his being a new creation achieves precisely this;³ and at that, without Torah in any form.

- *All connections between Torah and the law of Christ are to be severed.* Hübner argues that ὁ πᾶς νόμος ("the whole law" - Gl. 5:14) and ὁλος ὁ νόμος ("the whole law"- Gl. 5:3) cannot be the same. His notion is that Gl. 5:3, referring to the position of the Judaisers, has in view a life according to law, whilst the Gl. 5:14 reference is to the summary or purpose of the law, namely the love of the neighbour – the former being a negative reference and the latter a positive one. Hübner's argument is that the latter cannot be equated with Torah, because it was a reduction of Torah.⁴ In the same vein Westerholm argues that law had been replaced by the Spirit and not by another law. He argues that "law of Christ" is not a reference to a law, but is used rather loosely, "by analogy with the Mosaic code, for the way of life fitting for a Christian."⁵ This is also Heikki Räisänen's position. He defends the notion that νόμος should, in this instance, be translated with "order" and not with "law", so that "the word νόμος thereby permits a polemical allusion to the Mosaic Law."⁶ This boils down to living a life according to how a life in Christ should be lived.⁷

We return to Dunn who, after setting up these lines, puts a very appropriate question, although this dissertation differs from his suggested solution.

Could it be, for example, that the discussion of New Testament ethics has disregarded emphases in Paul's theology which the narrower focus on Paul and the law brings out more clearly? Alternatively, could it be that the discussion of Paul and the law has treated the subject in a too narrowly theological way and has ignored the ethical question: How then should the believer live? At all events the all too brief treatment of these passages in studies of New Testament ethics and the dismissal of them as witness to Paul's evaluation of the Mosaic law in studies of Paul and the law suggest that they deserve closer attention.⁸

¹ Schrage, 1988, 206-7; Barclay, 1988, 134.

² F. Hahn, 1976, 38, 41, 47-9.

³ Furnish, 1973, 96.

⁴ Hübner, 1984, 36-40. He does, however, change his position with regard to law in Romans.

⁵ Westerholm, 1988, 214.

⁶ Räisänen, 1992, 68. It should be granted that Räisänen takes this position with regard to Rm. 3:27 and 8:2. However, the gist of the argument is the same. His position regarding Rm. 8:2 is shared by Cranfield, 1975, 374-6, however, strangely, Cranfield differs regarding Rm. 3:27 (219-20). See also Käsemann, 1980, 102-3; Lekkerkerker, 1971, 155, 325; Moo, 1996, 249-50, 474-5; Stuhlmacher, 1998, 109-10.

⁷ Dunn, 1996, 64.

⁸ Dunn, 1996, 64.

Obviously, we cannot reflect his investigation of these passages in detail. However, his conclusions, although different from this dissertation, are important. He rejects the second line of meaning for law reflected above, arguing that “law of faith” (Rm. 3:27) should be understood as the opposite of “law of works”. By the latter he understands those works of Torah referring to Israel’s protection and promotion of its distinctiveness from the other nations.¹ They are not basic to faith. In fact they lead to boasting because of Israel’s privileged position. Faith had to establish the law of righteousness, or faithfulness, or obedience. To obtain faithfulness one had to rely on, trust, God. “The law of faith, then, is the law in its function of calling for and facilitating the same sort of trust in God as that from which Abraham lived.”²

The “law of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2) accentuates the position that the law may not be merely a letter of which mere notice is taken, but that it had to be a matter of the heart – and then a heart aligned to God’s. The Spirit is the great enabler of the faithful believer seeking to do God’s will in each new situation.³ He then raps up the first two phrases of the tripartite by stating:

In both cases Paul uses the term “law” because he wanted to underline the vital importance of doing, obeying God’s will. And in both cases the qualifier, “of faith,” “of the Spirit,” indicates in a summary way how that obedience is made possible. In Paul’s solution to the problem of human weakness and sin’s power, faith and Spirit are the two sides of the same coin.⁴

With regard to “the law of Christ” he follows the route of paralleling Galatians and Romans. Firstly, he draws a parallel between Rm. 13:8-10 and 15:1-3.

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. – Rom. 13:8-10.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself... – Rom. 15:1-3.

He then picks up a parallel between the two passages in their insistence on love of the neighbour and Christ’s having done so. This is a fulfilment of the law. He finds the same train of thought in Gl. 5:13-14 and 6:2

...through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” - Gl. 5:13-14

Bear one another’s burdens and thus you will fulfil the law of Christ. - Gl. 6:2

He deduces that “law of Christ” is somehow linked to the example of Christ⁵ and the whole law – not just moral teaching – is to be fulfilled as Christ fulfilled it. “Paul still saw a positive role for the law in Christian conduct.”⁶ The way to fulfil it is by love of the neighbour, and by implication, also of God. The references to

¹ Dunn, 1996, 65. He refers to his much more detailed article on this matter and worth reading: 1992, 99-117.

² Dunn, 1996, 68.

³ Dunn, 1996, 73.

⁴ Dunn, 1996, 74.

⁵ Dunn, 1996, 78. In Dunn, 1998, 655, he also connects it to the love command.

⁶ Dunn, 1996, 77.

“the whole law” - ὁ πᾶς νόμος in Gl. 5:14 and ὅλος ὁ νόμος in Gl. 5:3 – are, contrary to Hübner’s position, to the same law. In Gl. 5:3 it refers to

“a misunderstanding of the role of the law in relation to Israel, all that Paul summed up under the terms ‘works’ and ‘letter’. But the other was a wholly acceptable and necessary appreciation of the law’s continuing importance – the whole law, but as summed up and expressible in and through the command to love the neighbor. Where requirements of the law are being interpreted in a way which ran counter to the basic principle of the love command, Paul thought that the requirements could and should be dispensed with. On the other hand, it was possible in his view for the whole law, and all its commandments to be fulfilled in a way that did not run counter to the love command.”¹

Finally, he concludes, law, misunderstood as *letter* and *works* and not as a matter of love inclusive of non-Jews, is the law for which Paul has only negative remarks in Galatians and Romans. But “the law will still be the measure of judgement when the power of sin and death are themselves brought under the final judgement.”²

If Dunn’s intention is to defend the whole law, minus certain cultural and cultic laws, as still applicable for Christians, the question arises why Paul did not indicate what laws were still applicable. At least the laying down of some sort of principle would have been most helpful. The absence of such an indication is even more pronounced considering the occasion of the letter and Paul’s urgency in setting the Galatians’ theology and ethics straight. However, I do not think this is Dunn’s intention. It could very well be that, in line with the cautionary notes mentioned above, he is merely stressing the point that morality should not be compromised in the Christian community. By stressing ethics as “law” he makes an uncompromising call to take ethics seriously. The question is then why such an issue about “law”? Is it not equally possible to emphasise the necessity of high Christian morals without introducing a form of *neo-nomism*? Should we not accept “law” in “law of Christ” as a *rhetorical mechanism*? Is Paul not possibly, by way of irony, introducing a new mode of thinking about ethics and using “law of Christ” exactly to the effect that “law” as previously understood is rendered ineffective?

3.3.2. Should the positive statements entrench law in Christian ethics?

I fail to understand what the problem is with the so-called positive statements on law as opposed to Paul’s predominantly negative evaluation of law in Galatians. Much has been written on the subject by many an irreproachable scholar. I do not wish to brush off their arguments as unmerited. To the contrary, they have all made valuable contributions to the debate and the small volume of space awarded to this matter in the present dissertation should not be regarded as a reflection of the respect for their labour. The intention here is to defend the position that Paul rejected law’s ongoing function in Christian ethics, to the benefit of the notion that the Spirit would guide and enable believers in doing God’s will. The reason for bringing up the matter of the positive statements is that the latter are often recorded as against such a notion. I am of the opinion that most of Paul’s positive statements on law do not

¹ Dunn, 1996, 78.

² Dunn, 1996, 81.

necessarily reflect a notion on his part that law should be awarded with some form of ethical authority in the new dispensation. One can account for all the so-called contradictions to Paul's rejection of a continued function for law, by accepting that Paul assigned to law a *divine origin* and the positive function of identifying sin and keeping it at bay – but then, only for the *limited period* from Moses to Jesus; and if one accepts that Paul sometimes had in mind *law as fulfilled in Christ* and the *believer's loving service*. This will be applied very briefly below.

- Paul's claim in *1 Cor. 7:19* that neither circumcision nor non-circumcision counts for anything, but "keeping the commandments of God," need not, and probably should not, be seen as a one-on-one reference to Mosaic law. Grosheide, although expressing himself in terms of "moral law" (*zedewet*), is quick to qualify that Paul does not have Mosaic moral law in mind. Paul uses ἐντολαί instead of the expected νόμος. Grosheide then makes the enlightening exegetical remark that by using ἐντολῶν θεοῦ without the article Paul was actually emphasising θεοῦ. It was not about the now human prerequisite of circumcision or not, but about God and obedience to Him.¹ Of this obedience Pop says it was about the two main issues, i.e. loving God and one's neighbour.² Thus Paul was most probably not referring to Mosaic law at all, but to obedience to God. Obviously he would be all for it!
- *1 Cor. 9:20-21* illustrates Paul's missionary and pastoral strategy characterised by respect. Important at this point is the fact that Paul can state that for those under the law he became as one under the law and for those outside the law as one outside the law, but not without the law of Christ. This he says immediately after stating his freedom from all men, but despite this freedom, his willingness to rather be a slave to all for the sake of their being won for Christ (*1 Cor. 9:19*). Thus, he follows a morality different from any other – also from Mosaic law. He follows the route of loving service in which the self and its freedom is characterised by responsibility for others. This is incredibly similar to his *fruit of the Spirit* in *Gl. 5:22-23* where he introduces the fruit with the overriding quality of love and rounds it off with self-control. We have seen that these qualities could not be brought about by law and that law could only applaud it.
- In *Rm. 3:31* Paul puts the rhetorical question: "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith?" He answers it emphatically with: "On the contrary, we uphold the law." Ridderbos indicates that one should understand law in *Rm. 3:31* in a broader sense than the stipulations of Torah. It was about the total self-revelation of God in the OT. This is confirmed by his dealing with Abraham as an example in *Rm. 4*.³ Ridderbos continues by remarking that the antithesis Paul employs between καταργέω and ἵστανώ reminds one of Jesus' use of πληρῶω and καταλύω in *Mt. 5:17*, probably going back to a rabbinical formula.⁴ The conclusion is thus that

¹ Grosheide, 1957, 197.

² Pop, 1974, 141.

³ H.N. Ridderbos, 1977, 90. So also Newman & Nida, 1973, 72: "Paul uses the Law as a reference to the total religious system of Judaism, which finds its visible embodiment in the Old Testament."

⁴ H.N. Ridderbos, 1977, 90.

the OT had come to receive its full meaning through faith in Jesus. Once again, there is no reason to understand “we uphold the law” as of necessity meaning that Paul wished to entrench Mosaic law in some form in the new dispensation. In fact, it makes more sense to understand law in Rm. 3:31 in the broader sense rather than narrowing it down to a form of Mosaic law. It seems Rm. 3:31 could be understood as confirming that the ceremonial laws aimed at the promise had been fulfilled in Christ, and that the believer could now, because of the Christ event, fulfil the obligations laid on him to love God and his neighbour. Paul could be equally positive about this notion without reintroducing law as such.

- *Rm. 7:7-12* explains the positive role of law in making man aware of sin. Law itself was not sin, but revealed sin emanating from a life according to the flesh. In this context he adds that “the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.” Rm. 7:14 can also refer to the law as “spiritual”. Rm. 7:16 says “I agree that the law is good”. Taking great care not to deviate into debating who the ἐγὼ in Rm. 7 is, it seems evident that Paul’s positive references to law refer to its divine origin and intention. This is very much in line with Gl. 3:19, 21 and 23-24 where Paul is quite clear that it was meant for only the interim period between Moses and Christ.

In conclusion, within the framework of the temporary function of law in the interim between Moses and Christ, law’s having been fulfilled in the obligation of love, as well as the broader interpretation of law as referring to the whole system of Judaism in the OT, there is no need to regard the positive remarks regarding law as in any way entrenching law within Christian ethics. What Paul says about law and Christian ethics in Gl. 5:18 is meant to say precisely what it says, nothing less, and certainly nothing more: ***But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law!*** It is either the one or the other. Within the Christian paradigm it can be only the guidance of the Spirit. There is no alternative.

3.3.3. *What about the instances where he cites Mosaic law?*

As stated earlier, the touchstone in the matter of Paul’s rejection of a necessary ongoing function for law in the new dispensation is his own use or non-use of Mosaic prescriptions in his ethical applications. A few brief observations on this matter are required.

In 1 Cor. 9:9 Paul deals with the principle that someone working in the fields of the Lord should be sustained materially. This was such an obvious principle that it would almost be unnecessary to seek any textual support. In fact, it was a maxim equally well-known in Greek culture.¹ However, Paul refers to Dt. 25:4 where it is stated that an ox may not be muzzled when treading grain.² His allegorical interpretation is so out of context that one almost senses that Paul did not refer to it for Mosaic authorisation, but as a rhetorical mechanism. Anyone would understand that a worker in God’s field was more important than an ox. If oxen

¹ Grosheide, 1957, 241

² Deidun, 1981, 158.

were to be taken care of as a matter of commonsense, the congregation should realise the obviousness of the need to take care of evangelists.¹ The point is, Paul does not seem to base his call for support of evangelists on the law. He supports his call with an old and widely held decontextualised traditional maxim.²

In 2 Cor. 8:15 Paul calls on Ex. 16:18 in support of his argument that believers should be willing to share their abundance with those who lack materially. Of great interest is Paul's remark in 2 Cor. 8:8 that he does not appeal to them on the grounds of a command (*κατ' ἐπιταγήν*),³ but on the grounds of the grace bestowed on them by "Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." His argument is founded not on law, but in Christ and on his example. Thus his reference to Ex. 16:18 is not a motivation, but an illustration.⁴

In Rm. 7:7 Paul makes reference to the tenth commandment (Ex. 20:17; Dt. 5:21) inferring that if, for example, there were no commandment such as this one, he would not know sin. Clearly, his quoting of the commandment in this instance does not have any bearing on its continued efficacy for Christians. He is merely inferring that in the time when law was operative (from Moses till Christ) knowledge of the law was the way in which one learnt to identify sin.⁵ In fact, the whole context is that of law's ability to point out sin, but also its inability to counter sin, and so leading to death (Rm. 7:9-10).

Paul implores the believers in Rome not to take revenge when an injustice is done to them, but to leave it in God's hands (Rm. 12:19-20). He does not call on a requirement of law to substantiate his exhortation. He merely adds a quotation from Dt. 32:35 in which Yahweh states that He is the one to set injustices right. In so doing Paul provides them with the comforting knowledge that God knows of all wrongdoings and that He can be trusted with setting things straight. Thus, Paul's reference to OT scripture in this case is in no way a prescription of law, but a self-revelation by God concerning his justice. Equally, the reference to feeding the enemy and giving him to drink is not an OT law, but a sound piece of sagacious advice from the wisdom tradition of Proverbs (25:21ff.). One should also bear in mind that this whole section is preceded by the calls of Rm. 12:1-2, 9-10 and 17-18 which are far removed from the very specific stipulations of law, and abound in love as expression of God's will and that which is generally accepted by most people as decent and commendable behaviour.

¹ Pop, 1974, 180.

² Deidun, 1981, 158.

³ Granted that *κατ' ἐπιταγήν* does not refer to the commandments of God. Grosheide, 1959, 231, refers to *κατ' ἐπιταγήν* as an apostolic directive or an instruction with apostolic authority. The fact is, if he does not even award his admonition with apostolic authority. If he regarded law as still applicable would he not at least have awarded some authority to his admonition? As an apostle, and on a very important subject, i.e. the remembering of the poor, one would have expected him to lean more on law if it were still applicable.

⁴ Deidun, 1981, 158.

⁵ Cranfield, 1975, 348.

Paul reiterates the need for believers to love one another in Rm. 13:8-10 and adds that the love of the neighbour is equal to obedience to the law. He then follows with four of the commandments from the Decalogue of which he says that they and any other commandment¹ are summed up in the one command: “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Lv. 19:18), to which he also refers in Gl. 5:14. He then adds that love is the fulfilment of the law. Deidun observes:

Paul does not say that the fulfilment of the Law is love, but that love is the fulfilment of the Law (v. 10b); nor does he say, ‘love is the fulfilment of the Law, therefore it does no harm to neighbour’, but: ‘love does no harm to neighbour, therefore it is the fulfilment of the Law’ (v. 10).²

Paul clearly did not ground these and other prohibitions in Mosaic law. He regarded Christians as duty bound to abide by these specific requirements, but they were to do it simply as an expression of their overriding obligation to love as Christ did, and not because it was a law requirement.³ Paul reminds the Christians in Rome (Rm. 15:4) that what was written in former days was written for their instruction, so that by steadfastness and the encouragement of the scriptures they might have hope. One must bear in mind the preceding OT quotation from Ps. 69:9. Clearly, whilst Paul is busy with exhortation, he does not base it on law, but on the sufferings of Christ of whom the OT bore witness.⁴ To regard this reference to scripture as a call to found Christian exhortation on law is stretching matters.⁵

Deidun observes that Paul refers to specific laws on only 7 occasions.⁶ If Paul were truly convinced of an ongoing role for law in Christian ethics, one would have expected Paul to have made much more use of specific laws available to him in dealing with ethical matters and exhortations. He does not. Added to this is the fact, as illustrated above, that those references to law or OT scripture that he does make, are not in any way convincing proof of such a notion. On the contrary, it seems that Paul never exhorts believers to adhere to a specific norm because it is thus stipulated by law, but rather because it is in accordance with the love and sacrifice of Christ and because it fulfils law through love.

The basic eschatological-ethical stance of the transformed person is thus established from within, not governed by any set of external rules. Paul does occasionally appeal to external authorities, but these sporadic occurrences demonstrate, rather than call into question, Paul's independence from any kind of normative rules ethic. He can appeal to the teaching of Jesus (1 Cor. 7.10f). He can cite Scripture to support his judgement (e.g. Rom. 12.20). He can just as easily (and more frequently) bring in popular Hellenistic wisdom (e.g. the catalogues of

¹ H.N. Ridderbos, 1977, 296, comments that it is significant that Paul does not follow the well-known chronological order in which the commandments appear in the Decalogue. It is equally interesting that he does not provide a systematic and complete inventory of commandments, and that he almost carelessly opens the possibility of reading into *καὶ εἴ τις ἕτερα ἐντολή* any law other than the Decalogue. Not at all the type of conduct one would expect of one who still regards (moral) law with the same esteem as in the old dispensation.

² Deidun, 1981, 159.

³ Deidun, 1981, 159. Schreiner, 2001, 327, like many others, differs from this view. Does a believer, guided by the Spirit, really need the Decalogue to identify murder, adultery, covetousness and theft as morally wrong and sinful?

⁴ Cranfield, 1975, 732.

⁵ Deidun, 1981, 160.

⁶ Deidun, 1981, 157. He refers to the above 6 quotations, together with 1 Cor. 7:19 with which we dealt previously.

vices). The eclecticism of this approach makes it clear that there is no single set of rules which control character formation. Outside rules support and confirm interior insight.

Obedience to Christ and his Spirit leads to salvation, as well as to an ethically sound life following on salvation. The one is never without the other. In this sense, although his intention is praiseworthy, Schreiner overstates his case, awarding too much authority to law as ethical standard, when he writes:

Those who categorically eliminate any obedience of law in the new covenant fail to understand Paul. Keeping the law by the power of the Spirit is not legalism, nor does it quench freedom. On the contrary, it is the highest expression of freedom (2 Cor. 3:17).²

3.3.4 *The law of Christ?*

Dunn's notion is that the threefold use of law in combination with Christ, the Spirit and faith (*the law of Christ* - Gl. 6:2; *the law of faith* - Rm. 3:27; and *the law of the Spirit* - Rm. 8:2), indicates that Paul awarded a prominent role to law in the ethics of the new dispensation, but gave it a new interpretation as qualified above. In view of this, one has to deal with the question why Paul would have used the word *law* in these combinations. To be sure, if Paul had not used the word *law* Dunn would probably have a much weaker case.³ Why would Paul have used this term? Was it a reference to some form of Mosaic law or did it have a completely different intent?

I contend that Paul was not referring to the Mosaic law in any form. Once again, I am profoundly aware of the superb scholarly labour that has been spent on this subject. Although I will be brief it should not be seen as brushing the matter aside. Also, I do not wish to enter into a critical discussion of other interpretations. My aim is to point out that the interpretation of "law" in *law of Christ* as indicative of or alluding to a qualified ongoing role for Mosaic law in some form is unnecessary and even an overburdening of the text. Although I will endeavour to come to a conclusion on all three phrases my focus will be on the *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2). My opinion is, these three are very clearly aligned and that by explaining one the meaning of the others should become clear. Positions taken on ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ can briefly be described as follows:

- W.D. Davies suggests that it be translated as "the law of the Messiah." He tries to explain that this would reflect something of the rabbinical notion that the Messiah would replace Torah with a new law of which the elements would vary from modifications and new expositions of the old, to its total replacement. It would, applied to "the law of Christ," consist of the teachings of Jesus and be regarded as a type of Christian halakah. Evidence for such a new law known as "the law of the Messiah" is very scant.⁴ This notion was revisited by C.H. Dodd concerning the very similar phrase in 1 Cor.

¹ Scroggs, 1989, 130.

² Schreiner, 2001, 329.

³ Ironically, on the surface of things, the Judaisers would equally have had less with which to answer Paul.

