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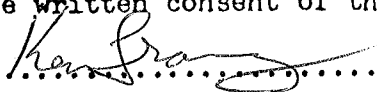
TITLE THE "LAW OF CHRIST" AS A PAULINE LABEL FOR CHRISTIAN ETHICAL

..... RESPONSIBILITY: A RECONSIDERATION OF THE ARGUMENTS OF C. H. DODD

..... AND W. D. DAVIES

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The "Law of Christ" as a Pauline Label for Christian Ethical
Responsibility: A Reconsideration of the Arguments of C. H.
Dodd and W. D. Davies

by

Adelia Grace Neufeld Wiens

A thesis
presented to the University of Manitoba
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Religion

Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1984

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submitted by Adelia Grace Neufeld Wiens
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
..... MASTER OF ARTS

The Thesis Examining Committee certifies that the thesis
(and the oral examination, if required) is:

Approved

Not Approved

George W. Houtsko
.....
Advisor

Paul Lindiger
.....
Egon H. H. H.
.....

A. B. G.
.....
External Examiner

Date ..5.. April ..1984.....

.....

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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PREFACE

It is the intent of this thesis to embark the reader on a fresh investigation of the meaning of Paul's phrase, "law of Christ." My hope is that this investigation will provide stimulating ideas for consideration.

The writing of this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of several people. First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to two professors at Canadian Mennonite Bible College who first exposed me to the horizons of biblical studies: Dr. Waldemar Janzen and Dr. David Schroeder set me on my way, and have continued to offer me encouragement and assistance.

I would like to offer special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Larry W. Hurtado, who helped me to maintain the focus of this work, and who spent many hours reading and responding to drafts of the chapters. My thesis committee, made up of Dr. Egil Grisliis, Dr. Paul Trudinger, and Dr. Rory Egan, also merits special thanks. Each person offered a unique and helpful perspective to my work.

For their continual encouragement, I remain indebted to my friends who saw me through the times when there was no end in sight. Finally, but most important, I want to thank the person who suffered most heavily under the stresses of thesis-writing: my husband, Werner.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father, David P. Neufeld, who taught me about walking the way of Jesus.

ABSTRACT

The phrase "law of Christ," which occurs twice in Paul's writings (Gal 6:2; I Cor 9:21), is difficult to understand alongside his emphasis on freedom, grace, and justification by faith. The major problem is the question of how Paul can use the word "law" with such a positive connotation in light of his powerful polemic against the Law (e.g., Rom 3:21, 10:4; Gal 3:23).

The work of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies provided an understanding of the phrase "law of Christ" which was dramatically different and substantially more developed than that of their predecessors. First, they argued that "law of Christ" embodied a code of precepts that were not simply pneumatic. Second, they held that Paul had a mind a Jesus-tradition, consisting of precepts and sayings of Christ, which had been handed down to the early churches and was considered as authoritative material. And third, Dodd and Davies tried to show that Paul conceived of the "law of Christ" as similar to the OT Law, in that it continued the revelation of God and expressed his election and grace.

It was the intent of this thesis to review scholarly understanding of the phrase "law of Christ" since Dodd and Davies (approximately 1950) in order to evaluate the verity

of their arguments. Furthermore, an exegetical analysis of the Pauline texts was undertaken in order to discover if Paul possessed a standard for Christian ethical responsibility.

This thesis has come to the conclusion that Paul's writings indicate that he had some kind of ethical standard for Christians to follow. The frequent use of quasi-legal language such as "walk," "way," "obedience," "test," and so on, indicates the existence of such a "standard" for Christian ethical responsibility. Paul intentionally used the phrase "law of Christ," then, to emphasize that obedience and correct moral behaviour complement and are united with the perception that the Christian lives in freedom. Such an understanding is made possible, in part, by a full understanding of the meaning of the term "law" in both Judaism and the Greco-Roman world.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem	1
The "Law of Christ" Discussion in Modern Scholarship	3
The Nature of this Study	20
Some Chronological Considerations for this Study	24
The Significance of this Study	28
II. THE POSITIONS OF C. H. DODD AND W. D. DAVIES	32
The Position of C. H. Dodd	33
The Position of W. D. Davies	43
Conclusion	58
III. SCHOLARLY DISCUSSION SINCE C. H. DODD AND W. D. DAVIES	59
Scholarship Since 1950 on the "law of Christ"	62
Continuity: The OT Law Remains Valid	63
Mediating Positions: The OT Law is Radicalized	66
Discontinuity: The Law Has Ended	79
The Law of Love	80
A New Standard	97
The Dissertations of 1971	106
Donald Allan Stoike, "The Law of Christ: A Study of Paul's Use of the Expression in Galatians 6:2," Th.D. Dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971.	107
Kieth Arnold Gerberding, "The Pauline Understanding of The Law of Christ," Th.D. Dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1971	112