⁴ Barclay, 1988, 127-8. See also W.D. Davies, 1970, 111-46; Schäfer, 1974, 27-42. Gerhardsson, 1981, 72, reminds us that Paul did not introduce a new halakah, but gave instruction and exhortation for a given situation.

9:21 (ἐννομος Χριστου).¹ He regarded Paul's maxims in Gl. 6:1-5 as very closely connected to Jesus' teachings in Mt. 18:15-16 and 23:4. Jesus had handed these teachings on to his disciples and they to the congregations in order that they be fulfilled.² R.N. Longenecker addresses his fear that the absence of external or fixed Christian maxims would jeopardise Christian morality by insisting that there had to be, and there remains, a core of instruction originating with Christ, which Paul regarded as part of the new tradition with regard to ethics. He lists a few such instructions (Rm. 12:14, 17, 21; 13:7, 8-10; 14:10, 13, 14)³ and then states:

It is certainly a mistake to consider "the law of Christ" as the equivalent of the rabbinic Halakah or to confine its designation only to the teaching of Jesus. Yet it remains that "even for Paul, with his strong sense of the immediate governance of Christ through His Spirit in the Church, that which the Lord 'commanded' and 'ordained' remains the solid, historical and creative nucleus of the whole."⁴

Despite this quotation I fail to understand on what grounds, if one were to accept that the church had such a tradition,⁵ one could conclusively argue that such a tradition would be known as "the law of Christ." However, the real problem relating to its use in Galatians is that, in terms of Paul's elaborate argument concerning the christological-pneumatological indicative at the heart of and forming the foundation of Christian ethics, such a view of law of Christ⁶ defined in terms of halakah is extremely unsatisfactory and inadequate. It fails to give enough weight to the Christian's having died to law (Gl. 2:19) and the world (Gl. 6:14); having been crucified with Christ and no longer living, except for Christ living in him (Gl. 2:20); being a new creation (Gl. 6:15); having received the Spirit (Gl. 3:2-3; 4:6); walking by the Spirit (Gl. 5:16, 25); and bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gl. 5:22-23). These definitive aspects of Christian ethics, are either excluded or set so far back in the mind that it plays almost no role.

- A very limited interpretation of law of Christ is that of Strelan.⁷ He views it in terms of the sharing of their common financial burden, which is enhanced by the fact that teachers were to be taken care of (Gl. 6:6) and the collection for

¹ Dodd, 1953, 96-110.

² Dodd, 1953, 109. In this regard R.N. Longenecker, 1964, 184-5, voices his fear of a one-sided understanding of Christian ethics as inwardly motivated by the Spirit without some form of external guidance. He also cites instances in Qumran scrolls where the expectation of such a Messianic Torah is noted.

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1964, 188-90. Barclay, 1988, 129, notes that estimations of such sayings going back to Jesus vary from 8 to 1000. This varying figure itself is under suspicion. He is correct in his statement that: "It is notoriously difficult to establish where Paul is alluding to or dependent on the teaching of Jesus."

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1964, 190. He cites the quotation in his quotation as that of Dodd, 1953, 110.

⁵ There is no need to go into the merits of the existence of such an authoritative tradition in this dissertation. I am in agreement with Barclay, 1988, 130, that Paul mostly only alludes to such teaching, and thus takes away much of the authoritative quality one would expect from an ethical code.

⁶ R.N. Longenecker, 1964, 194: "Paul viewed the Law of Christ as both propositional principles and personal example, standing as valid external signposts and bounds for the operation of liberty and concerned with the quality and direction of Christian liberty."

⁷ Strelan, 1975, 266-76.

Jerusalem. In view of the above criticism against Davies, Dodd and Longenecker, it is enough to say it is even more limiting than their position.

- Another unlikely view is that Paul used the law of Christ simply because it was a phrase used by the opponents. Betz mentions a few reasons why this could be plausible.¹ *Firstly*, it is a very rare phrase occurring only in Gl. 6:2 (although 1 Cor. 9:21 probably has the same meaning). *Secondly*, according to Betz, it “played a considerable role” in extra-Pauline traditions.² *Thirdly*, the Judaisers probably combined Torah-obedience and obedience to Christ in some way. *Fourthly*, Paul wanted to use a phrase that would illustrate that he did not advocate lawlessness.³ Although Betz acknowledges that Paul gave a different content to his use of the phrase than the opponents, it seems very improbable that Paul would have used an opposition phrase. His rhetoric throughout the letter is that of total rejection of the opposition’s stance. He describes their position as a different gospel (tantamount to a non-gospel – Gl. 1:6, 8). He implies that the opponents are accursed (Gl. 1:8). The Galatians are foolish for having considered their message (Gl. 3:1, 3). He speaks of a position like theirs as severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4). We have previously stated the profound urgency of the letter and Paul’s use of antitheses. At no stage does he follow a middle-of-the-road approach. It is either flesh or Spirit, law or faith, etc. It just would not fit the context or Paul’s rhetoric to soften up to his opponents nearer the end of his letter by accommodating one of their phrases. He would remain antagonistic in line with his remark in Gl. 5:12 where he wished for their castration and Gl. 6:12-13 where he accuses them of fearing persecution for the cross of Christ; not themselves keeping the law; and glorying in the flesh of the Galatians.
- There is the more acceptable notion than the others, namely that ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ should be understood as the principle by which Christian life is controlled, namely by living in Christ and by rule of love. However, I believe that although this approach is on the right track it does not go far enough, unless its advocates either do not express themselves clearly enough, or are too cautious in their formulations.⁴

I would argue that *law of Christ* should not only be understood in terms of a new operational principle, but rather, in terms of a paradigmatic approach.⁵ It fits very well with this dissertation’s arguments thus far. It was argued in Part 1 that Paul not only wrote the letter with a profound sense of urgency, but that he made abundant use of apocalyptic allusions in order to impress on the Galatians how radically different the new order in Christ was. A paradigm shift had occurred. Everything had to be reviewed. In Part II we had a glimpse of the present evil age. Then we

¹ Betz, 1979, 300, is followed by Brinsmead, 1982, 163-85, known for his exaggerated mirror-reading of Galatians.

² Betz, 1979, 300, does not mention these instances.

³ Would this really have been necessary? Was he not clear enough on this in his listing of the “works of law” and the “fruit of the Spirit”?

⁴ Advocates for this position are: Guthrie, 1969, 152-3; Räisänen, 1986, 80.

⁵ Hays, 1987, 268-90, follows this approach.

moved on to Part III in order to grasp the meaning of freedom as a description of the new dispensation. We saw that this freedom or new life can be described as christological-soteriological and pneumatological-ethical; these being the two sides of one coin. In Christ the old dispensation of slavery to the flesh and its second, law and the elements of the world, had come to an end. By being crucified with Christ the believer now had Christ living in him. Equally, the Spirit now lived in the believer. The believer was alive through Him and had to walk by the Spirit in order to live free from flesh's desires. The Spirit would guide the believer internally, according to God's will, and enable the believer to do God's will in practice. The touchstone for living and walking by the Spirit would be whether the believer was expressing sacrificing and serving love: the same love that Christ had shown him!

The love of Christ, his service, sacrifice, words and pattern of life are part and parcel of the new aeon or new soteriological and ethical order. Christ did everything necessary to introduce the new paradigm, but the Spirit as Enabler is equally part and parcel of this paradigm and inclusive of this existence in Christ.

Therefore it must be insisted that for Paul, Christ crucified is the law of Christ. It is his cross that sets the standard for self-giving, self-sacrificing love. It is his cross that is the supreme measure of love. Any definition of the law of Christ that loses sight of the cross loses the centre of Paul's ethics.¹

Of course, the most important litmus test for this understanding of the *law of Christ* is whether it stands up to the exegetical evidence in its specific context. It seems to pass this test with flying colours. We shall be returning to the specifics of Gl. 5:25-6:10 in the next chapter. The following remarks should suffice in the mean time.

- Paul introduces the pericope in Gl. 5:25 with the now axiomatic principle of the new ethic, i.e. walking according to the Spirit in conjunction with the other side of the same coin, living by the Spirit.
- He speaks in Gl. 6:1 of the possibility of someone falling to sin of some kind, and adds that such a person should be restored (καταρτίζω) by the spiritual (οἱ πνευματικοί) in a spirit of gentleness (ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος). This restoration should not be seen in isolation from the work of restoration done in Christ.² In the same way grace was shown to believers and they were put right with God, they were to reciprocally restore those who fell to sin. In fact, in a very real sense their restorative work as people living by the Spirit, would be an extension of Christ's own work through his Spirit. In this light Paul's reference to οἱ πνευματικοί should probably not be understood in a sense of irony or even sarcasm. They really had an intimate relationship with the Spirit.³ He was not only part of their life, but in Christ He was their life. It was in the Spirit that they had to restore others.
- In Gl. 6:2 Paul exhorts: "Bear one another's burdens (Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε), and so fulfil the law of Christ" (καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν

¹ Hansen, 1997, 232. One is reminded of Matera's parallels between Gl. 5:1-12 and Gl. 6:11-17 in which he determines that the cross of Christ is the focal point of Paul's arguments in Galatians. In this regard, see my Ch. 1 (§ 3.2.4.2.) and Ch. 5 (§ 2.2.)

² Schippers, 1978, 350. Also Delling, 1964², 476.

³ Betz, 1979, 296-7; Morris, 1996, 177.

νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ). Importantly, the imperative βασιτάζετε is in the present tense. This infers that the believer was to keep on carrying the burden of others. Just as they were continuously in Christ and living and walking by the Spirit, were they to live this life of bearing the burdens of others as Christ did for them. It was not something which could be done sporadically. It was simply how their lives had become in Christ.¹ They were set in a new paradigm in which life was lived differently, namely in the paradigm of the faithfulness of Christ.

- When Paul adds: καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε (“and so fulfil the law of Christ”) he undeniably connects the bearing of burdens with the law of Christ. The bearing of the burdens of others was how the law of Christ – the new paradigm of life in Christ – presented itself in practice. By using the future tense of ἀναπληρώ he confirms the fact that this paradigm is about action. It is about putting the indicative of being in Christ into practice.

There is no doubt that the paradigmatic explanation of *law of Christ* fits perfectly with the context and exegetical evidence. There is no indication that the use of “law” should in any way imply a connection with Mosaic law or any other ethical code for that matter.² Paul was free to make use of all the nuances with which language provided him, with a view to making the best possible rhetorical impact.

[T]he arguments that Paul always means the Mosaic Law when he uses the term νόμος are frankly unconvincing.³

However, one needs to answer the remaining question, namely why Paul would describe this new paradigm as the “*law of Christ*?” Could he not have used words like *paradigm*, *order*, *dispensation*, *way*, or the like? Although I have rejected the notion that Paul used it to refer to his not being lawless or immoral, or as a way of appeasing the opponents, I do believe it was rhetorically intended, as irony and paradox.⁴ The Galatians had been influenced by the opponents. The latter placed a high value on law. Paul wanted to put them off following this route. He was probably saying: “If you have to follow a law of some kind then follow the law of Christ! In other words: let Him live in you through his Spirit, and let Him guide and enable you to love others.” Hopefully they would have understood the irony and paradox, because Paul’s theological arguments had made it quite clear that *Christ* and *law* as such were exclusive of each other.

¹ Morris, 1996, 178; Hays, 1997, 27-32.

² In this respect I differ from Matera, 1996, 172, although I am largely in agreement with his article as a whole. The Christian ethic is of a totally different order than any other ethic – even of the Jewish ethic.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 425. Snodgrass, 1995, 158-74, has made a valuable contribution, stressing the importance of context. He argues, there are different spheres in which law is applied. The negative statements fit in the sphere of sin, flesh and death. The positive statements fit in the sphere of faith, Spirit and Christ (174). However, if I understand him correctly, I fail to understand why law as an external measure has to be awarded with any position of authority since the advent of Christ and his Spirit. A totally new definition of law is called for, one that is totally detached from the law of Moses, except for the fact that both are meant to aim at the fulfilment of the obligation to love. This new ethic has to allow for the new dispensation in which flesh has been dealt with and the Spirit leads the freed Christian.

⁴ Hays, 1987, 275-6.

4. THE CREATIVE ETHICS OF FREEDOM

Marshall has written a very well balanced article on the problems regarding deriving ethical injunctions from Scripture.¹ He identifies three areas of difficulty. *Firstly*, the ethical issues with which man is confronted today may not be present in the Bible. The world has changed since then.² *Secondly*, the character of biblical revelation in itself brings its difficulties. If, for instance, Scripture bases an ethical argument on nature or commonsense, does that imply that because it now is part of Scripture it has divine sanction and loses its initial motivation and appeal to a wider audience than the community of believers? Does biblical ethics apply to unbelievers? To what extent was a specific biblical ethical issue under review intended to have a broader temporal and special application.³ *Thirdly*, there are the common problems with regard to the cross-section reader not having the necessary exegetical and hermeneutical expertise, or merely sensitivity, to understand a text in its original context and then to interpret it against its modern horizon.⁴

He discusses a few approaches to the Bible in determining ethics for today. These include extreme biblicism with its inclination to selectivity and indiscriminate deductions from Scripture, the results often “out of harmony with modern ethical insights.”⁵ Equally unacceptable is the approach accepting that the gap between the Bible and today is too wide for application. There should be room for systematic theology to bring the two worlds together, and modern insights often have to be challenged by the old.⁶ Of course, there is Bultmann’s demythologising approach, operating with a closed world-view and historical scepticism and rejecting the supernatural,⁷ working exclusively on an anthropological level. There are also the approaches of Houlden, stressing variety in NT ethical positions and finding them helpful, but not normative,⁸ and J.T. Sanders finding most of NT ethics based on out-dated theological concepts on which no modern ethic can be based.⁹ Although he has justifiable criticism against both these positions he acknowledges that they reveal the need to discount the biblical ethical variety and to come to a “fruitful synthesis”.¹⁰

Marshall then proceeds to lay down ground rules for the enterprise of reading an ethical position from Scripture. He correctly stresses that the Bible should be taken seriously.¹¹ This implies proper exegesis and hermeneutics. Equally,

¹ Marshall, 1978, 39-55.

² Marshall, 1978, 40, mentions matters arising from scientific developments, such as contraception, artificial insemination, genetic engineering, etc.; new structures have arisen and others have disappeared, such as democracy that has become more prominent than the biblical monarchy; etc.

³ Marshall, 1978, 41-2.

⁴ Marshall, 1978, 42-3.

⁵ Marshall, 1978, 45-6.

⁶ Marshall, 1978, 46.

⁷ Marshall, 1978, 48.

⁸ Houlden, 1992, 115-25.

⁹ J.T. Sanders, 1986, 29, 65-6, 129-30.

¹⁰ Marshall, 1978, 48-9.

¹¹ Marshall, 1978, 51.

on hermeneutical level, the variety of cultures in modern society is to be respected. What is appropriate in one time and place can be inappropriate in another.¹ The whole Bible must be taken into account in order to find underlying principles that might not at first glance seem applicable. On the other hand, he stresses that some principles find quick association with modern situations, while others are not that obvious. One must be careful of too easily drawing analogies and being forced into taking commands literally and as applicable *per se*. Equally, one must not seek analogies where there are none.² Finally, he acknowledges that there are divine commands (e.g., genocide) which are also unacceptable in later Biblical teaching and should be regarded as time-bound.³

What is the relevance of this? It points to the fact that, although much of Biblical teaching remains the same throughout Scripture, there are abundant ethical injunctions that changed even in the span of the OT itself, as salvation-history and secular history developed, not forgetting the vast change brought about by Christ, to which we paid ample attention. Further, it emphasises that the vast change in situation from the Second Temple period to the twenty first century world implies ethical development. Today questions are asked for which the Bible was not geared. Thus, modern man would have to engage in developing many ethical positions as if on a clean slate. He would have to engage with the true gospel through which he, knowing Christ Jesus, seeks the guidance of the Spirit. He would have to engage with the community with its own ethical history and ethical goods, to find the Spirit's answer to their situation. "Find" would probably be more a matter of developing an ethical stance under the guidance of the Spirit.

In other words, being part of new creation, the new territory brings with it the necessity of a new ethical way of thinking. The appropriate ethic would have to be creative⁴ with a view to addressing a specific situation. It cannot be a casuistic ethic in any way. Such an ethic would be a reversion to the ethics of Second Temple Judaism, in which an ever increasing elaborate set of rules was developed in order to address any possible situation with a ready answer. This did not always address the situation with the love Yahweh intended to communicate. In other words, a more situation-specific ethic is needed. However, it cannot be one in which the situation dictates to the gospel. A situation-orientated, not a situation-based ethic, is needed – truly an ethic of a new order.

What can and must be said is not what is good once and for all, but the way in which Christ takes form among us here and now. The attempt to define that which is good once and for all has, in the nature of the case, always ended in failure....The concretely Christian ethic is beyond formalism and casuistry.⁵

¹ Marshall, 1978, 51.

² Marshall, 1978, 51-2.

³ Marshall, 1978, 53-4.

⁴ Briggs, 1978, 78, underlines the idea of having to put creativity into action when he, amongst others, says that Christ called his disciples "to discover the true meaning of being a neighbour." This is a human creative activity under the guidance and sensitising of the Spirit.

⁵ Bonhoeffer, 1978, 66.

4.1. Ethics of a new order

Just glancing over Paul's letter to the Galatians one initially gets the impression of a vastly underdeveloped ethic. Lategan puts the question whether Galatians has an inherent "ethical deficit",¹ basing his question on the following:

- Paul's direct ethical instructions are extremely scant. Most scholars regard only Gl. 5-6 as exhortation. But, this being said, the only rather explicit ethical instructions are found in Gl. 5:13-14, 16, 25-26; 6:2, 6 and 10.²
- This phenomenon of minimal ethical instructions on Paul's part is even more curious in view of the context in which he operated. The Galatians, as former pagans, found themselves in an ethical void, or at least ethically deficient.³ Their Jewish fellow-believers largely continued to follow their Jewish ethical roots. Obviously, as we have seen, this also had its disadvantages. However, the Galatians, unless following Jewish requirements, had "no idea" what was expected of them by the God of the Jewish-Christian tradition. Because of this very void they easily succumbed to the opponents' argument that they had to uphold the Jewish way of life. It is possible that their vulnerability was enhanced by Paul's not having given them enough authoritative ethical instructions when they initially came to believe.⁴

[O]ne needs a set of time-tested rules for the practice of this faith. That is exactly what the Jewish way of life can offer – it has stood the test of time; it has guided the Jewish people through the most testing and adverse times of their long history. Not only does it offer a practical guide to the Galatians, but it also provides the means to become part of an age-old tradition, to become fully initiated and accepted by the central leadership in Jerusalem. In view of the psychological needs of new converts – their acceptance into the group and their self-identity and sense of security after being cut off from their natural environment – this is a very attractive and persuasive argument.⁵

In such circumstances one would have expected Paul to provide more than his few general ethical remarks. He provides them with neither a list of applicable instructions from the Jewish tradition – not even a Christian adaptation – nor with a list of newly formed Christian ethical instructions. This is in stark contrast to his theological reflection and arguments that are both very thorough and, in comparison with the ethical instructions, elaborately motivated. When Paul does venture into providing a list of vices and another of virtues it is not in the form of direct instruction or broken down into contextualised specifics. Rather, he provides them with a list of undefined qualities that should be visible in the lives of Christians.⁶ He refers to them as *fruit of the Spirit*, but, seeing that they

¹ Lategan, 1990, 320.

² Lategan, 1990, 320, lists only Gl. 5:13 and 16 as specific instructions. He regards the rest as either theological motivation for the instructions, or as illustrations of what is meant. I prefer to include slightly more into the category of specific instruction, although it does not take away any force from his observation that Paul is very stingy with regard to specific instructions in this letter.

³ B.W. Longenecker, 1997, 143.

⁴ Betz, 1988, 206.

⁵ Lategan, 1990, 321.

⁶ Lategan, 1992¹, 138.

were well-known in Hellenistic philosophical schools where they were provided with specific meanings, one would expect Paul to redefine their meaning in terms of the newfound faith. He does nothing of the kind. In light of the above remark of the ethical void this unqualified reference to the list of virtues could even be interpreted by the Galatians as a reversion to their former religions or philosophical schools. This is also the case with quite a few other ethical concepts used by Paul, such as “boastful” (Gl. 5:26 - κενόδοξος),¹ “provoke” (Gl. 5:25 - προκαλέω), “envy” (Gl. 5:25 - φθονέω), “restore” (Gl. 6:1 - καταρτίζω), “examine critically” (Gl. 6:1 - σκοπέω),² “burdens” (Gl. 6:2 - τὰ βάρη), which are prominent in Hellenism.³

4.1.1. *Theologically motivated ethics*

Paul’s ethic is uncompromisingly based on his theology.⁴ He introduces himself as being from God (Gl. 1:1); he brings grace and peace from God the Father; he states that the deliverance Christ brought was according to the will of our God and Father (Gl. 1:4); and he adds that all glory belongs to Him (Gl. 1:5). He equally states that what he does as a slave of Christ, he does to please God and not man (Gl. 1:10). His vocation was to glorify God, and therefore his pleasure in the fact that believers were glorifying God, because of his faith and preaching (Gl. 1:24). Throughout the letter Paul persists in connecting the works of Christ and the Spirit with God’s gracious dealings with man. We see this in Gl. 3:1-18 where the christological-pneumatological element is grounded in God’s promise to Abraham (Gl. 3:6, 18). Equally, law was given by one God till the advent of the offspring (Gl.3:19-20). He adds that all believers in Christ are sons of God (Gl. 3:26) and heirs according to God’s promise to Abraham (Gl. 3:29). He clearly states that God sent forth his Son (Gl. 4:4) and also the Spirit of his Son through whom we are directed to the Father (Gl. 4:6-7). Paul continues in the same vein throughout the rest of Gl. 4.

Moving on to the ethical section with its heavy emphasis on the Spirit, Paul stresses that those who do the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gl. 5:21). He then continues with the ethical maxims of Gl. 6:1-10 in which he clearly states that these matters should not be taken lightly, because God is not one to be mocked (Gl. 6:7). One either sows to the Spirit, or one mocks God by sowing to the flesh (Gl. 6:8-9). He then expresses a benediction of peace on all who live according to the paradigm of Christ, and refers to them as the Israel of God (Gl. 6:16).

His emphasis is on theology as the seedbed from which ethics should flow. Coming from the tradition that he did, Paul knew how warped ethics could become

¹ Oepke, 1965², 662. Although it must be granted that, according to Betz, 1979, 294, it entered Hellenistic Judaism and Christianity via the synonym ἀλαζων.

² Fuchs, 1971, 414-6.

³ Betz, 1979, 295, 297, 299.

⁴ Jewett, 1994, 250.

when only loosely connected to its theology. Paul's emphasis is on the fact that Christians are free in Christ and that they have to stand firm in that freedom (Gl. 5:1). The theological and christological-soteriological basis had to be sound. The point of departure could never be ethics in itself: neither in the form of law as in the old dispensation, nor any other form. *Freedom in Christ* was the determining factor. At no point could it be allowed that freedom be jeopardised – neither by reverting to law observance, nor by living according to flesh. Equally, being in Christ also meant living by the Spirit. He had arrived in the wake of the Christ event to bring life to believers and to enable them to call God their Father. He would be the one to guide and enable them. Since they were living by Him they were also to walk by Him. They had to be in step with Him in order not to fall prey to the flesh. There was only one way of standing firm in the freedom brought about by Christ, namely walking in the Spirit. The point is, through faith they had been crucified with Christ and ridden of the curse of law. He was now living in them. They were dead to the world and to the law. They also received the Spirit through faith, and not through law. If the seedbed of their ethics, God's salvation in Christ, was thoroughly without law, how could law determine their ethics? In terms of Hay's arguments in my previous chapter, faith, not being the precondition for receiving the blessing, was the appropriate mode of participation in the pattern enacted by Christ. As the believer reacts in faithful obedience, he re-enacts Christ's faithfulness.¹ It is about believers partaking in a new pattern of life as part of a new humanity created through the faithful obedience of Christ leading up to the cross.² Now, it being about this new humanity and pattern of life through faith in the faithfulness of Christ, it follows that in as much as the gift of righteousness is without law, so too is the ethics characteristic of that life.

However, there is more to be said about a theologically motivated ethic. It is not only about the theological-soteriological indicative in distinction from the ethical imperative. It is especially theological in the sense that it is about God and his will, rather than about man and his subjective interpretation as to what pleases God³. It is not about man's subjective interpretation of love and his in-

¹ Hays, 1983, 249.

² Hays, 1983, 249-50.

³ Meeks, 1993, 151-7. Barth, 1955, 126, fervently warns against considering Christian life as a "private concern". He also warns against two corporate traditions that are equally guilty of falling prey to man's wanting to be his own master, namely a tradition (he refers to the "Roman church") which "dares to subject Christian life to a statute devised and formulated by man and consisting in regulations dealing with cult, law and morals;" and the tradition of religious enthusiasm "which wishes to submit Christian life to the dictation of what is called the Spirit, or of an 'inner light' which is alleged to be divine, or simply to the dictates of the conscience of every individual." He states: "In both forms man is secretly his own master; in both forms the apparent order of the Christian life is really disorder, and in both forms the Christian life is in fact at the mercy of chance and individual will" (127). In line with the above arguments regarding Christ as the new paradigm of life, and Hays' and others' arguments regarding the justification "through the faithfulness of Christ", he is quite right in stating: "The true ordinance governing the Christian life is *Jesus Christ*" (127). Küng, 1976, in his endeavour to explain why one should be a Christian (25, 601-2), speaks in the same vein as Barth. He compares the Christian ways of the progressive, individualistic Corinthian enthusiasts and the conservative, legalistic Galatians. He illustrates how Paul referred both groups back to the cross and the Crucified. They would discover their

adequate reaction to it that postulates the norm, but God Himself. The Christian ethic is born from and based on God's gracious will and equally gracious act of sacrifice in his Son. He has set the norm of loving service for Christians to follow in step with the Spirit whom He also sent forth. Ultimately, the Christians' life was not simply about doing the right thing, but about doing everything to the glory of God. However, to think in terms of a commandment based ethic as the ultimate check to subjectivism is fallacious. One cannot fathom the will of God that easily so as to capture it in certain commandments that ought to deal with all situations at any given point in time.¹

When the early Christians made "the will of God" their ultimate norm, they thus implied that there is an absolute ground for their ethics. Yet the qualifications we have observed show that the absolute norm was not absolutely clear.²

Paul was very aware of the fact that the believer could easily fall prey to a subjective and individualistic charismatic ethic, becoming the judge of his own actions and not being accountable to God and fellow believers. *For this reason the following chapter will be dedicated to Paul's insistence on responsibility and accountability within the paradigm of a christological-pneumatological ethic.*

4.1.2. An ethic from a heart set free

Only one way of remaining ethically true to their salvational seedbed in Christ was communicated to them by the Spirit (Gl. 5:25), and that was walking by the Spirit (Gl. 5:25). He would produce ethically sound fruit in them. The relationship between the Spirit of Christ and the believer would determine the believer's lifestyle. This would be an inwardly determined ethic. It would not be determined from outside by a set of casuistic or legalistic stipulations. Law could not provide life, but instead only led to slavery. True, one could argue that law could not provide life, but that it was given to guide believers as to the rights and wrongs in God's kingdom. It was only because of flesh that law was unsuccessful in the old dispensation and in the end became more of a curse than a blessing, but now, since Christ had dealt with flesh and the believer no longer lacked life and the ability to do God's will law would be helpful to remind him of the rights and wrongs of his choices. Thus, the argument would mean that there was a place for law in a reduced form (moral law only) in the Christian community and that it should thus be retained. On the other hand, I find no obligation in Galatians to retain law as an ethical standard. In fact, Paul expressly rejects its ongoing function.

Nowhere in this letter does he assign such a function to law. Given the context mentioned above of a possible ethical void amongst the Galatians one would have expected him to provide such guidance; or at least to explain on what grounds one retains one stipulation and rejects another; or with the help of what

true humanity and identity in Christ alone (399-402). By partaking in Him through faith, man becomes truly human in the sense that God intended (601-2). See also Küng, 1968, 163, 167, 200-1.

¹ Meeks, 1993, 157.

² Meeks, 1993, 156.

rationale one reinterprets old stipulations to be retained in a new form. Paul does absolutely nothing of the kind. I dare say, if Paul expected them to reinterpret law on their own and to draw up new stipulations for the Christian community, he certainly would have blundered in a pastoral sense by not providing such instructions or ethical detail from his side. They were at that stage not united in thought. Paul, although hyperbolically, describes them as biting and devouring one another (Gl. 5:15). If he expected them to sort out which laws were still applicable or in what form they were to be retained, he would really be setting the cat amongst the pigeons! On the contrary, he rejects the whole law.

Despite the fact that he acknowledges the divine origin of law (Gl. 3:19), he very clearly states that its role was limited to the period between Moses and Jesus. Nowhere in Galatians does he introduce any ongoing function for law.

We have determined that one should not read Galatians as if Romans has priority over it. It would be hermeneutically and exegetically fallacious to ignore that the Galatians had only this letter and Paul's previous oral teaching to go on. If one were to accept that Paul had become more accommodating and even positive with regard to law when he wrote Romans, one would have to inquire as to what Paul was actually saying in that specific context. Why would he sound more positive? What was different in Rome? If one accepts that Paul had not changed his mind on the matter, as we have argued, one cannot merely accept Romans as a Pauline commentary on Galatians and then *equally* and *simplistically* interpret Galatians in terms of Romans. That would be equal to blatant *eisegesis*. The proper question to ask is whether Paul does not use νόμος in a multivalenced way so that context should rather explain the meaning. It has been illustrated that the so-called positive statements on law are mainly in reference to its origin and interim function between Moses and Jesus, or to its having been fulfilled in the obligation to love, or in the broader sense, as referring to the whole system of Judaism in the OT.

In view of the scriptural evidence I find no reason why one should have to argue for some positive role for law in the Christian community. On the contrary, Paul sets law and Spirit up as opposites. He clearly says: "But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law!" (Gl. 5:18). To award a necessary ongoing position to law in Christian ethics on the grounds that flesh has now been sufficiently dealt with in order for law to be effective at last, is a motion of no confidence in the Spirit. It is tantamount to arguing that the Spirit Himself was weak and needed assistance from law.¹ Flesh, although still a threat, has been dealt with in the crucifixion of and with Christ. Why would the Spirit of Christ, of which the OT testifies that he would be part of God's solution to Israel's plight, now, since flesh's demise, be in need of law, of which we have learnt that even the OT regarded it as underlining that very plight and providing no solution?

¹Dunn, 1993³, 71-6, is a clear example of how freedom is bound up with law and how law is assigned with a necessary function till the *parousia*.

It must be reiterated that one should not cloud the issue with the fear that immorality automatically follows on the rejection of law. Anomism in a Christian context is not synonymous with immorality or libertinism. I would define Christian anomism as that position that defines ethics in terms of the inward walking through the Spirit and so producing external deeds describable in terms of the qualities of loving service and self-sacrifice on the basis of the Christ event. It is a rejection of the position regarding law in some form as necessary for the formation of a Christian ethic.¹ It would be an exegetical and hermeneutical distortion if one's fear of immorality would force one to revert to some form of law as supportive of life walked by the Spirit – ethical synergism as it were, between Spirit and law. Was this not exactly the position in which Paul found himself and in which he rejected the necessity of law? Is it not in the midst of his parenthesis to the Galatians with their *lack* of external ethical guidance that Paul explicitly states that those led by the Spirit are not under law (Gl. 5:18)?²

For being “in Christ” means neither nomism nor libertinism, but a new quality of life based in and directed by the Spirit.³

This is exactly the notion conveyed by Paul's use of the phrase “fruit of the Spirit”. He does not provide this list of qualities in Gl. 5:22-23 as an exhaustive list of Christian virtues. The idea is to explain how differently from law the Spirit works. Law drives its slaves to reach its ideals and keeps score of the achievement. The Spirit produces a certain style of living in the mature child of God that no external law can create, because it is born from a heart set free from the bonds of the flesh, and borne in love. For this reason Paul refrains from lists of laws, mostly referring to qualities produced by the Spirit. In fact, when providing ethical guidance in Gl. 6:1-10, he refrains from emanating a spirit of apostolic authority, but exhorts them on the basis of personal and communal responsibility.⁴ His aim was to guide them pastorally, not to dictate to them. He was illustrating the same spirit of gentleness he expected of them in their admonitions (Gl. 6:1).

Marxsen stresses that Paul did not have an ethical system from which he drew ethical admonitions as need be. It would be a travesty to make a compilation of all Paul's ethical comments and admonitions and present it as Paul's ethics. He emphasises that Paul's ethical comments are very incidental and situational and are not necessarily meant for different social and political conditions.⁵

¹ B.W. Longenecker, 1997, 144, emphasises that the absence of nomism is not indicative of a deficient ethic. Christian ethics is eschatological. It is oriented on Christ and enacted in a new life through the Spirit. Law is in this way fulfilled eschatologically, so that law-observance has come to an end.

² Matera, 2000, 243, remarks: “This vision of the moral life, as life under the guidance of the Spirit, is probably the most optimistic statement of Paul's ethical teaching, and is clearly intended for more mature believers who allow themselves to be led by the urging of the Spirit.”

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 246.

⁴ We return to this subject in Ch. 7.

⁵ Marxsen, 1993, 214.

It is in this sense of a new life-style under the guidance and enablement of the Spirit that Paul chose to follow the route of an *ethical minimum* as opposed to an *ethical maximum*, and in distinction to an *ethical deficit*. This specific ethical minimum had in view that that which law itself could not achieve, namely to love one's neighbour as oneself, be fulfilled. Thus the result of this ethic would be morally higher than that of law. In this sense less is actually more! Paul was advocating *minimum ethical regulation* with a view to *maximum ethical output*, but absolutely not in a theological-ethical void. After all, this ethic would operate in the fullness of time, inaugurated by the advent of Christ and his Spirit and filling the void of ethical impotence that law with its ethical maximum could not answer to. He was advocating the fullness of walking freely in the Spirit with a view to believers witnessing as he did, that it was no longer they who lived, but Christ who lived in them; and the life they lived they lived by faith in the Son of God who loved them and gave Himself for them (Gl. 2:20).

Only if a man ceases to be a slave to morality and becomes the slave of Christ (1 Cor. VII, 21f.) can the Spirit enable him to live in freedom and love.

So, it is not about Christianity being without morals.² It is not about a *laissez-faire* ethic in which almost anything goes as long as the actor's intention illustrates love. It is about living according to a specific *κανών* (Gl. 6:16), namely the new creation inaugurated by Christ and lived by his Spirit (Gl. 6:15). Put differently, it is a life in accordance with the law of Christ, which we have described as the new paradigm of life in Christ. It is about being crucified with Him and His now living in the believer through his Spirit, so that the believer is enabled to live according to Christ's example of love and self-sacrificing service to God and neighbour.

Thus, believers are *not without a moral norm*. What they are *without* is a *moral norm determined by law and clad in rules* regulating moral life and robbing believers of much of their responsibility to God and neighbour. Schrage correctly states: "[L]ove manifested in Christ is also the criterion of Christian conduct."³

4.1.3. Inclusive, contextualised and creative ethics

This is a very exceptional trait of Paul's ethics in Galatians. As we have said earlier, Paul motivated his position in Galatians in a situation in which the Galatians, under influence of the Judaisers, could very well have reasoned that they were to follow the Jewish ethical tradition, albeit in an adapted form. However, maybe because he feared that any hint in the direction of Judaism would lead to an embracing of Jewish law, Paul goes out of his way to incorporate ethical dictums from a wider field. In terms of the Jewish heritage of Christianity Paul makes good use of Lv. 19:18 ("You shall love your neighbour as yourself" – Gl. 5:14). It was an old tradition that was given due prominence by Jesus Himself (Mt. 22:39;

¹ Houlden, 1992, 34.

² Schreiner, 2001, 320.

³ Schrage, 1988, 173.

Mk. 12:31). This being said, Paul makes much more use of dictums from the Hellenistic world. True, some of them could have entered the rhetorical situation via Hellenistic Judaism. However, it makes no difference to the actual argument that Paul did not feel himself obliged to stick to any one tradition of ethics: neither Jewish nor Hellenistic; neither religious nor pagan. The fact remains that Paul made use of a wider range of ethical maxims than just those provided by OT law. He was willing to follow the lists of vices and virtues which were very foreign to Judaism in terms of content and form.¹ He did not ignore good qualities of other traditions in his *Umwelt* from which Christians could learn, even though the content sometimes needed adaptation. He was in no way threatened by the fact that other cultures and religions also had good moral elements from which Christians could learn.² It would have been a travesty of God's grace to think there would be only evil and immorality outside Jewish tradition.³ After all, in the new dispensation Paul equates law and elements of the world.

With regard to the content of the *sententiae*, there is little that is specifically Christian. By definition the *gnome* must be general ("infinite"). It must contain generally recognized principles dealing with the issues of human life, the life of the individual and of the community. The *gnomic* style provides critical observations about what is wrong behavior and advice on how to correct it. The effect, therefore, is provocative, corrective, demanding, and advisory.⁴

The Pauline ethic steers clear of the Jewish ethical ideal of measuring merits in terms of elaborately worked out ethical prescriptions and requirements, which lead to accumulation of ethical merits and consequential glorying in individual achievement.⁵ It is equally serious about not falling prey to the Hellenistic notion of living up to one's potential or failing to attain it. It is not an anthropological, but a theological ethic, as indicated above (§ 4.1.1.). Paul's concern is that they reflect that which they are in Christ in their ethical ways. The difference is not as much on the level of what is ethically sound and not.

The Christian is addressed as an educated and responsible person. He is expected to do no more than what would be expected of any other educated person in the Hellenistic culture of the time.⁶

The difference was at a much deeper level than meets the eye. It was on the theological level that things differed.¹ The end ethical product, on the surface of

¹ Marxsen, 1993, 213-4, states "none of the contents is really new." Paul includes maxims from his whole environment, be that Jewish, Hellenistic, or even nature based (1 Cor. 11:14-15). Malherbe, 1986, 11-6, underlines Christianity's indebtedness to Greco-Roman moral traditions. Especially the Stoics were dominant in the Roman Empire (12)

² Pretorius, 1992, 455. Schweizer, 1979, 207; Gerhardsson, 1981, 83-4. Jewett, 1994, 250: "Paul's view is that the gospel establishes a cross-cultural requirement of sharing material and spiritual resources together, constituting a new kind of fictive family that sought to overcome the clannishness of Graeco-Roman social life."

³ Meeks, 1986, 161, states the Christian movement wove different traditions into their moral fabric. He reflects on the Greek and Roman (40-64), as well as the Jewish traditions (65-96). This was only possible because Israel did not have an exclusive access to moral behaviour. Not even Israel had a one-dimensional moral sense (97-123).

⁴ Betz, 1979, 292.

⁵ Bavinck, 1960, 261-6, speaks of the danger of hiding God behind a magnitude of ethical requirements, so that his love and grace are so hidden from view that nothing Christian is longer recognisable. I find it very apt that an author on missions writes in this vein. So many years after the great missionary, Paul, wrote to Galatia.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 292.

things, was not necessarily what made the difference. It was more about God's glory and his will. It was about being able to live according to God's will, because of the paradigm switch that Christ brought about and the enabling and sensitising presence of the Spirit in the believer's life. It was about operating from a heart set free to love and even to sacrifice as Christ did. It was about an ethic that was not part of a philosophy, but the product of the gospel of Christ having effect in the believer's life. One is reminded of Bultmann's insight:

[Paul's ethical practice is distinguished from that of other people only by the fact that it has the character of obedience [that is, obedience out of faith]. From the justified person is demanded only whatever is good and acceptable and perfect, whatever virtues and praiseworthy things we might name (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 4:8).²

Paul did not introduce maxims from other religions – Judaism included – uncritically and without reinterpretation in terms of the law of Christ as defined above.³ For instance, in Hellenism there was not a concept for love equal to the Christian concept at the beginning of his list of Christian moral qualities.⁴ In the same vein, Paul's understanding of self-control was vastly different from that of Hellenism.⁵ Equally, the notion of humility was not common to Greek and Roman thought. In terms of their understanding of honour as something on an anthropological level, they would not be inclined to think it virtuous to trade the honour of this world for dishonour, in order to receive God's praise in the last days for seeking his honour presently.⁶ Of course, the notion of the cross and its stigma as the foundation of Christian living was equally something that had to be reinterpreted. Paul borrowed from different cultures, but always remained true to the theological basis of his ethics that flesh had been crucified with Christ and Christ now lived in him through his Spirit, bearing fruit in step with the Spirit's guidance, and emanating love.

¹ Bultmann, 1967, 47-54, defined the relationship between Paul's indicative and imperative. The imperative is always founded on the indicative, and this indicative is essentially the justification of the believer. Käsemann, 1980, 172-4 and 1969, 168f., has expressed the fear that in Bultmann's terms the imperative can easily be regarded as strictly an anthropological notion, dissociated from God as the Giver. In this way the imperative loses its theological basis and demand. The imperative should, equally, be understood as included in the indicative. It is in no way a human effort springing from an equally human insight to react to God, as a second movement. It is about the one Spirit who in one action brings the faith and brings man to believe and live faithfully. Malherbe, 1998, 230-244, provides good reading on how Paul's communication to the Greek world shows many similarities regarding conversion and morals. The difference was at the deeper theological level.

² Bultmann, 1967, 51.

³ Latagan, 1990, 325.

⁴ Quell & Stauffer, 1964, 37, indicate how totally different *ἀγάπη* was used in Greek literature in comparison to the Biblical use. It was not used in reference to relationships on a horizontal level or to a lower level, but with regard to movement from lower to higher levels, eg. from the human to the divine level.

⁵ Bredekamp, 2001, 195-8. Bartlett, 2002, 279, although in an article on homiletics and in a different context, remarks: "Paul is not always a great proponent of democracy, and the word 'inclusive' seems a little thin for the radical change Paul thinks the cross of Christ has made in the interactions of humankind." In no way do I wish to soften the radicality of the new dispensation in Christ. Inclusivity does not exclude a christological-pneumatological reinterpretation. By now this should be clear.

⁶ Meeks, 1993, 86.

One should take due cognisance of Bonhoeffer's warning that ethics should never be abstract, neither should it be casuistic. It must, however, be entirely concrete. By this he means that an ethic developed in abstraction could very easily be unmasked as totally insensitive to a context for which it was not prepared. In order to make it applicable for any conceivable situation, one would have to develop such an elaborate casuistic system that it becomes totally unmanageable. To his mind it is much rather about Christ taking concrete form amongst believers and in the world in everyday reality.¹ In this regard the well-known Biblical realism of Hendrik Kraemer is most relevant. Christian ethics is never an entity on its own, or an aim in itself. It is born from and borne in a living, historical² relationship with God in Christ Jesus and through his Spirit. Although it is eternally fixed in God and his will, it is also eternally changing as it finds its application in the ever-changing context of each day. Differently put, the Christian ethic is very flexible in its application, but fixed in God's being and will.³ It is a live entity! It always seeks to create new ways in new situations to concretise God's will in deeds of love.