Scholarship Since 1971 on the "law of Christ"	119
Continuity: The OT Law Remains Valid	120
Mediating Positions: The OT Law is Radicalized	125
Discontinuity: The OT Law Has Ended	135
The Law of Love	135
A New Standard	142
Conclusion	144
IV. THE "LAW OF CHRIST" IN PAUL'S THOUGHT	146
Exegetical Considerations	147
Bases for Exegetical Analysis	148
Dismissed Positions	158
Exegetical Questions	164
Exegetical Analysis	166
Conclusion	196
V. THE "LAW OF CHRIST" AND MODERN BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP	198
The Contribution of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies to the Understanding of Paul's phrase "law of Christ"	199
Implications of Paul's Understanding of the "Law of Christ"	220
The Law/Grace Discussion	222
Christian Moral Theology	226
The Jewish-Christian Dialogue	229
BIBLIOGRAPHY	232

Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE PROBLEM

The idea of a "law of Christ" has puzzled Christians throughout the history of the church, offering to some a legalistic conception of religious life,¹ while providing others with the task of harmonizing "law of Christ" with the concepts of justification by faith, freedom, grace, and love.² The specific phrase "law of Christ" arises only twice in the New Testament, both times in the Pauline corpus (I Cor 9:21, Gal 6:2), and the lengthy debate over its meaning has opened manifold possibilities of interpretation. Why has this seemingly insignificant phrase provoked such a flurry of interest? F. F. Bruce observes that one reason for this exceptional curiosity lies in the fact that Paul,

¹ For instance, in the second-century church, Barnabas understood Jesus as the giver of "the new law." According to the Apologists, Jesus had revealed himself as the Logos (Word), the divine ordering principle of the universe, and thus represents the new law of the Kingdom of God. For the early Catholic church, the co-existence of Gospel and Law was deemed important. [See also G. W. Forell, History of Christian Ethics, Vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1979) and Maurice Goguel, The Primitive Church (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964), pp. 497ff.].

² For instance, Martin Luther, John Calvin, as well as other Reformation leaders. Subsequent biblical scholars and theologians have been confronted with this unavoidable issue.

throughout his writings, has energetically worked to put the law "in its place" (e.g., Rom 3:21; 10:4; Gal 3:23); suddenly, however, in the phrase "law of Christ" he seems to use the term "law" with a more positive connotation.³

Several major concerns are present in any effort to come to an accurate understanding of Paul's conception of the "law of Christ." First of all, we must ask if the "law of Christ" is in some way related to the Jewish Torah. Does it refer to the ethical responsibility of the Christian? If so, what is the nature of this responsibility? Does it have elements in it that are not found in the Torah? Second, the biblical scholar must address the concern of how Paul can use the term "law" with a positive connotation in light of his previous, seemingly negative statements about "law." The question also arises whether or not Paul has in mind some specific commands of Jesus, passed along in an oral or written tradition similar to the Decalogue. The relationship of the "law of Christ" with the love command in the New Testament must also be addressed. Finally, the roles of the Holy Spirit and the congregation must be examined in relation to the fulfillment of the "law of Christ."

³ F. F. Bruce, "All Things to All Men: Diversity in Unity and Other Pauline Tensions," Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George Eldon Ladd, ed. Robert Guelich (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 88.

The intention of this study is to show that Paul did indeed have in mind the ethical responsibility of the Christian when he used the phrase "law of Christ." In order to show this, we will look at the positions of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies, whose work provides a turning point in understanding the phrase, and we will reconsider their arguments in light of scholarship since their contribution was made. This reconsideration will lead us to attempt a fresh exegetical study of the "law of Christ" passages so that we will be able to address anew the concerns listed above.

Before we move to a discussion of the method and significance of this study, it is necessary to describe briefly modern scholarship on the "law of Christ" prior to the work of Dodd and Davies.

1.2 THE "LAW OF CHRIST" DISCUSSION IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Until the writing of Maurice Goguel (1947), whose work immediately preceded that of C. H. Dodd, scholarly interest in the "law of Christ" was limited. When the phrase was interpreted, its significance was not perceived to be notable. Basically, "law of Christ" was understood as an indication of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Christian. It was this pneumatic character, with mystical attributes, which retained prominence until Dodd and Davies began to stir the waters.