In the sphere of Biblical realism, to do the will of God is a spontaneous act and a decision of loving obedience, because God's will is love and can only be done in free, spontaneous love. To do it otherwise means to do it not at all. The Christian ethic, well understood, is the joyful liberty of the pure-hearted children of God.⁴

A parenthetical remark would not be totally out of place at this point. Too often, as one listens to laymen and scholars, one gets the impression that believers, being hermeneutically pressed and often uncertain of what to make of biblical laws in new situations, take the even more uncertain road of trying to strike a balance between decontextualised *law requirements* and modern responsible and feasible action. Seen this way, it often boils down to either a choice between fundamentalist biblical ethics and subjective libertarian action, or striking a balance between the two. However, both are equally un-Pauline and equally irresponsible. With regard to the fundamentalist approach one must take full cognisance of the fact that ethics in biblical times was also creative and participationist within its context. The following remark by J.A. Sanders with regard to a more fundamentalist approach is exceptionally brilliant and relevant:

Their argument, as I understand it, is that the ancient culture reflected in the Bible is that which God wills for humans today. The major problem with that is that the Bible was formed and shaped over a 1200-year period in antiquity (no matter the theory of authorship) from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age to the Persian Period to the Greek and Roman eras. And each of the cultures of those eras in and through which the Bible was formed left its mark in biblical literature. The Bible, therefore, is transcultural and does not reflect a single ethic but is full of cultural dialogue.⁵

In the next chapter it will be illustrated that Gl. 5:25-26 and Gl. 6:9-10 form a chiasmus around the maxims that Paul communicated to the Galatians.⁶ Of significance at this stage is the fact that, given the chiasmus, it seems Gl. 5:25-26 introduces

¹ Bonhoeffer, 1978, 66.

² Meeks, 1993, 214-7.

³ Kraemer, 1977, 87-8.

⁴ Kraemer, 1977, 88.

⁵ J.A. Sanders, 2002², 125.

⁶ See Ch. 7 at §1 and fig. 7.1 dealing with the structure of Gl. 5:25-6:10.

and Gl. 6:9-10 summarises and concludes the maxims. Read together, the two sub-sections state that believers are obliged to walk according to the Spirit (Gl. 5:25-26) and that this would result in the believers doing good to all men, but especially to those of faith who are closer to them, and according to what the specific context calls for. If this assumption is correct, Paul's maxims (Gl. 6:1-8) are an indication of what their specific ethical needs in Galatia were. Once again, Paul creates a situation conducive to the Galatians being able to work out what had to be done amongst themselves, only providing the main parameters. In fact, if we accept that Gl. 5:13 introduces the ethical section proper and Gl. 6:10 concludes it, we can deduce that Paul's whole ethic of freedom is summarised in doing good as loving service in accordance with the Spirit's guidance.¹

Within this frame of reference one could say Paul's ethic came close to one of commonsense and commonly accepted practice, but born from a heart set right with God in Christ, ethically enabled by his Spirit, and aiming to serve God and neighbour in love.² For this reason there can never be any room for moral heroism³ or self-aggrandisement. It is always aimed at glorifying God.

4.1.4. *Participationist ethics of the mature*

From what has been argued up to now, it seems reasonable to describe Paul's ethics as participationist. *Firstly*, he is willing to include ethical dictums from different traditions, cultures, philosophies and religions. The proviso being that it must be in accordance with the law of Christ – the new paradigm of life! *Secondly*, he is slow to award his ethical dictums with apostolic authority as though he were the sole judge on these matters. After all, all believers have the Spirit and he makes much about this in his letter. *Thirdly*, he involves the whole community in ethical decision making, as well as in the restoration of sinners (Gl. 6:1-10).⁴

Although on a different subject, namely the narrative substructure of Paul's thought, Horrell indirectly contributes to the creative ethics issue and the role of community.

[I]n opposition to a certain kind of cerebral Christianity, it shows that Pauline thought cannot be conveyed as a series of propositions to be believed but only as a story⁵ that is 'lived', retold, and embodied in the practices of the community that celebrates that story.

He adds that Pauline ethics is not about setting up lists of principles and judgments on certain issues. It is more about forming the character of the believer as part of a specific community of believers who are part of an existing story and build onto it.⁶ It is about these characters making responsible choices in

¹ Snyman, 1992, 480.

² Meeks, 1993, 217: "Common sense is shaped, in the way I have argued in this book moral sensibilities are shaped, by common lore, common tradition, common practices, by our memory and our experience – no other way."

³ Kraemer, 1977, 91.

⁴ Both Meeks, 1993, 216-7; and Hays, 1997, 187-9, speak of this aspect, the diversity of opinion or insight, in the community of faith as polyphonic. Snyman, 1992, 482.

⁵ Horrell, 2002, 170.

⁶ Horrell, 2002, 170.

terms of the position in which the community finds itself at that point.¹ This fits in well with what we have found till now. Paul's ethic is based on his theology. The indicative of the christological-pneumatologically defined paradigm brings about a change in the character of the believer. He now lives life as new creation and makes responsible choices as led by the Spirit and resulting in deeds of loving service. Because there is no fixed and detailed set of ordinances according to which choices are made, even unwittingly, he has to consider situations as they arise. He has to apply the necessary discretion born from his new self-understanding, in order for his decisions to be responsible.²

Obviously, certain patterns of action would result, making choices easier, but still not automatic. On the other hand, an ethical pattern of action might take a specific form in one situation or community, but take a slightly different form in another. How love and respect is communicated does not have to do only with the intentions of the communicator. He has to take the context in which he operates into consideration. Will the object of his love experience it as he intended it? Paul clearly illustrates this in his ethical praxis in 1 Cor. 8:4-10; 9:19-23; 10:23-33. Obviously, referring to different situations, one also includes temporally different situations. What is accepted as responsible and respectable in one generation could easily and correctly be regarded by a next as indiscriminate, antiquated, fossilised, uncouth, boorish or inappropriate for the new situation. As knowledge demythologises old patterns of thought and accompanying ways of doing it becomes necessary to adapt one's ethical patterns to the new point of view.³

This is not to advocate a form of situational ethics in which principles are subordinated to the most practical and practicable set of actions. It is not about accommodating sin or finding middle ground, because it seems the best way to go or to keep most people happy. It is not about compromising principle or going with the flow of things. It is about individuals and communities living by the Spirit and wishing to walk in step with the Spirit, having to honestly seek the form in which the love of Christ is to be communicated and lived in a specific place and time so as to come across as though Christ incarnate is present (Gl. 2:20).

Paul's ethics accordingly cannot be understood as timely moral truth, independent of all historical conditions. Its individual injunctions are not meant without exception for all people in

¹ Gerhardsson, 1987, 17, also stresses the profound role of the community, as well as responsibility in the pneumatological ethic. He writes: "In the fellowship of the congregation some typical attitudes emerge, are discerned, and encouraged, and are consolidated. A Christian way of life is developed, which the law, if it had the right to pass judgement upon it, would not be able to condemn."

² Lategan, 1990, 324.

³ Examples are abundant. To mention but a few: what to eat and what to drink; the wearing of a head-covering by women; the length of ones' hair; the unquestioning positive reaction of a child to his parents' requests as opposed to his wanting to first understand and be party to the decision; the handing down of corporal punishment as opposed to remedial action; the indiscriminate rejection of the use of condoms in a society where HIV-AIDS is prevalent, as opposed to calling on the use of it by a society that does not wish to abstain; etc. See Schweizer, 1979, 207-8.

all situations; in part they are unique and unrepeatable (cf. Philemon), in part quite pragmatic and practical (cf. 1 Cor. 16:2).¹

Pauline ethics distinguishes itself from any notion of situational ethics by the mere fact that it is not aimed at pleasing man, but at glorifying God in the way we love and serve fellowmen. It is not anthropologically, but theologically motivated. To think of Pauline ethics in Galatians wholly in terms of neighbourly love in isolation from God's love in Christ and the fact that He is to be glorified, is to create a commonsense ethic alien to Paul's.² When we refer to commonsense in Pauline ethics, it is about that which is commonsense to the regenerated man. Much of it, probably most, on a horizontal level, would be commonsense to the unregenerate as well. However, because the Christian ethic is generated from a heart set right with God, it will seek God's glory. In unregenerate society one's ethics in a given situation might be determined by one's concern for an individual, sympathy with his/her dilemma, defence of the dignity of the individual concerned, appreciation for the individual, or even a reciprocating obligation borne from the past, etc. Although these impositions all have a bearing on how one deals with the individual, when push comes to shove, the believer's love of his neighbour is coloured by his love of God in the first place.

Christian morality is indeed resumed in love of neighbour, but it is not *reduced* to it, if by that we mean that love of neighbour competes with, overrides or replaces the particular demands which confront the Christian in virtue of his total situation.³

Paul does not wish to drown the life of Christians in a sea of casuistic trivia. Nor does he wish to provide laws applicable to every conceivable situation. But he does wish for concrete application to real life...The difference between Paul's approach and casuistry lies not in a lack of concreteness, but in the absence of any elaborate system embodying every possible injunction and reducing them all to the lowest common denominator of triviality.⁴

This calls for *responsibility* on the part of the *individual* and the *corporate body*, the subject of our next chapter.

5. CONCLUSION

The ethic that Paul advocates and reflects in the letter to the Galatians has many aspects to it. In order to conclude this chapter as clearly as possible, I will briefly reflect and summarise these aspects. Importantly though, these aspects are not separable and should be seen as well integrated into one holistic ethical paradigm.

i) *A theological ethic*

Paul's ethic is wholly theological. It is founded on the initiative and will of God as He pronounced it in the deliverance that his Son attained for those believ-

¹ Schrage, 1988, 191. I gather from the context that by "timely" he means that which is meant for all times.

² Douma, 1981, 89; Thielicke, 1979, 648-67.

³ Deidun, 1981, 185.

⁴ Schrage, 1988, 189.

ing in Him. It is not anthropological in the sense of being born from man and his insight in life on a mere horizontal level. It is not about man subjectively deciding on what is ethically good from his or his society's point of view, but about what God wants. It is about God who provided man with salvation through his Son and who makes it possible for the believer to live according to his will through the Spirit whom he equally provided. God provided a new soteriological and ethical paradigm in the advent of his Son and Spirit. The believer is to live within and according to this paradigm characterised by love and sacrificing service.

God does not impose an imperative on man without firstly providing him with the indicative in his Son and Spirit. Equally, having provided the indicative, he does not leave it to man to decide whether he wishes to react positively on the imperative. The imperative is not optional, but obligatory upon the believer. The indicative and imperative are not separable, but the two sides of one coin. Neither are they to be regarded as the division between God's work and man's. God provides both the indicative and the imperative in Christ and the Spirit. Man is to respond to both the indicative and the imperative by faith in Christ through the Spirit, and equally, by obedience to Christ and his Spirit within.¹

ii) *A christological ethic*

Paul's ethic is solidly founded on his soteriology. His soteriology can be described as the believer's freedom from the present evil age dominated by flesh, as provided by God in the Christ event and quickened existentially by the Spirit. He refers to this new status of the believer as a vocation (Gl. 5:13). He has been freed and is called to be free. Obviously, this implies that the believer is to live in freedom. If salvation is described as freedom, then the ethics following from this new status should also be characterised by the same token of freedom. Paul does not have a soteriology disparate to his ethics. His soteriology is about being free from flesh and having crucified the flesh and being dead to the world. It is about living through the Spirit.

Equally, the ethic emanating from this status is born from the intimate relationship with the Spirit. If his soteriology is about being free from flesh's *secundi*, law and the elements of the world, his ethic is equally free from law and the elements. When he speaks of the *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2) he does not have a new Christian set of rules or ethical system in view, but the new paradigm God provided in Christ and his Spirit. Having been set free from the flesh by Christ, and subsequently quickened to faith by the Spirit, the believer is persistently to live in step with the Spirit. His life and salvation being founded on the faithfulness of Christ, the believer has to live in accordance with Christ's faithfulness.

¹ The believer's obligation to God will be revisited in the next chapter by way of the family metaphor.

iii) *A pneumatological ethic*

In the advent of Christ and his Spirit, through faith, a new mode of living was introduced. It is not about balancing one's freedom with law in some form so as to prevent one from falling prey to flesh. Law has never been able to curb flesh. In fact, under influence of the latter, law became aligned with flesh and therefore opposed to the Spirit. What law could not do in the old dispensation, the Spirit would now do without the help of law. It is not about an inner conflict between flesh and Spirit as equals. Flesh has been dealt with. It has been crucified with Christ. It is a beaten foe that cannot stand up to the Spirit. The believer is therefore to allow himself to be led by the Spirit. In the process he will bear the fruit typical of a life in the Spirit. It is the believer's responsibility to be led by the Spirit and to walk in step with Him. The fruit will follow, not as a work of the law, but as a fulfilling of the purpose to which law was given.

We investigated Paul's use of the three pneumatological phrases, εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι (Gl. 5:25), πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε (Gl. 5:16) and πνεύματι στοιχῶμεν (Gl.5:25). We found that it underlines the notion that Paul's ethics was built on his soteriology. New life was given by the Spirit and had to be lived through the Spirit as opposed to following the guidance of a law of some kind. If there was one point of orientation to which the believing community had to orientate, it was to the guidance provided by the Spirit. This, we argued, is in no way comparable to an orderless *laissez faire* ethic. Rather, it is about a well-ordered life in the absence of the dictates of law or some form of natural ethics and to the glory of God. It is given from the internal guidance provided by the Spirit. Obviously, subjectivity (even well-meant and "spiritual" subjectivity) can derail such guidance. Therefore, Paul emphasises the individual's responsibility, as well as that of the community, to seek God's will and his glory. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

iv) *An anomistic ethic of obliging obedience*

The central thrust of both Paul's soteriology and ethics is that a new paradigm has been inaugurated by Christ. He refers to this as the *law of Christ*. The believer is to live according to this paradigm. He is a new creation. This is the paradigm in which the Spirit enables the believer to live according to God's will, and guides him in what is expected in every situation. It is not a new law.

The norm of this ethic is the love of the neighbour. Obviously, although Paul does not expound the matter, the love of God is implied in the believer's faith which is nothing less than total surrender to Him. He refers to it as being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:20). While law intended to promote a life of love towards the neighbour, but was unsuccessful because of flesh, the christological-pneumatological ethic that God has now provided makes this goal possible and incumbent upon the believer.

With regard to Paul's seemingly positive remarks on law and his reference to specific laws from time to time in other letters, we determined that these instances do not indicate that Paul foresaw a role of some kind for law in Christian ethics. Paul's positive remarks on law can be discounted against the original intention with law. It was given for a limited time, meant to curb sin and a gift for Israel alone. God gave it and therefore Paul makes positive remarks in that sense. He is also positive with regard to the goal of law, namely the believers' obligation to love. But, in the new dispensation all of this has been taken over by the Spirit. He has written this on the hearts of the believers. Law is thus irrelevant. Equally, when Paul refers to instances of law and seemingly builds his ethics on these laws, it is evident that he only cites these laws in the sense that they are so obviously expressions of love that they will not be disputed in the particular situation. Paul did not ground his ethics in law. He grounded it in the love and faithfulness of Christ from which followed the obligation to love.

In this paradigm of the enablement of the Spirit, Paul is very wary of an ethic of maximal regulation. It was unsuccessful in the old dispensation. True, given the new creation and the Spirit and flesh's crucifixion, man was now in a better position to live up to law's requirements. However, the Spirit is not in need of laws, because he works internally. The believer is under the obligation to bear the fruit of the Spirit. He is not relieved of that duty. However, he does exactly that, because of the Spirit's indwelling without the use of law.

Paul does not promote ethical relativism or subjectivism. He lays a heavy obligation on believers to live in accordance to God's will, but not in a nomistic fashion. He promotes an anomistic ethic of being guided by the Spirit in every new situation, so as to translate the love of God in Christ into that situation, and so to glorify God.

v) *An ethic for its time and place*

We found that Paul's approach to ethics is very creative. He makes use of a variety of maxims from different circles in his *Umwelt*. He has a type of commonsense approach to ethics. He seeks that which is good in God's sight for a specific context. He takes maxims from outside the religious realm, from the philosophical realm, and introduces them into the life of the Christian community. Obviously he would only use those compatible with Christian theology and aimed at doing God's will while loving the neighbour. The big difference from other ethics not primarily being on the level of *what* is required, but that the believer is *enabled* to do good and does it altruistically and to *God's glory*.

vi) *An ethic of participation*

This ethic is not one in which the individual reigns supreme. It is an ethic involving the community. The community not only provides the context in which the ethic is lived, love proven and the self sacrificed. It is equally involved in de-

termining what is ethically acceptable in the community and instrumental in the application. Although the community is without law it is not amoral or immoral. It lives a life of high moral quality under direct guidance of the Spirit. This does not mean that certain patterns of moral action do not take form. This would obviously happen. However, as soon as the pattern becomes the moral authority and opens the way for casuistics and formalism, stripping the believer of direct moral responsibility before God, that pattern has become an external law of the same order as the Mosaic law and the old elements of the world.

* * * * *

Paul undoubtedly went out of his way to bring the Galatians to understand that the apocalyptic event of the advent of Jesus and his Spirit, not only stripped law from any notion of effecting salvation, but also from playing any essential part in ethics. Surrendering to God through Christ and his Spirit, implied living life through Christ and his Spirit. The community of faith would live by faith and not by law in any form.

CHAPTER 7

AN ETHIC OF FREEDOM IN THE SIGHT OF GOD AND IN THE MIDST OF THE COMMUNITY

We have determined that the believer, crucified with Christ and endowed with his Spirit, bears fruit befitting new creation. Christ freed him from flesh's demands on him, enabling him to be influenced by the Spirit. In other words, Pauline ethics is christologically founded in the freedom God provided in Christ (Gl. 1:4; 5:1), and pneumatologically initiated, actualised and driven in the believer's life. We indicated that Christian ethics is not essentially about the pursuit of external ethical codes, but about emanating Christ crucified's self-sacrificing love quickened by the Spirit in the inner being of the believer. One could erroneously assume that a pneumatological ethic is a euphemism for blatant Christian subjectivism – a distorted view according to which the believer may do as he pleases on the assumption that he is free and is led by the Spirit irrespectively. To question his views and deeds is tantamount to dishonouring the Spirit. Consequently, this chapter deals with the importance of ethical responsibility, individually and communally, as well as accountability to God in the final analysis. Paul is extremely emphatic on these matters in Gl. 6:1-8. Although the Christian ethos is a fruit of the Spirit, springing from the relationship with Christ through his Spirit, it is not altogether automatic. The believer bears responsibility to be influenced by the Spirit and not to resign to the flesh. Christian ethics is put into practice amongst people and to God's glory (Gl. 1:4-5).

In this respect we will have to attend to the question of the role of ethical codes in Christianity. How does Paul deal with the matter of ethical creativity and participation in practice? Does his use of the different maxims in Gl. 6:1-10 not in effect reintroduce the notion of an external law or ethical system? Does his use of these maxims fit the picture argued in the previous chapter, or does it in fact indicate an external ethical system of some kind? After mentioning the list of virtues, predominantly aimed at communal life, Paul reiterates the importance of doing good to all, especially to those of faith. The social character of Christian ethics includes that the community of faith take *responsibility* for one another, restoring one another and bearing one another's burdens. It will be argued, contrary to modern, individualistic Christian practice in general, that Christians are to take responsibility for the welfare of others and for the restoration of relationships. Paul equally emphasises *accountability to God*. Though he emphasises it only near the end (Gl. 6:7-8), it is implied throughout, e.g., in the metaphor of the believer's *sonship of God* (Gl. 3:23-4:7), the *covenantal promise* (Gl. 3:15-20; 4:21-31) and the *Israel of God* (Gl. 6:16).¹

1. STRUCTURAL MATTERS

Despite the difficulty in finding some structure in this section,² these maxims are not at all unrelated. The field of structural suggestions vary from refraining from

¹ The reader is reminded that a few matters pertaining to this section of Paul's letter have been dealt with already, such as *new creation* (Gl. 6:15), *living and walking by the Spirit* (Gl. 5:25), and *law of Christ* (Gl. 6:2).

² Despite criticism of Betz' view on rhetoric in Galatians and how the section holds together, it has already been acknowledged in Ch. 5 that his division of Gl. 5:1-6:10 is accepted. Therefore, other than most, our chapter will deal with Gl. 5:25-6:10 as a unit and not merely Gl. 6:1-10.

making any suggestions¹ to breaking it up into smaller units so meticulously² that one wonders whether the *sententiae* hold together only in their being compiled by Paul. Some divide Gl. 6:1-10 into two parts, with the division either between Gl. 6:5 and 6,³ or between Gl. 6:6 and 7.⁴ There are also those dividing it into three parts, i.e. Gl. 6:1-5, 6:6 and 6:7-10,⁵ or even into four, namely Gl. 6:1-2, 6:3-5, 6:6, and 6:7-10.⁶ All of these positions can be substantiated in some way or another. What is interesting is that Gl. 6:6 seems to be difficult to place. The more one breaks up the pericope, the more Gl. 6:6 is distinctly different from the others – even out of place.⁷ Why would Paul have added this maxim? How does it relate to the others, if at all? We shall return to this.