Very few works have been devoted to a history of research on the "law of Christ." The only study available to this examination is the Th.D. dissertation of Donald Allan Stoike, which offers an extensive history of research on the phrase.⁴ His work provides a wealth of information. But since his methodological concern is to judge scholars according to the extent to which they have succeeded in relating the phrase "law of Christ" and other statements about law to the historical, not theological, circumstances behind the Epistles,⁵ we ourselves will need to review the positions of the major scholars.

In the appendix to his book, Theology and Ethics in Paul, Victor Paul Furnish offers a survey of nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpretations of Paul's ethic.⁶ This, too, is an extensive history of research: but, since showing the scholarly understanding of "law of Christ" is not his overriding concern, the value of the study is somewhat limited in relation to our particular interest.

⁴ Donald Allan Stoike, "'The Law of Christ': A Study of Paul's Use of the Expression in Galatians 6:2," (Th.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971), pp. 1-62. (Hereafter, this work will be referred to as "Law of Christ").

⁵ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁶ Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 242-279. (Hereafter, this work will be referred to as Theology and Ethics).

In a brief exposition, then, of modern discussion on the "law of Christ," there are several significant scholars who cannot be omitted, even though their concern for our particular topic may not be very great. The first of these is F. C. Baur, whose so-called "Tübingen School" has influenced Pauline studies for the last century. Peter C. Hodgson observed that Baur's great contribution lay in his

unequivocal recognition of the radically historical nature of the Christian Church and Christian faith, and in his concomitant desire to relate historical-critical study internally rather than externally to the contents of dogmatic affirmation.⁷

Baur formulated the idea that there were two parties within the early Christian church, the primitive Jewish-Christian party in Jerusalem, and the Hellenistic party, of which Paul was the chief representative, and that these two parties carried distinct and antagonistic understandings of the nature of Christianity. In his study of Paul, published in 1866-67, Baur perceived Paul as "the receptive soil in which the principle of Christian consciousness, which through him for the first time obtained its living features, developed into a concrete consciousness."⁸ In Baur's judgment, no one had understood and interpreted Christ more fully than Paul.⁹ While Furnish asserts that Baur offered abso-

⁷ Peter C. Hodgson, The Formation of Historical Theology. A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 1.

⁸ F. C. Baur, quoted by Hodgson, The Formation of Historical Theology, p. 203.

lutely no interpretation of Paul's ethical concerns, exhortations or presuppositions,¹⁰ Stoike lifts out Baur's interest in the Pauline idea of love in its connection with faith¹¹ and shows that Baur did in fact link the "law of Christ" with these concepts. Stoike quotes Baur at length:¹²

Love is indeed the whole sum of the law; in it the law becomes the law of Christ himself, Gal v.14, vi.2 (cf. ennomos Christou, I Cor ix.21). Though the law is abolished through the death of Christ, it is not abolished altogether; only that in it is taken away which was merely external, which was merely positive. Set free from its outward form, the legal becomes the moral, -- the law is received back into the self-consciousness of the Spirit, the law of Christ is the moral consciousness in its essential oneness with the Christian consciousness. Thus what on the one side is freedom, is on the other side subordination. [Baur, Paul II, p. 167]

Even in this brief exposition of the meaning of "law of Christ," Baur raised the crucial issues -- the relationship with OT Law, the necessity of love, the work of the Spirit -- but he did not move on to provide us with answers. Baur also did not deal with the relationship of Paul to a Jesus-tradition. John W. Fraser notes that for Baur, "It was Paul who gave absolute significance to Jesus' person, but at the same time he had no great interest in Jesus' preaching."¹³

⁹ Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁰ Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 243.

¹¹ Stoike, "Law of Christ," p. 17.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ J. W. Fraser, Jesus and Paul. Paul as Interpreter of Je-

After the work of Baur, scholars continued to perceive the "law of Christ" as being some "internal consciousness." Several scholars in the late 1800's discerned the work of the Holy Spirit as integral to an understanding of "law of Christ."¹⁴ H. Fr. Th. L. Ernesti (1868), Hermann von Soden (1892), and Paul Wernle (1897) all built on the idea that the Christian is moved to ethical action by something "within" (that is, the presence of God through the Holy Spirit). The Law, according to Paul, continued to be a revelation of God's divine will. Paul's major concern, however, was not morality, but faith, and this was what made him distinctive. Ethics grew out of the freedom that came from justification by faith, and ethical action was a spiritual gift -- the Spirit within would enable the person to meet the requirements of God's will.