I agree with most scholars that Paul did not merely “dump” a few ethical maxims, mostly Hellenistic in origin, on the Galatians without some relevance to their situation. The letter as a whole reflects a high degree of structural integrity and everything Paul writes is highly relevant to the argument. The urgency with which he tackled the Galatian problem is reflected in different ways. The letter’s internal logic and rhetoric, and the way in which all the parts hold together, culminating in the ethical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10), make it very difficult to think Paul would, just before his grand conclusion and greeting (Gl. 6:11-18), throw in a few loose cannonballs. Why would he, after such prudence, break off the logic of his reasoning at the point where everything had to be wrapped up? It can be assumed that the context called for verbalised admonitions. To the original readers they would have made immediate sense. Hopefully our discussion will assist us in making sense of it. On the face of things, it seems extremely difficult to find an apparent structure in the text. It is doubtful that any suggestion pertaining to structure can be regarded as final – the present suggestion included. However, it is necessary to find some internal logic so as not to miss finer nuances. I would argue for the simplest possible structure.

The section is *chiastically* enclosed by markedly different exhortations from those in Gl. 6:1-8. *Firstly*, Paul includes himself throughout, making abundant use of the first person plural in the verbs and participles. I refer to Gl. 5:25-26 as introductory, and Gl. 6:9-10 as concluding exhortations. *Secondly*, the character of the exhortations in Gl. 5:25-26 and 6:9-10 are less gnomic and express what is typically or endemically Christian: the paradigm of living by and walking in step with the Spirit (Gl. 5:25), and typically Christian allusions to the *parousia* (καρπός and *reaping and sowing*).⁸ *Thirdly*, enhancing this chiasmus, are the introductory exhortations (Gl. 5:25-26) starting off by stating the expected con-

¹ Schlier, 1971; Duncan, 1934; Bruce, 1982¹.

² Betz, 1979 291-3. Betz acknowledges it “appears confused, but it is not without organization and structure” (291), regarding the internal connection it is more on the level of “language and inner logic” than textual structure.

³ Lightfoot, 1890, 67; Kuck, 1994, 290.

⁴ Oepke, 1989, 265.

⁵ Mußner, 1974, viii. Esler, 1998, 230-3, also divides it into three parts, but differently, i.e. Gl. 6:1-6, 7-9 & 10.

⁶ NEB

⁷ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 271, suggests just this.

⁸ We have dealt with the apocalyptic element of these terms in Ch. 2.

duct positively (25), and following by banning certain negative attitudes and deeds amongst them (26). The opposite occurs in the concluding exhortations (Gl. 6:9-10), the negative, *not* to grow weary of well-doing and *not* to lose heart (9), stated first and followed by the positive exhortation to do good (10).

Everything between the two markers is more gnomic or aphoristic. A further division of these utterances is possible. *Firstly*, Gl. 6:1-6 is focussed on the *horizontal level*, dealing with both the ethical responsibilities of *individual* believers (1b,3-5) and their responsibilities toward fellow believers (1a, 2, 6). Together with this, there is also the *corporate responsibility* of the community of faith towards its constitutive individuals (Gl. 6:1-2). *Secondly*, Gl. 6:7-8 is focussed on the *vertical level*, dealing with the believer's relationship with God (7) and the Spirit (8); God being the final judge or rewarder of believers' actions, and the Spirit the one through whom they are led and enabled to sow with a view to eternal life. This gives rise to the structure below (fig.7.1), illustrating the chiasmus with its introductory and concluding exhortative principles (Gl. 5:25-26; 6:9-10); the maxims on horizontal responsibilities (Gl. 6:1-6); and vertical accountability (Gl. 6:7-8). Hopefully this will serve us well regarding Christian freedom and ethics.

Gl. 5:25 εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν.	+
26 μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι, ἀλλήλους προκαλοῦμενοι, ἀλλήλοις φθονοῦντες.	-

Horizontal responsibility

- 6:1a (other) Ἄδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημψῆθῃ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινι παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος,
 6:1b (self) σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς.
 2 (other) Ἄλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε, καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
 3 (self) εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τις εἶναι τι μὴδὲν ὦν, φρεναπατᾶ ἑαυτοῦ·
 4 (self) τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος, καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἔξει καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον·
 5 (self) ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει.
 6 (other) Κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ καταχρούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ καταχοῦντι ἐν πάσιν ἀγαθοῖς.

Vertical accountability

- 7 (God) Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, θεὸς οὐ μκπητρίζεται· ὁ γὰρ ἐὰν σπεῖρη ἄνθρωπος τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει·
 8 (Spirit) ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν, ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

9 τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιοῦντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν, καιρῷ γὰρ ἰδίῳ θερίσομεν μὴ ἐκλυόμενοι.	-
10 ἄρα οὐν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως.	+

Fig. 7.1.

What is important at this point is that Paul seems to bring the matter of ethics right into the midst of the Galatians' current concrete situation. He had dealt at length with the immediate problem of circumcision and law (Gl. 3-4). He had come to the conclusion

that the reversion to law was tantamount to severance from Christ and falling away from grace (Gl. 5:4). They had been given freedom in Christ and had to stand firm in it (Gl. 5:1). In fact, they even had a divine vocation to live in this freedom (Gl. 5:13). In the previous chapter it became clear that Paul, having taken law out of the theological and ethical equation, had to explain in greater detail how the ethics of the new dispensation worked. He described it as an ethic produced in the believer by the guidance and enablement of the Spirit – a pneumatological ethic as it were. This ethical fruit was multi-dimensional, but primarily boiled down to loving service and the willingness to set one's own interest second to that of others (Gl. 5:22-23). This was also after expressing the so-called love command as the fulfilment of the law (Gl. 5:14).

In a sense one could regard Paul's list of Christian ethical qualities, as well as the call to love the neighbour, as largely theoretical. He was discussing ethics as subject and the norm of love could very easily be regarded as an abstract entity. It could even remain such. Therefore, after having argued his view on ethics, he moves on to explain how it was relevant to their own situation. How were they to move on from where they were? How were the Galatians to put walking in the Spirit into practice *in Galatia*? How was the creative and participationist ethic to be implemented in their concrete situation?

The use of the first person plural in the chiasmus creates intimacy, which is enhanced by his reference in Gl. 6:10 to the community of believers as "the household of faith". They were family! It is as if Paul at this point intended sitting down at a table with the Galatians and saying to them: "Alright, you've heard my whole argument. Now, how do we apply this ethic in the very situation we are in now? Where do we go from here?" In other words, he clearly expects the Galatians to review their current situation and to make the necessary and correct decisions in view of the fact that they lived by the Spirit and were expected to walk in step with Him. Most commentators are agreed that Paul's negatively formulated hortatory subjunctives in Gl. 5:26 should be explained in terms of the Judaising opposition. Either Paul was explaining how believers were not to operate and suggesting that the opponents were handling the situation incorrectly, or they themselves had followed suit in their internal debate on the matter of law and needed to be admonished by Paul's very specific reference to misbehaviour amongst themselves.

Whichever way one looks at it, it seems obvious, Paul would not have mentioned these examples of misbehaviour and suggested these guidelines if they were totally unconnected to the specific situation. One could safely say Paul was addressing a very specific situation to which he applied his ethic as argued up to that point. What we have here is applied Pauline ethics as a culmination of his arguments. He never intended his ethical views to be mere points of philosophical discussion, but to be put to use and concretised in daily living in the community of faith.

One should not award Gl. 6:6 the status of hermeneutical key to our current pericope. Gl. 6:6 is not a loose addendum which should be understood as an entity in isolation from the rest of the letter. It is part of an integral whole and

should be understood in terms of the paradigm of ethical conduct in the new dispensation of freedom in Christ. It is about specific guidelines with regard to walking in step with the Spirit by whom they live (Gl. 5:25) in a situation of which Paul is quick to add, that there was self-conceit, provoking and envy of one another (Gl. 5:26).

2. AN ETHIC OF TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Even though Paul describes his ethic as one of being crucified to the world (Gl. 6:14); of Christ living in the believer (Gl. 2:20); living by the Spirit (Gl. 5:25); and the ethical qualities of this new life emanating from the relationship with the Spirit in the same way as fruit is produced by the tree of which it is part; and that it is not the result of the believer's hard labour and efforts (Gl. 5:22-23), he never gives the impression that this life follows automatically on the relationship with the Spirit of Christ. For this reason Paul follows up his indicatives with imperatives. In Gl. 5:1 Paul's indicative of freedom in Christ is followed up by his imperative to stand firm in that freedom and not to submit to slavery again. Gl. 5:13 fixes the admonition not to abuse freedom as an opportunity for the flesh on to the indicative of the vocation to freedom. He even adds the so-called love command (Gl. 5:14). Gl. 5:16 exhorts the Galatians to walk according to the Spirit. In the same vein he follows in Gl. 5:25 with the call to complement the indicative of their living by the Spirit with the imperative of walking in step with the Spirit. This is evidence enough that Paul does not think of the believer as a thoughtless ethical automat doing as the Spirit commands. In fact, if this were the way the Spirit operated it would rob the believer anew of his freedom in Christ. Of course, Paul would also have to explain why believers still sin, but this is not currently our concern.

Paul most definitely values ethical responsibility exceedingly highly. The freedom in Christ and according to his Spirit is one that always involves the call to take up the responsibility of not only living by the Spirit, but actually walking in step with the way He points out.¹ The Christian's responsibility is not to match the guidance of the Spirit with works of law from his own resources, but to allow the Spirit to convince him of and enable him to do that which is fitting to the situation and emanates the love of Christ to the glory of God.

[F]reedom did not mean that there was no moral discipline or moral direction. Moral discipline, for Paul is applied through identification with the cross of Christ: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (5:24). And moral direction is provided by the Holy Spirit: "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law" (5:18).²

The structure of evangelical ethics is essentially determined by the fact that its sole task is to spell out and expound what Luther calls the "freedom of a Christian man." This freedom implies that we are free from the Law and from tutelage, that we are the children of God and hence are of age, mature [*mündig*]. This means above all that we are always the subjects of

¹ Buckel, 1993, 209-13.

² Hansen, 1997, 221.

our action. Those who are under the Law are not subjects of their own action but merely objects of an alien will; they are “functionaries.”¹

As we have seen in the simple structure above (*fig. 7.1*), Paul does not limit his call for responsibility to the individual in his relationships. He equally ardently calls on the believing community to take responsibility for individuals in its midst. But besides this responsibility of believers on the horizontal level (Gl. 6:3-6) there is a profound sense of accountability to God and the Spirit on the vertical level (Gl. 6:7-8).

2.1. An ethic involving community

Paul did not advocate an individualistic ethic that ran the risk of being subjectively determined under the guise of being given by the Spirit. The question is therefore: what proviso did Paul build into his ethical rationale through which the possibility of a subjectively misconstrued or downright misguided ethic could be countered? Given the fact that the believer would not necessarily walk by the Spirit and that he/she would always run the risk of not distinguishing between the Spirit and their own spirit, what mechanism was available for testing the fruit presenting themselves in Christian lives, to determine whether they were from the Spirit or according to the flesh?

I would argue that Paul placed a very high premium on the community of believers being so involved with one another, and the common good of the household of faith, that this social fabric of the community of faith would assist to discern between right and wrong and to build the moral fabric of the community.²

2.2. Horizontal communal responsibility

2.2.1. *Never on your own. About we, us and sound relationships*

This element in Paul's ethical reasoning is of the utmost importance. Viewing the matter from modern Western civilisation's individualism, a very heavy burden of hermeneutical responsibility and integrity rests on scholars dealing with this subject. It is common knowledge that the first-century Mediterranean personality was essentially dyadic. In other words, personality was not viewed in individualistic terms, but in terms of inter-relatedness. It was about personality being defined in terms of others and behaving in terms of the expectations of others – always embedded in a specific group with its own identity and ethos. Paul does not seem to change this. The following is indicative of Paul's continued thinking in terms of the community and the corporate personality.

- Paul makes almost exclusive use of the second person plural when addressing the Galatians in his ethical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10). The same must be said of his use of the personal pronoun. The only times he does not do this, is when he includes himself in their number (e.g., Gl. 5:5, 25, 26; 6:9, 10), and when he refers to the fictitious third person singular (Gl. 6:1, 3-8).

¹ Thielicke, 1979, 455.

² Jewett, 1994, 250.

One must add, however, that in the case of the latter it can hardly be said that Paul has an individualistic ethic in mind. It will become clearer in due course that even this use is embedded in the context of the community.

- In addition to this, Paul makes good use of the reflexive pronoun ἀλλήλους (“one another” – Gl. 5:15, 26; 6:2) and refers to the Galatians in the vocative ἀδελφοί (“brothers” – Gl. 5:11, 13; 6:1). This term indicates closeness, intimacy and affection enhancing the notion of communality.¹
- His list of “works of the flesh” is heavily burdened with vices that reflect discord in the community.² Equally, the “fruit of the Spirit” is a list of qualities of which most are conducive to unity within the community.³
- Paul’s reference to the believing community as the “household of faith” (Gl. 6:10) is of the utmost importance for our subject.⁴ The imagery of family was a most effective way of communicating horizontal relations and responsibilities in the ancient Mediterranean world. The family as basic unit of the societal structure was vastly determinative of society. As of late much has been done on a social-scientific level to probe the depth of the metaphor.⁵ One’s social position was determined by the family into which one was born. It determined one’s identity and social standing or honour.⁶ Believers were spiritually the family of God and family of one another. They had, therefore, to think and act as a family unit.⁷ Living according to the family identity determined whether one honoured or disgraced the whole family.⁸

Of importance for our discussion of Gl. 5:25-6:10 is that the whole section is enclosed by koinonial references. Gl. 5:25-26 very explicitly makes abundant use of the first person plural (“we”, “us”) and the reflexive pronoun “one another.”

2.2.2. *About sinning and restoring*

The paradigm shift from the present evil age dominated by flesh and its *secundi*, law and the elements, to the new dispensation founded on Christ pre-

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 271.

² Esler, 1998, 228.

³ Esler, 1998, 229.

⁴ Take note of other supporting elements, such as the fatherhood of God (Gl. 1:1, 3, 4; 4:2, 6); Christ’s offspring from Abraham (Gl. 3:15), as well as that of the believer in Christ (Gl. 3:29); and the believer’s heirship in Christ (Gl. 3:29); and the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Gl. 4:21-31). We return to these in §4.2.3. below. Of obvious significance with regard to the family metaphor, is the reference to the “household of faith” (τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως - Gl. 6:10). Gl. 4:5 introduces the notion of the believer’s adoption by God through faith in Christ. He expands the idea by introducing the Spirit in the same breath as the One through whom the believer calls to God: “ἄββα ὁ πατήρ” (Gl. 4:6).

⁵ It is impossible to make mention of all investigations. The references made in the course of our arguments should suffice in reflecting the mainline arguments regarding current research results. A word of warning with regard to these studies is appropriate. Van der Watt, 1999, 492, warns that on this subject one works “in rather abstract and generalized terms.” The reason for this being that one must accept that there was cultural diversity in the ancient Mediterranean world.

⁶ Van der Watt, 1999, 494.

⁷ Van der Watt, 2000, 289-93.

⁸ Van der Watt, 1999, 496.

sent in his Spirit, had brought about radical changes on more than one level. Obviously, when the foundation of faith changes from a promise still unfulfilled and law, to the fulfilment in Christ and his Spirit, it simply has to impact not only on the foundation of salvation and ethics, but equally on the level of the restoration of the sinner. Christ had fulfilled law together with its sacrificial system which communicated the sinner's remorse. God set the sinner's relationship with Him right, as well as the sinner's relationship with the community to the extent that it could be done. We have dwelt extensively on the matter of restoring the relationship with God in the new dispensation. What remains, is the restoration of the sinner in concrete community life,¹ as well as the role of the community in restoring the sinner in relation to God.

Paul does not create the impression that the believing community no longer sins. He assumes it to be the case that believers still sin. In Gl. 6:1 he writes:

Ἄδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημφθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινὶ παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραύτητος, σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς.

Paul's use of "brothers" (ἀδελφοί) not only implies he is about to make an important statement,² but also sets the tone in which they were to deal with sinners. He takes the harshness often characteristic of the old dispensation out of the equation. After all, the curse on the sinner associated with the old dispensation (Gl. 3:10) had been dealt with by Christ when He Himself became a curse via the law (Gl. 3:13). Thus, the curse had now been removed and could not be part of the new dispensation, even though believers still sinned. With Christ living in the believer (Gl. 2:20), as well as the Spirit through whom the believer calls to the Father (Gl. 4:6), a new way of dealing with sin and sinners in the believing community was called for.

R.N. Longenecker suggests that the protasis was written to serve a future situation that would most probably arise (ἐάν with a subjunctive verb). Although Paul creates indefiniteness, he adds the high probability of such an occurrence.³ He enhances this notion by using ἄνθρωπος ("a man") in a generic sense, not having a specific person in mind. On the other hand, he is not referring to an altogether general situation. He is after all dealing with these brothers to whom he is writing and giving very concrete advice.⁴

The questions to be answered by this Pauline exhortation are: *firstly*, how is sin identified in the new dispensation in the absence of law? *Secondly*, what does Paul mean when he uses the verb προλαμβάνω ("surprised", "overtaken")? Does he mean that the sinner was surprised by sin, caught unawares as it were, therefore not sinning altogether intentionally; or does he have in mind that

¹ Betz, 1979, 295.

² Betz, 1979, 295;

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 272.

⁴ I refrain from substantiating this notion by referral to MSS that have tried to enhance this notion by substituting ἄνθρωπος with the indefinite τις ("anyone", "someone") or the addition of ἐξ ὑμῶν ("of you") such as is done by R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 272.

the sinner was caught unawares by his fellow believers while sinning? *Thirdly*, how does restoration take place?

- a) *How is sin identified?* In the absence of law, and this was probably an issue on which the opponents could have thrived, a new way of identifying transgressions was needed. Paul does not deal with the matter explicitly, probably because he does not deem it necessary after his elaborate arguments. We should be reminded of the fact that we have already identified the law of Christ as the soteriological and ethical paradigm of the new dispensation since the advent of Christ and his Spirit. There are a few essential indicators. The following are not exhaustive and are only touched on to illustrate that law was no longer necessary, let alone essential, to determine wrongdoing amongst believers in Christ. Obviously, these indicators can hardly be separated. They are actually descriptions of the same thing.
- i) Action that is *out of step with the Spirit*. In Gl. 5:25 Paul summarises the ethical obligation of the Christian as “to walk according to the Spirit,” using the verb στοιχέω. We have already determined that it has the meaning of “walk in a straight line”, “conform to a standard” or “walk in step with”.¹ The Spirit is the One who guides the believer in the law of Christ. To be out of step with Him and his guidance is to transgress. This notion is pronounced by Paul’s use of παράπτωμα (“transgression”) rather than a word such as ἁμαρτία. Etymologically παράπτωμα carries with it the imagery of “fall beside (the road)”.² Thus, in view of παράπτωμα being used so shortly after the introductory Gl. 5:25 and its use of στοιχέω, it seems logical to understand “transgression” in Gl. 6:1 as the believer’s making a false step,³ falling out of step with the Spirit and thus losing his way. Seen this way, transgression does not take place only at the point when it manifests in a specific wrongdoing, but already when the believer ignores the guidance of the Spirit and in so doing creates disharmony between himself and the Spirit⁴ and follows the desires of the flesh.⁵
- ii) Action that is *incompatible with the fruit of the Spirit* (Gl. 5:22-23) and, therefore *in line with the works of the flesh* (Gl. 5:19-21). We have already seen the very heavy emphasis Paul places on love of the neighbour. In Gl. 5:6 he stresses the paramount importance of faith working through love, or faith being translated into an ethic of love. In Gl. 5:13-14 Paul urges the Galatians to serve one another through love, adding that the whole law is fulfilled in loving the neighbour as one loves oneself. Then there is Gl. 5:22-23 describing the fruit of the Spirit, or the

¹ See my Ch. 6.

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 272.

³ Matera, 1992, 213.

⁴ Michaelis, 1968, 172, also points to the word as indicating disruption of the relationship between the believer and God.

⁵ Küng, 1976, 468-72, warns against failure to discern between the Holy Spirit and one’s own sinful spirit. Of the latter he indicates that on both individual and structural level, it is possible to claim authority for a certain viewpoint on the grounds that it is according to the Spirit’s guidance.

qualities that follow from walking in step with the Spirit. We have already stressed that all the qualities follow from the most fundamental of them all, namely love. They are all descriptions of love. The last quality, i.e. “self-control (ἐγκράτεια), has also been identified as that quality of love by which one is willing to place the needs of another before those of oneself, in fact, placing others before oneself. So, in conclusion, the overriding quality against which one measures one’s being in step with the Spirit, is whether one’s deeds reflect the love of Christ or deny it!

One should emphasise that it is not about love in general, but about the love Christ illustrated in his crucifixion (Gl. 2:20), so that he now lives in the believer and not only shares that love with him, but endows him with it, in order for him to share it on his part. Thus, the touchstone for determining whether one’s deeds are in or out of step with the Spirit is the sacrificing and serving love of Christ made manifest in the believer.

- iii) Action that causes *disharmony in the community of faith*. It is striking how many of the works of the flesh in Gl. 5:19-21 can be connected with disharmony in the community of faith. Equally, just after positively exhorting the Galatians to walk in step with the Spirit (Gl. 5:25), he admonishes them not to have any self-conceit, not to provoke one another and not to envy one another. Clearly, these are matters concerning disharmony. As we have seen, and it will be touched on again, Gl. 6:1-10 in which Paul becomes very concrete, has a tremendously profound emphasis on the community and its taking care of one another and bearing one another’s burdens. One is also reminded of Paul’s efforts to promote unity between himself and the leaders in Jerusalem as reflected in Gl. 2:1-10; and his disgust at and disappointment with Peter for having acted insincerely and separated himself from the Gentile Christians when the Jerusalem party arrived in Antioch (Gl. 2:11-14).
- iv) Action that is *not born from seeking God’s glory*. Pauline ethics being fully based on theology and not on anthropology, always seeks his glory. This position was motivated in the previous chapter.¹ Suffice to say, the will of God is fundamental and already introduced in Gl. 1:5. God was to be pleased (Gl. 1:10) and glorified (Gl. 1:24). Paul specifically emphasises the divine deed foundational to Christian ethics and in which God is glorified, namely glorying in the cross of Christ (Gl. 6:14). After all, the believer lives because of the faithfulness/obedience of Christ to the will of God. He also lives this life in that faithfulness/obedience of Christ to the will of God.

At this junction it is important that law is no longer needed to identify transgression. The latter is equal to being out of step with the Spirit who leads and sensitises the believer in the new christological paradigm, the law of Christ.

¹ Ch. 6, §4.1.1.

- b) *How should προλαμβάνω be understood?* One way of looking at the verb is to accept the sinner had been taken unawares by the transgression, either being tricked into it or transgressing inadvertently.¹ Paul could possibly have intended to enhance the notion of a future possibility which the sinner himself would not want to have succumbed to. On the other hand, there is no necessity to take it as such, and it creates the impression that when it came to deliberate sin Paul did not have restoration of the sinner in mind, only unsuspecting sin being in view. This does not seem the case, since Paul actually seems to place a stronger emphasis on the role of the restoring community than on that of the sinner.² I am in agreement with the notion that Paul had in mind the coming to light of the sinner's transgression, even if he were trying to conceal it.³ In other words, it could be translated as: "When a man is caught out/detected in any trespass..."⁴ This makes it irrelevant whether there was a motive on the part of the transgressor or whether he sinned inadvertently. He was found to be out of step with the Spirit. It also paves the way for emphasising the role of the community, namely to restore the sinner, irrespective of the circumstances leading up to the disclosure. This obviously implies accountability within the community. The sinner in the household of faith could not argue that he was only accountable to God. He was part of the family of faith who were given to one another and called to care for one another, and even to restore sinners in their midst.
- c) *How is the sinner restored?* The maxim: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gl. 6:2) has a wider scope, to which we shall return shortly. However, it should not be read in isolation from the sinner, his sin and his restoration in Gl. 6:1.

"You who are *spiritual* should *restore* that man in a *spirit of gentleness*"
(ὁμείς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος)

The question is, what to make of οἱ πνευματικοὶ? Should it be taken at face value or as a rhetorical mechanism? Some have taken it as irony on Paul's part.⁵ There is not enough evidence that Paul really intended irony. On the face of things it seems most likely that he meant to refer to their participation in that which he announced in Gl. 5:25. They were living by the Spirit and he urged them to walk in step with the Spirit. In Gl. 3:2-3 he refers to their life of faith as one having begun in the Spirit and, by implication, to be continued as such. In Gl. 3:5 he takes their having been divinely supplied with the Spirit by grace for granted, and equally so in Gl. 4:6.⁶ In fact,

¹ Delling, 1967, 14; Siede, 1978, 750; Morris, 1996, 177. Also Barth, 1955, 128-30.

² Betz, 1979, 296.

³ Dunn, 1993², 319.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 420, remarks "[the] verb suggests an unanticipated interruption of an action in progress, not a dealing with an action already completed." It enhances the notion that the sinner is detected in sinning.

⁵ Schlier, 1971, 270.

⁶ See also Gl. 3:14; 4:6, 29; 5:5, 16-18, 22-23, 25; 6:8. A very stern cautionary would be appropriate at this point. One should not understand this "supply" in terms of a once given gift now at man's disposal. It should

his use of οἱ πνευματικοὶ if chosen for rhetorical reasons makes more sense if it is not understood as irony, but rather as part of Paul's very sincere appeal to them to live according to the Spirit. The *pathos* emanating from this section of the letter is all but irony and sarcasm.¹ If Paul meant it sarcastically he himself would have contradicted the intimacy of this epistolary section, as well as that which he was expecting from the Galatians, namely to bear one other's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ (Gl. 6:2).

This was part and parcel of Christian ethics, how the law of Christ as new paradigm functioned,² how the Spirit led believers in the event of one of the flock sinning. Being of the Spirit and accepting his guidance, love would be manifest in "gentle" restoration (καταρτίζειν). It was impossible for those believing in the Son of the holy God, to regard the need for holiness and responsibility as secondary since the disappearance of the law, or to simply accept obvious sin in the community.

For Paul, freedom and mutual respect do not imply simple affirmation of whatever takes place within a universal Christendom.³

The time of heavy-handedness had passed. It was not about one believer being of higher spiritual order than another, but about believers – the sinner and the restorer – being of a new time and order, namely of spiritual maturity. It was the time after the advent of Christ and his Spirit. It was the time after the immaturity of the age of law and other such elements of the world. A new way of living and dealing with sin and sinners had arrived. *Punishment* and *condemnation* did not befit the new era.⁴ They were to deal with sinners in the same way God dealt with sinners in Christ, i.e. loving, serving and restoring them. With καταρτίζειν in such close proximity to Gl. 6:2's reference to burden-bearing and the law of Christ as understood in this dissertation, one cannot do otherwise than make a connection between restoration and bearing the burden of the sinner. Cousar writes:

Paul describes the restoration as bearing burdens: sharing the pain of failure, assuming a portion of the guilt and judgement...⁵

One is once again reminded of the family imagery. When a family member acted in discord with the family's traditions or value system, the family itself regarded it as a shame and a threat to its stability. However, they could restore the disobedient in the family by way of punishment or discussion. In the process the honour of the whole family could be restored. All was not lost forever. It could be rectified.⁶ Against this background, fervently re-

be read against living by and walking by the Spirit. His guidance is the directing force. In this regard one should read Barth, 1979, 48-59 (especially 58). See again Barth, 1949, 140, as quoted in my Ch. 3 on p.103.

¹ Dunn, 1993², 320.

² Matera, 2000, 244.

³ Schrage, 1988, 195.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 297.

⁵ Cousar, 1982, 145.

⁶ Van der Watt, 1999, 498-501.

minding them that no one had to think more of himself than he should (Gl. 6:3), and knowing that they were all equal before the Father, he admonishes them to restore one another in a spirit of gentleness.

While fierce competition for honour may be the order of the day outside the family, within its ranks everyone is expected to work to maintain its collective honour.¹

Although “gentleness” is an acceptable translation for *πραΰτης*, “humility” is better.² It fits much better with the reminder that they could also be tempted. What Paul means by being tempted is not altogether clear. It could carry the meaning of the temptation to sin just like the sinner discovered in sinning. It could also carry the meaning of being tempted to self-righteousness in dealing with the sinner, in that way encouraging the “works of the flesh.”³ Whichever way, humility was called for.

Obviously, there is a profound difference in the fact that Christ founded the indicative within which believers have to operate. It was a “once for all” that would never be repeated. But there is another difference, i.e. on the level of Christ’s example. They were to remember that they themselves were vulnerable. This matter will receive attention further on.

2.2.3. About bearing one another’s burdens like Christ

Betz indicates quite a few instances where the maxim of burden-bearing amongst friends is encouraged in Hellenistic literature.⁴ “Burdens” (*τὰ βάρη*) in Gl. 6:2 is preceded by the notion of sin and followed in Gl. 6:6 by the notion of financial sustenance. Although these two forms of burdens would have been very near the surface in Paul’s and his readers’ minds, they are not to be regarded as the only burdens to be borne.⁵ It is about daily living and all its hassles and struggles.⁶

Moving on to *βαστάζω*, it is about more than just tolerating the fellow believer with his problems, faults and failures, and even sin (Gl. 6:1). It is about providing his needs so as to bring relief. It is also about accepting that failure is part of this life and therefore also part of the burden to be borne with others.⁷ One must be wary of weakening the preceding context of sinning, by focusing too strongly on burdens in general. Paul’s reference, following on the sinning of the fellow believer, is firstly to the sinner’s burden of sin and his need for restoration.⁸

It is extremely important that Paul uses the present imperative form of the verb to emphasise that the bearing of the burden of another is not an occasional

¹ Esler, 1998, 219.

² See Bauder, 1976, 256-9 for more information.

³ Betz, 1979, 298.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 299.

⁵ Mundle, 1975, 261, stresses the burden of sin, but not exclusive of other burdens, or of the responsibility to bear one’s own burdens. Also Schrenk, 1964, 553-61 for a wide range of meanings. Also Dunn, 1993², 322.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 299.

⁷ Betz, 1979, 299. See also Büchsel, 1964, 596.

⁸ Kuck, 1994, 292.

supportive act, but an ongoing responsibility.¹ It is part and parcel of being a part of the community of faith. It is part of following in the footsteps of Christ as the Faithful *par excellence*.

That Paul links the bearing of burdens so effortlessly with fulfilling the law of Christ, cannot slip our attention. He connects these with the combination καί οὕτως (“and, in this manner”). Καί as connective already joins Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε with ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. However, using the adverb οὕτως (“in this way”), Paul strengthens this logical connection. It is further enhanced by the prepositional prefix attached to the verb in the future tense ἀναπληρώσετε.²

We have indicated that law of Christ refers to the new soteriological and ethical paradigm in Christ and his Spirit. It would not be far-fetched to include that Paul is inferring that this paradigm is founded on the fact of Christ’s burden-bearing *par excellence*. What Christ did, not only set the example to his followers, but cut out the pattern along which believers and their community would necessarily act in the eschatological time inaugurated by his advent. It was part of their paradigm. There was no escaping the responsibility.³ He says: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gl. 2:20). The believer is now like Christ and not able to do otherwise than bear the burdens of fellow believers.

2.2.4. About remembering your teachers

Why would Paul have added this admonition? Did he intend this admonition to be so central to the section that one should actually relate it to each surrounding component; in other words, almost as an hermeneutical key to our pericope? For our purpose it is not necessary to go into all the arguments that have been put forward in answer to this question. Our intention is to determine how this “most puzzling of all Paul’s directives in 6:1-10”⁴ fits into the broader picture. Is it an enigma or a hermeneutical key? Or is it just a very logical remark emanating from the situation. I would argue in favour of the latter.

We have seen that Gl. 6:6 is a rather independent verse. For instance, Gl. 6:3-5 and 6:7-9 are two groups of maxims, each having some form of internal coherence. In form they are internally supportive of each other,⁵ and in content they are linked by a specific thread of thought: introspection and self-evaluation in the case of the former, and sowing and reaping in the case of the latter. If one were to regard vs. 6 as belonging to Gl. 6:3-5 the structure could suggest that the whole matter of bearing burdens was actually intended to build up to the climax of supporting the teachers. If, on the other hand, it were to be affixed to Gl. 6:7-9 it could suggest that sowing is all about finances. Whichever one opts for, it seems

¹ Morris, 1996, 178.

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 275.

³ Fletcher, 1982, 204.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 278.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 278.

that the text would be hermeneutically clouded in financial terms so as to obscure other shades of meaning that seem to have much relevance. Strelan¹ e.g., has argued that Paul's reference in Gl. 6:2 is about the congregation's responsibility to share in the common financial burden of the community, particularly the responsibility toward missionaries and teachers, and possibly also the collection for Jerusalem. This leads him to understand that the fulfilling of the law of Christ is the carrying out of the duty that he laid down in 1 Cor. 9:14, i.e.: "[T]hose who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel."

Although the bearing of burdens surely includes financial burdens it seems an unnecessary road to take. Besides depriving the text of more meaning, it makes the matter even more enigmatic. Why would Paul, after arguing so logically and coherently from theology to ethics, on the verge of concluding his letter (Gl. 6:11-18), decide to fit in a whole section dominated by finances? It had not featured at any other point, unless one regards Paul's reference to his promise to remember the poor (Gl. 2:10) as such. But, surely the link is too weak to provide reason enough for this explanation. A more contextually responsible way is needed and seems probable.

The broader historical context, according to Ramsay, would have made this exhortation more than apt. Pagan religions did not have a system of teaching. It was about ritual and bargaining with the gods.² They would not necessarily have known of such a responsibility and would have to be taught in this regard. However, the specific context in Galatians would have made the call even more appropriate.

Paul was being very practical at this point and very aware of the intricacies of the human psyche and how it influences relationships and accompanying deeds. His readers, of whom some considered circumcision, some were at least carried away by the teaching of the false teachers, and others probably stuck to their Pauline guns, were possibly deeply divided. The first two groups could very well have reasoned that teachers of Paul's orientation towards the gospel were not teaching the truth and were therefore not to be supported. Paul most probably did not have himself in mind, but teachers of his conviction. Whether they would even have considered supporting the Judaisers is uncertain. One does not know whether the latter presented themselves as teachers. It would be best left out of the equation. Now that Paul had dealt with the problem of whose gospel was correct and had assumed (he says he has no doubt) that the Galatians would follow his reasoning, he reminded them that they had a responsibility towards the teachers that they had distrusted. They were to take care of their needs anew. There might also be the hint, in terms of reciprocity, that they were to share the good things with the teachers, because these teachers' teachings were good. Although one cannot be sure of the circumstances and whether this presentation of matters is correct, one can at least argue that there is more than enough reason to accept that Paul had not interrupted his argument and that the pericope under discussion need not be

¹ Strelan, 1975, 266-76.

² Ramsay, 1900, 457-8; Morris, 1996, 182.

clouded by finances, although finances would have been one of its nuances. What is beyond doubt is that teachers were to be supported as partakers in the community of faith; partakers who had the vocation to teach the true gospel of freedom in Christ.

Esler remarks that one should view this matter of material support in terms of the family metaphor.¹ Family members had responsibilities toward one another. The teacher was part of that family and had to be taken care of as a family member. The implication is that it was a matter of honour to do this. Not to support a family member was tantamount to shaming the whole family. They were to include the teacher in their communal circle of burden-bearing. Obviously, this would be the will of the Father of the family and He would be honoured in the process.

A final remark with regard to Paul's specific use of the maxim in Galatians is warranted. Although pagan religions did not have the custom of teaching, they supported their priests by way of ritual sacrifices. However, it was customary in philosophical circles of antiquity for a teacher's followers to support him.² It was a matter of reciprocity. The teacher shared his knowledge and they reciprocated with material goods. Seen from this angle it was not an uncommon thing for Paul to touch on. What is interesting is that while Paul, in his First letter to the Corinthians (9:14), motivates his stance on subsistence for teachers on the authority of the Lord (Lk. 10:7), he desists in this instance. Rather, he *appeals* to them to do such. He once again appeals on their sense of *responsibility*. If the teacher teaches the truth of the gospel he should be cared for.

2.3. Horizontal individual responsibility

Obviously, that which is written above with regard to the responsibility of the community is equally applicable to each individual within the community of faith. Therefore, it will not be elaborated any further in the current context of individual responsibility. However, what does concern us, is the fact that Paul does not allow for the individual to hide behind the corporate responsibility of the believing community. One should not regard the individual responsibility as dissolved into that of the community, as if Paul was advocating a communal ethic as such. In fact, if the believer were to sacrifice his own responsibility for the community to take over and decide on his behalf, it would imply that the guidance of the Spirit belonged to the group. The individual would then be enabled by the Spirit to do uncritically that on which the group decided on his behalf. It would also imply that the believer is cast in a new form of slavery, namely that of the community. If they reflect on matters ethical and decide on his behalf what actions he is to take, it boils down to slavery of the group. It would assign a mediating role to the group in the eschatological time when the Spirit would lead the believer from within. While acknowledging the vast role of the community in the ethical choices and ways of the individual believer, one should not

¹ Esler, 1998, 232.

² Betz, 1979, 305. See Hauck, 1965, 132-3. J.L. North, 1992, 523-7, provides additional examples.

frustrate the immensely intimate relationship between the Spirit and the individual and the immediacy of his guidance of the individual. Paul does not allow for this. He emphasises the individual believer's responsibility as much as that of the community, each on its own terrain.

The believer is always tempted to "self-righteousness and arrogance" when becoming aware of another's wrongdoing. For Paul this is a form of "works of the flesh".¹ He adds (Gl. 6:3) that if one thinks highly of oneself when, in fact, one is nothing one is caught up in a delusion. Now, Paul does not merely draw from philosophical diatribe. One's faith is constantly threatened by forgetfulness. The basis of one's faith is the acceptance of the fact that one's life is one of plight before God. In order to break out of the destruction of the present evil age, man had to be delivered from outside his realm by divine intervention in Jesus Christ (Gl. 1:4). This fact underscores the dilemma of man in his fleshliness. In himself he is nothing. If not for God's divine intervention in Christ, the believer would still be pitiful. He has no need to think of himself as better than another, because his new status in Christ underlines the fact that he is undeserving. It is very significant that Paul introduces the law of Christ at this point (Gl. 6:2). The new paradigm in Christ makes the difference, not the man privileged to be part of that paradigm.

There is another point to be made in this regard. Paul seems to fear that the Πνευματικοί might think of their having the Spirit as authorising them to deal with other sinners in their midst from a position of spiritual superiority. Having the Spirit does not place one in a position of authority over fellow believers. In fact, he adds that it does not place one out of the reach of sin. In fact, in Gl. 6:7-8 he underlines the possibility of believers sowing to the flesh. Therefore the believer had to test his own work (Gl. 6:4). This was not only about taking responsibility for one's ethical life, nor only about being careful not to fall prey to sin. It was especially about not comparing oneself to others and glorying in it. It was about being constantly aware of the fact that one was a new creation and had to continually and consciously choose to live within the paradigm of the new life in Christ and his Spirit.

It was about spiritual maturity, honesty and taking responsibility for one's spiritual and ethical life. Ultimately each had to bear his own burden of responsibility.

3. AN ETHIC OF VERTICAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD AND HIS SPIRIT

3.1. An ethic in the sight of God

At no stage does Paul allow for a humanitarian ethic without ultimate accountability to God. The Christian ethic is firmly grounded in both the christological and the pneumatological indicatives, which we have discussed elaborately. It is possible for man not to take his responsibilities seriously and to ignore the christological-pneumatological indicative and to do what does not befit a believer. It is possible to know what the Spirit expects and to shun that admoni-

¹ Betz, 1979, 298.

tion in order to sow to the flesh (Gl. 6:8). One is reminded of Eph. 4:30 where it is written: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” It is possible to ignore the Spirit. It is possible to misuse one’s freedom. It is endemic to the notion of freedom to think that one cannot be called free if one is to be controlled by an entity of some kind – even if that entity is the Spirit. On the other hand, Christian freedom is defined by its foundation, which is Christ and his faithfulness. This foundation provides man with deliverance from the present evil age in which flesh dominated his life and enslaved him. He was set free from that bondage, not for the sake of unbridled freedom in itself, but with a view to being able to do God’s will as illustrated in the Christ event (Gl. 1:4), and indeed to do it by walking in step with the Spirit. He was set free from the old bondage with a view to let Christ live in him (Gl. 2:20).

Despite flesh having been crucified, it is still possible for believers to sow to the flesh, and even to seemingly get away with it. As possible as it was in the old dispensation to do the right thing in terms of law, but without love and thus not honouring God, it was also possible in the new dispensation to do the right and expected thing without love, or to do the wrong thing without being “caught out.” This could never be the position the believer takes. Paul admonishes the believers to always be remindful of the fact that God is not mocked (Gl. 6:7). The soteriological and ethical indicatives culminating in Gl. 5:1 (“For freedom Christ set us free”) and the notion of new creation in Gl. 6:15, are firmly founded in the great theological indicative that all of this came about because God willed it; it was his initiative of love and service (Gl. 1:4).

One’s ultimate ethical responsibility is towards God who provided the Spirit as the Enabler of life in the paradigm of Christ.¹ If one were to live, or, from time to time, conduct oneself in a way that is not in step with the Spirit’s guidance, one would be making a mockery of God’s saving act in Christ Jesus and his Spirit. In as much as circumcision could be indicative of severance from Christ indeed already having taken place, it was also possible to indicate such a severance having taken place by consistently living a life out of step with the Spirit, and therefore fleshly. This reminds one of Paul’s words to the Galatians in the context of reversion to law, but equally applicable here: “Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?” (Gl. 3:3).

3.2. About remembering who God is

3.2.1. *God’s will and honour as over-riding principal*

In Gl. 1:4a Paul states of Christ that he “gave Himself for our sins to deliver (ἐξέλιπται) us from the present evil age.” We have already attended to the fact that this deliverance is nothing other than Christ’s setting free of the believers from the present evil age in order to live in that freedom under the guidance of the Spirit. Paul grounds this deliverance and freedom in the *will of God the Fa-*

¹ Keck, 1996, 3-10, emphasises the intimacy of the believer’s relationship with God in Christ (Gl. 2:19-20) and through his Spirit (Gl. 4:6). Within this relationship the believer accepts this accountability unquestioningly.

ther (Gl. 1:4b).¹ It is most significant that he does this at the onset of his letter. The entire case for freedom and the accompanying life of freedom is founded on God's will and Christ's being obedient to that will. The conclusion earlier² that *law of Christ* should be explained as the new paradigm in which the believer lives, i.e. the new soteriological and ethical order introduced by Christ and involving his love, service, sacrifice, words and pattern of life, and the living presence of his Spirit, is founded on God's will and initiative. If the *salutatio* (Gl. 1:1-5) and the *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-17/18) are read in conjunction, as we motivated in Ch. 2 that they should be, this notion is enhanced. The *salutatio* emphasises God's glory as illustrated in the deliverance of the believers by Christ. The *conclusio* does the same. Here Paul emphasises that he wishes to glory only in the cross of Christ (Gl. 6:14). This is in stark contrast to the opponents' motive to glory in the flesh of the Galatians.