Hermann Jacoby (1899) took this understanding of "law of Christ" and clarified it, showing that the human act of faith, along with God's gift of the Spirit, constituted the basis of the new life for Paul. Through the Spirit, the exalted Christ himself governed within each individual Christian and within the corporate life of the community "as the

sus from Harnack to Kümmel (Appleford, Abingdon, Berkshire: The Marcham Manor Press, 1974), p. 11. In Baur's brief examination of "law of Christ," we see a pattern that remains prevalent throughout much of the exegetical treatment of the phrase: the important issues and concerns are tersely presented but not analyzed or discussed.

¹⁴ Summarized in Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 242ff.

ethically enlivening principle."¹⁵ Hence, said Jacoby, the Christian fulfilled the law of God (in the form of the "law of Christ," I Cor 9:21) by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Furnish observed that "most of the early twentieth-century interpretations of Paul's ethic really belong to the nineteenth century, with respect to their approach, methodology and results."¹⁶ The influence of Wernle and Ernesti continued to be felt as H. Weinel (1904) and Archibald B. D. Alexander (1910) explained Paul's understanding of ethics from an interior, spiritual dimension. Alfred Juncker,¹⁷ who published in 1904 and 1919, criticized most previous discussion of Pauline ethics for being superficial, brief, and inconclusive. Apart from his attention to justification by faith as a vital part of Paul's ethic, however, Juncker basically followed the positions of Ernesti, Jacoby, and others outlined above. The major stress continued to lie upon the Pauline doctrine of the Spirit, and the ethical exhortations of Paul were meant to be "principles," making clear what Christians already knew implicitly. Juncker's major contribution lay in his perception of the relevance of Jesus' death and resurrection to Christian ethics.

¹⁵ Quoted in Furnish, Ibid., p. 248.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁷ Unfortunately, Juncker's work is unavailable to me, so I rely on Furnish, Ibid., pp. 253-256 for this summary.

Johannes Weiss (1917), another prominent figure in biblical studies, continued to treat Paul's ethic in connection with the doctrine of the Spirit.¹⁸ Weiss's great contribution to Pauline ethics lay in his work as the "initiator of the current eschatological debate."¹⁹ Weiss wrote of Paul:

His ethic, inasmuch as it moves in the imperative, is the alarm cry of the last hour: still one more mighty, final exertion of strength -- then comes the end!²⁰

Albert Schweitzer (1931) added to the emphasis on the controlling place of eschatology in Paul's ethic. Schweitzer believed that this eschatological motif made Paul's ethical advice and exhortations "interim": one lived with eyes "fixed upon eternity."²¹

This eschatological emphasis was not the only distinctive point of Schweitzer's interpretation of Paul's ethic. The role of the Holy Spirit provided ethics with a theological base, that is, the doctrine of dying and rising with Christ. When one is "in Christ" in the mystical sense, the Spirit of God "unites with the spiritual part of man's personality"²²

¹⁸ Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 257; Stoike, "Law of Christ," p. 61.

¹⁹ Fraser, Jesus and Paul, p. 14.

²⁰ Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, II, p. 577. Quoted by Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 257.

²¹ Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle (London: Adam and Charles Black, 2nd ed., 1953), p. 333. This book was first published in 1931, but in his preface, Schweitzer says that the MS was initially written in 1906 (p. vii).

²² Ibid., p. 342.

and provides the impetus for ethical activity. Schweitzer went on to identify the "law of Christ" with the "law of Love."²³ He asserted that love was the highest of the spiritual gifts for Paul, and that only the pneumatic man would be capable of really practising love. Regarding Rom 13:8-10, Schweitzer wrote,

Paul's thought is not merely that the law of the Spirit is substituted for the Law of Moses, but rather that it is only those who are no longer mere natural men who can properly fulfil the ethical demands of this Law.²⁴

Schweitzer understood Paul to be saying that ethics are "the necessary outward expression of the translation from the earthly world to the super-earthly", which takes place in the person who is "in Christ."²⁵ Thus, ethics come out of life in the Spirit. Schweitzer's understanding of Paul's ethic, then, was "mysticism conceived on the level of will and action."²⁶

Schweitzer addressed the concern of whether Paul had a Jesus-tradition by attributing to Paul a creative and free hand in passing on this tradition. Schweitzer wrote,

The alteration in world-conditions through the precedent death and resurrection of Jesus is so great that the teaching of Jesus, prior to it, can no longer be applied to it without more ado, and compels Paul to take up a creative attitude

²³ Ibid., p. 303.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 333.