Thus, the whole letter is enveloped by the motif that God is to be glorified for the new life in Christ and that his will is the overriding principle of Christian living, as opposed to the will and glory of man. If the believer is to glory in the cross of Christ as paramount token of obedience to God, he can have no other motive, but to live equally obediently according to the cross, even sacrificing himself and human glory. Paul reiterates:

Am I now seeking the favour of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ (Gl. 1:10).

3.2.2. God's initiative and promise to Abraham fulfilled

Aligned with the above, is the rhetoric regarding Abraham. *Firstly*, in Gl. 3:6-29 and Gl. 4:21-31 the introduction of Abraham and his faith in God and his promises, takes the believer back to the time before the introduction of law. It takes the individual as well as the community of believers back to the basis, the indicative of our faith, God's electing grace, his promises and his setting up of a relationship, or covenant, with those of the promise and their seed. By bringing this covenantal element into the argument, Paul emphasises that the indicative of faith and its accompanying life of faith can in no way be defined in anthropological terms. It is also more than merely a pneumatological or christological matter. It goes back to the theological heart of the matter, Yahweh who is gracious and loving; who makes and keeps his promises; and who, in the fullness of time sent his Son (Gl. 4:4) to deliver (Gl. 1:4) and redeem us (Gl. 3:13) and set up a new creation (Gl. 6:15). As new as the new dispensation was, it was not something arising out of the blue. It went back to Yahweh and his gracious promises. *Secondly*, Paul's use of the phrase *Israel of God* (Gl. 6:16) in reference to the new eschatological people of God, also connects the new dispensation in Christ and his Spirit with God's initial promise to Abraham that in him all the nations would be blessed (Gl. 3:8 in reference to Gn. 12:3).

¹ Betz, 1979, 42.

² My Ch. 6, §3.3.4.

Thus, one could argue that the same God who committed Himself to Abraham and his believing offspring, and who provided them with the law in order to curb their sin in reaction to his promises, provided them with the fullness of the promise by providing Christ and his Spirit (Gl. 3:14-16, 29). This was no new initiative. It was about the initial initiative coming to fruition. The same God who required obedience from Abraham as a man of faith, still requires obedience from those of faith. However, this obedience is not in terms of law as was the case in the interim period between Moses and Jesus. It was about obedience flowing from faith in the promise to Abraham now fulfilled.

3.2.3. *The believer as a child in God's family*

Paul alludes very strongly to the believer's need to honour the Father of the household of faith by using the dynamic metaphors of family and sonship of God, and adoption by Him. In this regard the following references are obvious enhancers of these notions.

- In the *salutatio* Paul thrice refers to God as the Father of the believing community (Gl. 1:1, 3, 4). He repeats the fatherhood of God in Gl. 4:2, 6.
- In Gl. 3:15 Paul refers to Christ as Abraham's offspring. He returns to the subject by referring to the believers as Abraham's offspring, because they are in Christ (3:29). Together with this, he speaks of God's promises in the metaphor of a man's will (Gl. 3:15), and then returns to the subject by introducing heirship in Christ in Gl. 3:29. The same notion is reintroduced to the argument in the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Gl. 4:21-31). In this regard, Gl. 4:28, 30-31 are especially important, emphasising sonship.¹
- Closely related to this is the introduction of the notion of the believer's adoption (υἰοθεσία) by God through faith in Christ (Gl. 4:5). He expands the idea by introducing the Spirit in the same breath as the One through whom the believer calls to God: "αββα ὁ πατήρ" (Gl. 4:6). The view taken by most scholars is that Paul is referring mostly to the Hellenistic custom of adoption, since it was largely absent from Mosaic law.² The important point is that no one had a natural Father-son relationship with God, besides Je-

¹ J.A. Sanders, 2002², 122, stresses: "The Metaphor for the covenant was basically the family for which the ultimate father/mother was God."

² Moore-Crispin, 1989, 203-23. Knobloch, 1992, 79, warns that one must be careful of judging too quickly on the use of adoption in Israel. If one's definition is too narrowly defined the notion becomes totally foreign to Israel. He indicates that Israel had an understanding of the notion of adoption. Ryken, Wilmot & Longman, 1998³, 14, adds to this, indicating that social needs that other societies alleviated by way of adoption in the stricter sense, were addressed by Israel via customs such as polygamy, legitimate heirs by female slaves, levirate marriage and guardianship. Van Aarde, 1997, 150-72, provides most informative information from the Umwelt of the NT. Although he applies it mostly to Jesus' Sonship, he does make mention of the fact that it referred to the believer's non-biological relationship to God, their allegiance to Him and their being separated from those outside that relationship as a social identity (163). J.L. De Villiers, 1950, 10-47, illustrates very well that the idea of adoption is very well represented in OT and covenantal theology, and that Paul made thorough use of this in Galatians (74-111). We cannot go into the details of these terms, but amongst others, he refers to Yahweh's election of Israel; Israel as his first-born (Ex. 4:22); children of God (Dt. 14:1); God as Father (Dt. 32:6, 18; Is. 1:2; 43:6; 63:8, 16; 64:8; Jr. 3:4; Hs. 1:10; 11:1; Mt. 1:6; etc.); and others.

sus. Whether one was a law-observant Jew or a Greek without law, one needed to be adopted into the family by faith in Jesus Christ.¹ If this Hellenistic notion is accepted, it implies that the adopted child was in all ways equal to those of blood and thus with the same familial standing. A new family unit had been created by faith in Christ.

- Of obvious significance with regard to the metaphor of family, is the reference to the “household of faith” (τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως - Gl. 6:10).

We have already emphasised the importance of the imagery surrounding family and the great importance of the metaphor with regard to conduct within the family of God.² Of fundamental importance for our discussion here, is the authority of the father as the head of the family.

Birth and acceptance into the family automatically meant that the child stood in a specific, well defined relation to the father of the family.³

Whether one was born into a family or adopted into it,⁴ as part of that social entity one was expected to act according to the wishes of the parents. Having received life, a home and provision from which to live, the child had to honour his parents by living according to the family identity as lived and laid down by the father.⁵ This obligation was not voluntary.⁶ It was a matter of honour in a society of limited good and in which one did one’s best to increase one’s honouring. A child was not allowed to be disrespectful to his/her parents in any way. This obviously included the prohibition on disobedience.⁷ In fact, it was expected of a son to emanate the father’s words and actions. What is important with a view to Paul’s ethics in Galatians is that the imagery of family (the Fatherhood of God, the believer’s adoption into sonship of God) is strategically prominent in the letter. It can be assumed that, against the ancient Mediterranean culture, Paul’s use of this imagery most probably alludes to the believer’s ethical responsibility and accountability to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They would not have thought of their salvation in terms of becoming part of God’s family, and then have ignored their ethical responsibility to honour Him in daily living or ethics. Their ethics of freedom could not be absorbed in subjective, individualistic libertinism. As *paterfamilias*, God had to be taken abundantly seriously. Their ethic was born from a restored relationship with God in Christ. His will would have to be taken absolutely seriously. They were fully accountable to Him. They had become part of a family and were to uphold the family values of which the father was the guardian.⁸

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 283, 289; Moore-Crispin, 1989, 214-6.

² See §3.1.1.1.

³ Van der Watt, 1999, 495.

⁴ Malherbe, 1995, 120.

⁵ Van der Watt, 2000, 291.

⁶ Malina & Neyrey, 1991, 29; Van der Watt, 2000, 284.

⁷ J.W. Roberts, 1984, 157; Van der Watt, 1999, 498-501.

⁸ Van der Watt, 1999, 501-2.

Of course, this was equally important regarding the image they created in secular or other religious societies of themselves and God. In a society in which the values of a community often reflected the essence of the community, it was important that they “do good” so that the broader society would honour God for what they reflected of Him. This was not about law, but about values expressing who they were and to whom they belonged.¹ They were, after all, a missionary church wishing to persuade others to join their ranks by aligning with Christ and his faithfulness.

Although we will not re-enter the subject of slavery, one should, regarding the believer’s obligation to obedience, remember that Paul refers to himself as a slave of Christ (Gl. 1:10).

3.3. God is not mocked

In Gl. 6:7 Paul very brusquely interjects: “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap!” However, although the interjection is frank and almost surprising – out of the blue, as it were – it would only sound as such to the modern Westernised ear. In view of the above discussion on Yahweh’s profound role, albeit in the background, and the strong allusion to family and God’s fathership of the believers, the cross-section ancient Mediterranean believer would not have experienced it as out of place. It would not have surprised him.

His use of μή πλανᾶσθε (“do not be deceived”) adds great urgency to the following *sententiae*. It is an interjection quite often used to introduce a warning. In Paul’s time it had become a very solemn warning in itself.² As indicated earlier, it probably had apocalyptic undertones emphasising the urgency of the situation.³

His warning following the interjection is in the form of a proverb:⁴ “God is not mocked” (θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται). It has different nuances, but scholars are rather unanimous that its meaning should be sought in the semantic field indicating the showing of contempt.⁵ It was not akin to the Jewish tradition, although it entered into Judaism from Hellenism via the LXX. It usually associates the godless and enemies of Israel with this attitude.⁶ The reference in this case is not about verbally mocking God, but about showing contempt towards

¹ Malherbe, 1983, 50, makes mention of the tendency to emphasise the analogies between Paul’s *Haustafeln* and ethical instruction in Hellenistic communities and philosophy, but adds a very important matter. In line with Hellenistic Judaism, Paul emphasises the apologetic and missionary functions as important evidence concerning their inner life. This was especially enhanced by the suspicion with which they were regarded by many (53) in view of their “deflection” to Christianity.

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 279.

³ Günther, 1976, 459; Betz, 1979, 306.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 306.

⁵ Nida & Louw I, 1988, 435.

⁶ Dunn, 1993², 264; Betz, 1979, 306.

God by living against His will¹ as if He were a fool. In fact, it was about living as if God did not matter, or, even worse, as if He did not exist!

There is no way in which man – believer or non-believer – could live as though God did not exist, or did not take note of man's ethics. Ultimately, man was accountable to God. Paul was not merely making a proverbial utterance for rhetorical effect. He was calling on believers to take ultimate responsibility for their lives and to remember their ultimate accountability to God Himself! He adds a truism from agriculture that man cannot expect to sow one thing and harvest another.² One cannot ignore God or treat Him contemptuously and expect Him to be the fool who blesses when He should be punishing.

Although Paul prefers to persuade rather than to threaten and to operate from God's grace before resorting to judgement, one should not fault by breaching the dialectical bond between these concepts. In as much as his theology and ethics operate on the basis of God's grace in Christ Jesus, it also acknowledges that in the end all have to answer to his eschatological judgement.³ God expects man to do that to which He enabled him in Christ Jesus and through his Spirit. This amounted to glorying in the cross and so glorifying God – honouring Him. To ignore this, was to mock God and to open oneself to his ridicule and being shamed in the day of eschatological divine judgement.

3.4. About sowing and reaping

If a believer continues to live a life in contradiction to God's will he should expect to harvest God's wrath. The responsibility rests with man alone.⁴

The metaphors of sowing and harvesting are common on all ancient literature. The same can be said of the idea of divine retribution, whether it is understood in the sense of immanent life experience or of eschatological judgement. In Gal 6:7 Paul thinks, of course, of the divine retribution at the Last Judgement, where "man" [= "everyone"] (ἄνθρωπος) will have to appear, in order to be judged according to his deeds.⁵

The choice is between sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit (Gl. 6:8). God cannot be tricked into believing that man had sowed to the Spirit when, indeed, he sowed to the flesh. Man will have to bear the consequences of his deeds if he wilfully sows to the flesh. Betz describes sowing to the flesh as nothing other than "giving an opportunity to the flesh" (Gl. 5:13), and the opposite of "crucifying the flesh" (Gl. 5:24).⁶ The ultimate harvest of such a person is corruption (φθορά), the opposite of eternal life (ζωή αἰώνιος).⁷ The latter, again, is endowed to the one who sows to the Spirit.

¹ Preisker, 1967, 796.

² Morris, 1996, 182.

³ Hays, 1997, 40-1; Fletcher, 1982, 206; Kuck, 1994, 289.

⁴ Fee, 1994¹, 202, emphasises the sufficiency of the Spirit to deal with both flesh and law, but equally the fact that all does not work automatically. The believer has the responsibility to sow to the Spirit.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 307.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 308.

⁷ Schreiner, 2001, 282.

'Sowing to the Spirit' is an unusual expression, but it clearly points to a concentration on those aspects of life which involve interaction with God's Holy Spirit. It signifies concentrating on what will produce 'the fruit of the Spirit'. It means seeing our spiritual life as more important than our secular experiences and devoting time and energy to it accordingly.¹

A remark or two should be made with regard to φθορά. It has a wide range of nuances in classical Greek literature, e.g.: moral corruption, bribery, the seduction of a woman, ruin, destruction, etc.² It occurs only 8 times in the NT, of which 5 are in the Pauline corpus. Seeing that he uses it in opposition to "eternal life" it seems in order to translate it with "ruin" or "corruption". Because of the eschatological context created by Paul's "sowing and reaping" motif and his reference to "eternal life", Paul most probably has in mind the damnation associated with the *parousia*. He definitely does not seem to have an immediate and ongoing cause-effect notion in mind. However, he could have in mind the notion that the ruin, although it will only become clear to all and sundry in the day of judgement, is taking effect even as man sows from day to day. However, God, to whom man is ultimately accountable, is not fooled. He knows. Thus the appeal rather to sow to the Spirit, because God already sees and knows.³ Although the fullness of the ruin will be seen in that day, it is already operative in daily living and probably visible in the works of the flesh (Gl. 5:19-21). As it creeps on man, he himself is actually shown to be the fool.

The fact that the eschatological time had already arrived in the advent of Christ enhances the urgency of the warning. The eschatological movement from the old dispensation of slavery to and expected sowing to the flesh (of the present evil age) had come to an end. The new dispensation of living by the Spirit and the expectation of walking in step with Him (new creation) had arrived. To sow to the flesh in this time of being guided and enabled by the Spirit would be surprising and foolish. Dunn very aptly remarks on the use of the present tense with regard to sowing to the Spirit. This indicates a continued responsibility and act of being involved with the Spirit.⁴

There is also another side to the issue of sowing and reaping to the Spirit in Galatians, a very practical one. It needs to be mentioned because it involves both the vertical and the horizontal levels. In fact, it is about the impossibility of managing successfully the horizontal level without tending to the vertical level. Taking the context into consideration, there seems to have been self-conceit, provocation and envy amongst the ranks in Galatia (Gl. 5:26). Paul speaks of the problem of someone being overtaken in transgression and the necessity to restore such a person (Gl. 6:1); the need to be vigilant with regard to one's own actions (Gl. 6:1b, 3-4), and bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ (Gl. 6:2). One is only in a position to take care of these matters and to live a harmonious community life if one actually sows to the Spirit. So, in

¹ Morris, 1996, 183.

² Merkel, 1975, 468. Also Harder, 1974, 93-6.

³ I cannot agree with Demarest, 1978, 525, that Paul had in mind that "the liberality with which one sows determines the spiritual and material benefits one reaps." There simply is no such indication in our text.

⁴ Dunn, 1993², 331.

this sense there is a blessing in heeding the call to sow to the flesh. There is no way in which they could achieve these aims if they tried *merely on a horizontal level*. That would boil down to trying to achieve these things in the flesh (my Ch. 3). The *vertical level*, God's input, sowing to the Spirit, made it possible to achieve these aims. There was no way in which they could move forward from their impasse if they were going to try it on their own – sowing to the flesh. It could not be achieved exclusively on a horizontal level. If they were not going to allow the Spirit to lead them out of the impasse they would continue to fight amongst themselves. They had to sow to the Spirit in order to experience the fruit of the Spirit in this respect.

Although one must be careful of thinking only, or mostly, in terms of ethnic identity markers when considering what Paul means with sowing to the flesh, I agree with Dunn that he would have had this in mind as well. Wrapping up his arguments and using the flesh-Spirit antithesis, Paul would not be referring to only the ethical sowing, but also to circumcision, which would inevitably lead to the works of the flesh (Gl. 5:19-21).¹

3.4 About biting the bullet

At no stage does Paul give the impression that the ethic of the new dispensation is at all plain sailing. Although it is a fruit (Gl. 5:22) it does not come effortlessly. Although the believer is in Christ and under the guidance of the Spirit, it does not imply that he is a programmed, unthinking, involuntary automat. Although flesh has been dealt with and the believer lives according to the Spirit, the possibility to live according to flesh is still open till the day of final judgement. So, while on the subject of responsibility and accountability, Paul reminds the believers not to grow weary in well-doing (τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιῶντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν - Gl. 6:9). Apparently this was not at all a remote possibility, considering the following information.

- In Gl. 1:6-10 Paul mentions the possibility of apostasy and pleasing men rather than God. He adds to this by referring to their actions as deserting Christ (Gl. 1:6). In Gl. 3:1 he even refers to the Galatians as foolish for having allowed themselves to be bewitched. In Gl. 4:9 he asks them how they can turn back to weak and beggarly elemental spirits, underlining the possibility of apostasy.
- He even adds the poor example set by Peter who, to Paul's mind, had chosen to please men rather than God (Gl. 2:11-14). Contrary to this action by Peter, Paul and his entourage "did not yield submission even for a moment" (Gl. 2:5).
- In Gl. 5:1 he affirms the indicative of salvation in terms of freedom and immediately warns that they are not to submit to slavery again. He regards this as falling away from grace and being severed from Christ (Gl. 5:4).

¹ Dunn, 1993², 331-2.

- He warns against bad influence by referring to the action of yeast (Gl. 5:9). This clearly refers to a negative influence and the possibility to yield to it, or being hindered (Gl. 5:7).
- Paul mentions his own persecution and, in the same breath, the cross as a stumbling block (Gl. 5:11). Not all believe in the cross and could even stumble over it or persecute others. He returns to the subject of persecution in Gl. 6:17 where he probably refers to marks of persecution for the cross of Christ.
- Equally indicative of the possibility of apostasy and of the need to persevere, is the juxtaposing of the Spirit and flesh (Gl. 5:13-24) and the strong emphasis on their opposition to each other, causing an inner struggle in the believer (Gl. 5:17).
- Then, of course, the call to bear one's own burden, and also those of others (Gl. 6:2, 5), and the possibility of falling to sin (Gl. 6:1, 4).

Without going into any detail whatsoever, it should be clear just from reading the above references that Paul had no illusions about the fact that Christian ethics is not altogether easy riding. Walking in step with the Spirit is not a walk in the park, so to speak, but the taking up of one's burden as Christ did when he introduced the new paradigm. Obedience and loving service, even to the point of persecution, was expected of believers. The good news was that it would never be a curse, because of the guidance and enablement of the Spirit. Thus, they were to persevere in the faithfulness of Christ.

3.5. Conclusion

Paul's pneumatological ethic was not an ethic based on a set of laws. It was not about the responsibility to live up to such a list. It was about being in Christ and no longer living according to the flesh, but having Christ live in the believer. The believer was no longer orientated towards the law, but towards Christ. The law of Christ, the whole paradigm switch brought about by Christ, was what counted. It was, by the same token, about the Spirit living in the believer, sensitising, guiding and enabling him to live his life in the paradigm of Christ. He had to allow the Spirit to orientate him to Christ. This was not about an exterior entity or code imposing itself on the believer to act accordingly, but about the Spirit being in a relationship with the believer and convincing him in his inner being to act as it pleases God in Christ, but also involving horizontal responsibility to listen to fellow believers and to love his fellowmen.

However, this being said, the believer was still accountable for his deeds. He was not accountable to a set of laws or the enforcers thereof. He was accountable directly to God! Ultimately, God, who had enabled him in the Christ event and the advent of the Spirit, was the One to whom man had to account for his deeds in the eschatological time that had begun in Christ and would be fulfilled at his *parousia*. It was the time in which believers were to be regarded as mature (Gl. 3:25, 29; 4:7) and to be treated as such.

4. ABOUT FREEDOM, OBLIGATION AND SETTING RULES

We have determined that the ethics Paul promotes in Galatians is the product of the Spirit of Christ as He enables and guides the believer to do God's will in freedom. It is clear that this ethic is characterised by love and service towards fellowmen. It was also determined that this ethic of loving service is aimed at and should be implemented in concrete life. It is therefore not an ethic in which one indulges in the abstract. It is aimed at a concrete situation. Paul does not provide ethical blueprints from which believers can derive specific instructions for each new and unique situation. It is the responsibility of the individual and his community of faith to determine the correct action for every situation, in freedom and under guidance of the Spirit. Together with this, Paul makes use of ethical maxims from different religions and philosophies in his *Umwelt*. If a certain instruction has a bearing on the specific situation, Paul does not fear using it. Importantly, however, it is applied in the new christological-pneumatological paradigm as the direct guidance of the Spirit for a given situation.¹

We have also indicated that ethically sound behaviour is not optional for the Christian. Paul does not separate indicative and imperative. The imperative is given in the indicative as it were. One cannot be part of the new paradigm in Christ and through his Spirit and not be moved towards doing that which befits this new life. Thus, in the absence of a legal system of ethics, and in the presence of an ethic of freedom, walking in step with the Spirit was obligatory.

Given the dangers of subjectivity and of laxity on the side of the individual believer, would a set of ethical maxims not be in order for Christians to apply as the situation calls for it? Is Christian ethics so situational and every situation so unique that certain patterns cannot be determined, let alone an elaborate system? Should one's fear of casuistry lead one to abandon an ethical system aimed not at regulation, but at providing guidance?

At the end of this chapter dealing with responsibility and accountability, and in which Paul himself applies maxims, it is a most relevant subject to ponder.

4.1. Either pneumatological ethics or casuistry

I am in agreement with the conviction that Christian ethical action is born from the dynamic interaction between the believer and the Spirit in every concrete situation. Therefore, if one takes the lead of the Spirit seriously one should not frustrate the dynamics of such a position by introducing ethical direction previously given for a different situation. Marxsen follows this route. He argues that if one were to take that which is good for today's concrete situation and apply it unreservedly to tomorrow's concrete situation without further reflection, one makes today's answer applicable as well as normative for tomorrow. We then

¹ Westerholm, 1984, 245, comments that Paul's instructions are concrete, although "not capable of statutory formulation." Paul was well aware that instruction was still needed for the period till the *parousia*, because of temptation and man's weakness despite being in the Spirit. However, the encouragement he provides is akin to a life lived and walked in the Spirit, and not comparable with externally imposed commands

endanger our ethics by making the dated instruction provide guidance instead of leaving that to the Spirit. This is tantamount to doing what the Jews did, namely to allow instruction (*law or torah*) to take the place of God.¹

He acknowledges that there is a risk involved and that the guidance obtained in this way might have a certain ambiguity.

Anyone seeking to avoid ambiguity in ethical decisions will consider this 'solution' unsatisfactory. It is also unsatisfactory because there is no solution. Yet this is exactly the nature of the matter.²

Since there are no unambiguous concrete imperatives in Pauline ethics, but Christianity has to be practiced concretely in the flesh, each decision is always a risk.³

If I understand him correctly, I am in agreement with him that one either follows a theological approach in which the Spirit leads the believer in Christ according to the will of the Father with all its risks, or one follows the nomistic route of casuistry according to which the ethical system provides the lead. Of the latter, we believe, Paul informs us that we have been fully freed. Differently put, more correctly, there is only one route for the Christian, that being, following the lead of the Spirit without the necessity of law in any form. From a dogmatological angle, and in keeping with his dialectical approach to theology and ethics, Karl Barth also takes this position.⁴ He wishes to restore the dynamics of the vertical dimension of ethics in each new situation on the horizontal level. Although he acknowledges that the history of vertical encounters on the horizontal level could have an educative value,⁵ he is wary of allowing past injunctions, instead of the Word of God, to dictate to the present.

For precisely in Holy Scripture the command of God does not confront us in the guise of rules, principles, axioms and general moral truths, but purely in the form of concrete, historical, unique and singular orders, prohibitions and directions.⁶

In short, it is about an ethic relying fully on the Spirit's guidance in each new situation, without an ethical system of authoritative instructions which have to be implemented. A position allowing for such an authoritative system would be considered as casuistry.

The value of this view is its defence of the dynamic relationship between the Spirit and the believer in every new situation in which the latter has to make responsible choices. It enhances the need for the believer to continually evaluate his motives to determine whether they are in line with the overall obligation to love the neighbour. It equally enhances his sense of responsibility as well as the consideration of each new situation in its uniqueness. It should equally be appreciated for its emphasis on the defence of the believer's freedom to obey

¹ Marxsen, 1993, 218.

² Marxsen, 1993, 218.

³ Marxsen, 1993, 219.

⁴ Barth, 1961, 3-31.

⁵ Barth, 1961, 17-8.

⁶ Barth, 1961, 12.

God¹ as he walks with the Spirit. As soon as some system of law is introduced it involves casuistry of some kind. This robs the believer of his accountability to God, and also of his freedom before God, and places the system between them as a type of ethical mediator.

In view of the danger of subjectivism on the part of individual believers, the role of the community of faith is vastly important and is accepted by this approach.

That is to say, it may well be the case – indeed, it will always be so – that one man has the task of interfering in respect of the conduct of another, that with the great or little authority and knowledge which he has in relation to the other he must warn him concretely and particularly about this or that mode of behavior or act, or *vice versa* spur him to it; and perhaps that neither of them can evade this duty, although ultimately each can only act for himself in a case of conscience.²

This might be more than mere advice. It could even be an authoritative exhortation leaving little room for discussion, but then, even though another is involved, the exhortation is born from the dynamic interaction between the Spirit and the believers and is meant for that situation only.

Obviously, given a community's history and tradition of ethical directives, a believer will be sensitive to patterns of the past. One never acts on a clean slate. However, tradition alone cannot be the directive. In fact, tradition itself could be proved imperfect, even blatantly wrong. God alone, through his Spirit, can provide the needed guidance, for which He has no need of oral or moral law in a casuistic sense. Tradition itself must always be subjected to historical-critical examination. However well motivated and theologically and ethically sound traditional directives might be, they were given to or arrived at by a certain community of faith in a given situation at a set time. One cannot simply accept these unchanged or unchallenged in another time. It must be reiterated that ethical patterns and traditions must not be regarded as evil or representative of "another gospel" in opposition to the true gospel *per se*. It is about authority. If it is awarded with ultimate authority or infallibility or in any way hampers the Spirit's role, it is wrong of.

The matter of tradition also calls to the position the Bible in Christian ethics. I do not wish to digress; neither do I wish to denigrate the Bible to being merely part of Christian tradition on the same level as all other ecclesiastical goods. Far from that! However, approaching the Bible fundamentalistically for ethical guidance, as if its ethical maxims and directives are all equally authoritative and directly applicable for today, is to disregard the original context of the instruction and its situational relevance. It equally robs Scripture of the opportunity to speak anew in the modern situation after proper exegesis. Thus, although the authority of Scripture should never be questioned, phenomenologically speaking, it should be investigated like any historical document to determine its original contextual meaning, in order to determine how it is applicable today. In this regard Birch and

¹ Barth, 1961, 13-4.

² Barth, 1961, 9.

Rasmussen have done well to provide theological ethics as science with guidance on the use of Scripture in ethics. Their emphasis is on honest exegesis instead of abusing Scripture to justify certain moral positions, or merely taking scriptural references literally without hermeneutic sensitivity.¹

4.2. Pauline ethics involving exhortation, but not external law

Deidun verbalises the feeling of many scholars when it comes to deciding on the role of external law in Christian ethics.²

It is a distortion of Paul's true perspective to suggest that he sees this break as liberation from law *qua* external law. For Paul, christian liberty is first and foremost radical emancipation from the power of sin and release from the impotence of self. This of course, entails a break with (a 'death to', cf. Rm. 7.4.6; Gal. 2,19) the law as γράμμα (mere demand) ; but it is not correct to suggest that Paul sees ἐλευθερία precisely as freedom from external law as such – with the result that *even in the Christian economy* external imperatives have to be seen chiefly as a sign of imperfect liberation.³

If one were to equate exhortation with external law the above quotation would have some merit. Christianity without exhortation in the new era prior to the fullness of the new creation at the *parousia*, would have to work on the premise of individual perfection. One would equally have to turn a blind eye to Paul's own exhortation – even in Galatians. This is, not forgetting the guidance and admonitions of Jesus and the other apostles. We do not live in perfection yet and therefore exhortation is part of our Christian being. However, to equate such exhortation with law is fallacious. If the intention with the use of law is to indicate the need that the *indicative* is to be followed by an *imperative*, the *Gabe* by the *Aufgabe*, or the *gospel* by *law* in the Lutheran sense of the dichotomy, one would not have too great a problem with this notion. However, when it is used in the sense of ethical codes and systems as necessary elements for Christian ethics to be effective, it becomes a problem for the reasons we mentioned in the previous section.

Even though Deidun is correct about the necessity of external exhortation within the ecclesiastical context;⁴ that the inner awareness created by the Spirit also involves the body of Christ's admonition to come to a well articulated expression of love; and that it has to be concretised in the body and outward;⁵ it is not necessary to have an elaborate ethical code of conduct by which one should determine one's actions. Such an approach carries with it the notion of indiscriminate control, threatening Christian freedom with being replaced by a tyranny of ethics. It essentially robs believers of making responsible choices within the dynamics of the interaction with the Spirit in the momentary situation in which he has to decide on what God expects of him in that *kairos*.

¹ Birch & Rasmussen, 1989, 181-8.

² See §3.3.1 in my Ch. 6 on the ways in which law is often assigned some ongoing function in Christian ethics.

³ Deidun, 1981, 209.

⁴ Deidun, 1981, 215.

⁵ Deidun, 1981, 222-3.

Yannaras warns against what he calls “the totalitarian dimension of objective ethics.”¹ He argues that it is typical of modern Western society to seek objective solutions or proposals to societal problems. This would equally apply to moral problems. There is more than often a tendency to impose these solutions dynamically and “politically”. What is lost in the process is the personal differentiation in which the wishes of individual human beings and their capacity to put solutions into practice are ignored. Theories have priority over humans. Crucially important for our subject, the individual is robbed of his responsibility to seek for what is morally correct, and his individuality as a partaker in the bigger societal search for what is moral in a given situation.² This is not to disregard the communal aspect. The point is, even communities within a diverse society are robbed of their communal individuality or identity, and, further, the dynamism of differentiation in a community or society is ignored.

Truth is no longer something achieved by a personal approach and personal experience, but a complete, closed “system” of concepts and intellectual relationships which interprets natural and historical reality definitively and with authority, with “axioms”, “principles” and “laws” of “scientific” positivism.³

This warning is most relevant with regard to freedom, the guidance of the Spirit and human responsibility to make correct moral decisions.

Thus, exhortation by the household of faith is part and parcel of responsible and accountable Christian ethics. Even awareness of ethical decisions and patterns of the past has a place. It would be unlike human beings to ignore such patterns. But, when push comes to shove, the exhortation must be born from the interaction between the Spirit, the exhorter, and the exhorte. It cannot simply be derived from past positions and systems. Equally, following Paul’s way of exhorting, one should always be crucially aware of the danger inherent to objectified moral exhortation. There is always the danger of formalisation and fossilisation, which, as in the case of OT casuistics, leads to law, in whatever form, mediating life between God and the believer or believing community. That would rob the Spirit of providing direct guidance, and it would rob the acting believer of his freedom to walk in step with the Spirit.

4.3. Paul’s use of maxims in Galatians

The question remaining after the above discussion on the need for and role of maxims is: how do Paul’s maxims in Galatians fit the position taken above? Without going into any detail, the following should suffice.

- On the whole, Paul’s maxims are very broadly formulated (Gl. 5:13-14⁴, 5:16, 22-23, 25-26; 6:1-5, 7-10¹). The effect of this formulation is twofold.

¹ Yannaras, 1984, 200.

² Yannaras, 1984, 200-1.

³ Yannaras, 1984, 201-2.

⁴ Although, one must add that immediately after expressing this maxim, Paul actualises it with regard to their dissonance.

Firstly, it calls for concrete application. It emphasises that faith can never be a matter of mere words. It has to go into ethical action. *Secondly*, it places the responsibility on the believer to apply it as he sees fit in his interaction with the Spirit. He does not limit his exhortations to case specific situations. He does, however, remind the believer to be case specific in his application. One should also acknowledge that the letter as a whole is very contingent and that Paul's broadly formulated exhortation would definitely have hit home. It was aimed at concretising, but the concretising was not provided by Paul. He seems to have left this to the Spirit by whom they lived and had to walk (Gl. 5:25). This is even the case with the maxim regarding remuneration for teachers. We have indicated that it probably was a problem related to the dissention amongst them. However relevant it was, Paul merely left the matter in their hands.

- Whilst Paul's ethical exhortation in Galatians is broadly formulated, he is extremely specific with regard to his exhortations regarding the indicative aspects of faith – the foundation of ethics. In fact, his letter was written in defence of the gospel (Gl. 1:6-10; 2:2, 5, 7) of Christ crucified (Gl. 6:12, 6:17) against an onslaught of reversion to law. Paul spares them nothing when it comes to exhorting them to remain true to the One who delivered them. He is even harsh with the Galatians (Gl. 1:6; 3:1, 3; 4:20). He leaves no room for a different interpretation of the gospel (Gl. 1:6-10). He reminds them of their own acceptance of Christ (Gl. 3:1-5; 4:12-14; 5:7). He warns them that they could be cut off from Christ (Gl. 5:2, 4). This does seem to indicate that Paul emphasises the inner disposition of being in the paradigm of Christ and his Spirit more emphatically than the specifics of ethical living.
- Paul assigns a major role to the community of faith. On this we have elaborated in this very chapter. It is especially with regard to the ethical exhortations in Gl. 6:1-10 that we see Paul emphasising the community of faith.
- We have already indicated that Paul refrains from being too authoritative in Galatians' ethical section.²
- We have also indicated that one would have expected Paul to provide a more elaborate ethical system to the Galatians. They probably experienced an ethical void in the absence of Paul's law free gospel as opposed to the Judaiser's provision. He refrains from providing such a system.

4.4. The Spirit does not need a law

Is there a possibility of a moral degeneration in the absence of an ethical system of worked out instructions? Obviously there is, but not on account of the absence of an ethical system. The danger lies in flesh and the believer's being lured into doing its works. A worked out system of ethics will not be able to motivate the be-

¹ To be sure, these maxims are specific in what they say. However, they do not specify the sin, the temptation, the burden, about what is being boasted, how God is mocked, etc.

² See Ch. 6, §4.1.4.

liever not to follow its course. Not even the elaborate casuistry of Judaism could do this. The fact that flesh has been crucified does not mean that the believer cannot be enticed into heeding the flesh and frustrating the Spirit. However, no system of law can come to the Spirit's aid in this respect.

What God has provided in the advent of Christ and his Spirit, is the direct and inward dynamism of the Spirit, sensitising the believer to the will of God and moving him through love to service.¹ Further, he has provided his communities of faith to guide and exhort believers in articulating ethical behaviour to God's glory. That there are risks involved and that man does not always pay heed to the Spirit is true. Equally true, this is the only way befitting the gospel of freedom. That man allows flesh to dominate does not render this ethic fallacious, but underlines man's hope of righteousness in the future coming of Christ.

Believers seem to have a propensity towards relinquishing their responsibilities, equally those regarding ethics. Thus, the perpetual move towards regulating behaviour via some system. There is always a danger of casuistry, even in the community of faith. For this reason Paul's letter to the Galatians was written and continues to have profound relevance.

5. CONCLUSION

Clearly, Chapters 5-7, dealing with freedom, new creation and the accompanying ethic, are very closely linked. However, Chapters 6 and 7 are very close, because they are both aimed at ethics in day-to-day practice. Ch. 7 very pertinently deals with the responsibilities and accountability of the believer and believing community on both the horizontal and the vertical levels. It deals with the believer's obligation to live in obedience to God and to serve the community and other fellowmen. The following conclusions on the chapter should suffice.

i) *An ethic of personal and communal responsibility*

Paul's ethic was not primarily individualistic. In fact, he emphasises the role of community. He makes very abundant use of the second person plural when addressing the Galatians in his ethical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10). He also makes good use of the reflexive pronoun (ἑαυτοῦ) and addresses the Galatians in the vocative ἀδελφοί, enhancing communality. Equally, his list of vices and virtues (Gl. 5:19-23) reflect a heavy emphasis on qualities that threaten or enhance unity in the community. His use of family imagery is also extremely important. Family values were decisive in Paul's *Umwelt*. The values of the family to which one belonged determined one's conduct. Inversely, the same family evaluated the individual's actions to determine whether they were good or bad in terms of its set of values. His use of family imagery, especially "household of faith" (Gl. 6:10), confirms the notion that Paul,

¹ Read Bornkamm, 1969, 182-6 on the relation between Spirit and law. He makes special mention of the danger of both nomism and libertinism being anachronistic and robbing the word of grace from its "here-and-nowness" and man from the liberty to bear fruit (186). Birch & Rasmussen, 1989, 181-2, emphasise the absolute necessity of the Bible in Christian ethics. However, they warn against using the Bible to extrapolate all its applicable moral directives. The emphasis should rather be on the role of the Bible and its narratives in forming the Christian's moral character from which he can make responsible ethical decisions.

regarding the community of believers as a newfound family in Christ, did not think individualistically about the believer or his ethic.

We also determined that on both individual and community levels, believers were to take responsibility for their ethical lives. The very first responsibility of the believer was to walk in step with the Spirit. The Spirit is the one who enables and guides the believer in that which is ethically good. Since the believer no longer follows a worked out set of rules, it is his responsibility to keep in step with the Spirit. Equally, the believer, although he is part of a community that seeks God's will through the Spirit, cannot relinquish his own responsibility to that of the community. For the believer, in this case, safety in numbers so as to disappear in the group, is a fallacy. He refers equally to the responsibility of the individual and the community. The two go hand in hand.

ii) *An ethic of restoration*

Paul's ethic, being founded on its christological-soteriological foundation, could not be different from the paradigm set by Christ. Christ did not come to judge or curse sinners. He came to deliver sinners believing in Him from the present evil age in which flesh reigned. He also came to deliver them from the curse that law inadvertently cast on them, because law could only direct them towards God's will, but could not enable them to act accordingly. Christ had brought a solution to the plight of the man of the old aeon. He did this by sacrificing Himself in love. This was the route believers were to follow if one of them were to fall victim to sin. Irrespective of the sinner's irresponsibility or even voluntarily and knowingly sinning, the community of faith was not to pull out the stops and condemn in terms of a magnitude of laws or maxims. It was their task to restore the sinner through love and service. They even had to help him carry his burden with regard to his sin. In fact, Paul admonishes them to do all of this in obedience to the Spirit (Gl. 6:1). Even after sin presented itself they could not deal in terms of law, but had to deal with the sinner through the Spirit of Christ.

iii) *An ethic of burden-bearing and perseverance*

Paul clearly indicates that the Christian ethic is not easy going. One has burdens to bear in the world. Despite this, one has to remain true to the guidance of the Spirit and produce the fruit of the Spirit. Added to this is the fact that one's fellow believers and other fellowmen have burdens to bear. Being a believer in the paradigm of Christ, one is obliged to love such people and illustrate it by helping them carry their burden.

He adds that one is always in danger of sinning. There are always temptations (Gl. 6:1). Together with this the Spirit and flesh oppose each other (Gl. 5:17). Add to this the ever present possibility of persecution (Gl. 6:17) and the fact that others do not think highly of the cross (Gl. 5:11). This calls for believers to realise from the start that a life according to the Spirit is not plain sailing. Believers were to accept this together with the responsibility to remain true to the Spirit's lead.

iv) *An ethic of accountability*

When one mentions responsibility accountability obviously follows. Believers were to be able to count on one another to bear another's burdens and to restore a sinner according to the paradigm set by Christ. If a member of the household of faith deviated from the set paradigm, not communicating the love of Christ, that member was accountable to the community. He would probably have to explain why he acted as he did. He might have acted in discord with the paradigm of Christ and would have to be restored. He might well have thought that he acted in step with the Spirit's lead and account for his understanding. He might even convince the community that he took his lead from the Spirit and that he was not at all subjective. Whatever, the believer is accountable to the community and the community to the individual.

However, on a much higher plane of accountability, is the believer's accountability to God. Ultimately, it is about remembering who God is. Paul introduces the letter with God's will and glory (Gl. 1:4-5) and closes it in glorying in the cross of the One God sent to deliver the believers (Gl. 6:14). As the Father of the household of faith God is the supreme Authority on what conduct is expected in different situations. One is accountable to Him. Paul adds that He is nobody's fool (Gl. 6:7). In fact, he emphasises that there will inevitably be a time of reckoning in which one will reap according to how one sowed (Gl. 6:8-9). However, the touchstone in this reckoning will not be some form of law, but whether one sowed according to the flesh or in obedience to the Spirit. It is the responsibility of the believer to live in step with the Spirit. Of this he will ultimately have to account to God.

v) *An ethic involving exhortation, but not nomism*

Finally, the question was put as to whether an anomistic christological-pneumatological ethic could at all accommodate exhortation of some kind. The question itself exposes a misconception. It is often wrongly assumed that the absence of law implies the absence of ethical direction and accountability. The inversion of this position is equally incorrect, namely that when ethical direction is given or believers are admonished, it implies law. We have argued that one should be very wary of an ethic revolving around a specific and even elaborately worked out system of codes of conduct. In fact, even the slightest hint of something of the kind should set off all alarms. This is why Paul wrote to the Galatians in the first place. He feared that they would revert to casuistics once more. The community of faith lives through the Spirit in the new era in which the Spirit does not mediate through the law in whatever form, but guides the believer and community of faith inwardly. True, certain patterns might emerge in a certain community, or even in the broader church, and the guidance of the Spirit is not given to relativism and subjectivism. However, the pattern must always be subjected to the guidance of the Spirit in a new situation. He might lead with a different nuance in a different situation. The moment one sets the pattern as the norm, the Spirit has to mediate through the pattern. This belongs to the previous aeon.

Paul does not shy away from exhortation. He even, at times, comes over as abrasive. However, he goes to great lengths to emphasise the role of the Spirit

in ethical guidance. His maxims are not too specific and he leaves vast opportunity for the Galatians to make responsible decisions for their own situation within the parameters of his maxims. These maxims are there to guide and not to specify.

Interestingly and most importantly, when Paul does become very specific in the letter and spares no one's feelings, it is not about their ethical behaviour, but about the indicative. He leaves no room for interpretation of any kind when it comes to the fact that Christ was crucified and that he was crucified with Him (Gl. 2:20); that they themselves had a vivid notion of his crucifixion (Gl. 3:1); that they had received the Spirit (Gl. 3:3-4) and continued to experience his call to the Father (Gl. 4:6); and that they had been set free (Gl. 5:1). Reversion to law would indicate their severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4). He is absolutely clear when exhorting them to remain true to the gospel of the crucified and resurrected Christ who delivered them, but is more cautious in presenting them with specific ethical exhortation applicable to almost any situation. This he would leave to the Spirit in his dealing with the individual and his community.