²⁶ This phrase comes from Maurice Goguel, The Primitive Church, p. 436.

alongside of Jesus, and give the Gospel the form necessary to adapt it to the changed conditions.²⁷

With the help of the Holy Spirit, Paul was able to carry out this task of adapting the Gospel to his cultural milieu. Apart from a few concessions to tradition (I Cor 15:2; 7:10; 11:23-25), Schweitzer asserted that Paul was wholly dependent upon revelation given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.²⁸

A. Fridrichsen succinctly summarized Schweitzer's position:

According to Schweitzer St. Paul is an eschatological mystic for whom the life and teaching of Jesus were of no significance; the only matter of importance to him was the supramundane life common to believers after the resurrection.²⁹

Morton Scott Enslin (1925), an American, also considered himself greatly indebted to Johannes Weiss. Contrary to some scholars' tendency to say that Paul divided the Mosaic law into ceremonial and moral demands, Enslin asserted that Paul broke with the Law as an entire unit. The Christian was to be no longer under any of its constraints, moral or ceremonial. Enslin went on then to clarify Paul's ambiguity about "law" by offering a sociological perspective. Because Paul had been such a devout Jew for so long, he said, this influence left an "indelible stamp" and he could "even refer to the new system as a Law."³⁰ That was how he came to use

²⁷ Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, pp. 172-173.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 174.

²⁹ Quoted in Fraser, Jesus and Paul, p. 17.

³⁰ Morton Scott Enslin, The Ethics of Paul. Reprint of 1925 ed. (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 87.

the phrase "law of Christ." Enslin went on to explore to what extent the words and example of Jesus served as a criterion for the conduct of Paul and his churches, and concluded that while Paul certainly had access to some tradition of Jesus, it was the "light within",³¹ the "law of the Spirit",³² which gave the ultimate moral directive. Ethical activity would spring from the mystical union of the believer with the Lord, resulting in a real unity among fellow believers.³³ So, Enslin wrote:

Almost every moral precept is based on its effect on the brethren. The social virtues -- love, harmony, service -- are never forgotten. In so far as conduct squares with this demand it fulfills the law of Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," for the man whose life is thus directed must needs have cast aside the works of the flesh and have brought forth the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, . . . (Gal. 5:22).³⁴

Martin Dibelius (1919, rev. ed. 1933), while not having dealt specifically with the idea of "law of Christ," began a decisively new discussion in Pauline ethics with his expression of the possibility of the use of a "Jesus-tradition" in the early church as a "Christian Halakah." This interest likely arose out of the fact that Dibelius pioneered the method of Formgeschichte (form-criticism). Dibelius asserted that the words of Jesus were handed down "within the

³¹ Ibid., p. 130.

³² Ibid., pp. 129, 232.

³³ Ibid., p. 133.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 129.

framework of a Christian Halakah,"³⁵ and these words provided a "storehouse of teachings and warnings" usable in many kinds of relationships.³⁶ Paul, observed Dibelius, provided proof for this assertion in his uses of "words of the Lord" (cf. I Thess 4:1). Paul also, however, combined his own preaching with the Church's tradition, because he needed to interpret the Jewish meanings to his Gentile listeners.³⁷ Using maxims from the wise sayings of the Jews and Greeks as well as from Jesus' words and the church's experience, Paul made the Christian message applicable to an audience that was very different from that of Jesus.³⁸

Dibelius' success in demonstrating the necessity of a formal analysis of Paul's ethical teachings, linking them with the Hellenistic parenetic tradition as well as a Jesus-tradition, is apparent as we survey the work of other scholars. Furnish linked Dibelius' contribution with C. H. Dodd's special interest in the role of tradition in Paul's ethic,³⁹ and we shall see that much biblical scholarship in the last two decades has been influenced by this idea (cf.

³⁵ Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, rev. ed., E. T. [first published 1919] (Greenwood, S. C.: Attic Press, 1971), p. 28.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 240.

³⁷ Martin Dibelius, Paul, edited and completed by Werner George Kümmel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 90.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

³⁹ Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 261.

Gerhardsson, Riesenfeld, Dungan).

Rudolf Bultmann (1951), the undeniable focal figure of twentieth-century biblical scholarship, offered a theological analysis of Paul's ethic, and characterized the "law of Christ" as the demand that the Christian practise love.⁴⁰ He cited Rom 13:8-10 and Gal 5:14 as proof of this demand, where the Law is summed up, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Bultmann clarified what he meant as follows:

Such fulfilling of the law, however, is no "work" in the sense of meritorious accomplishment, but is a deed done in freedom. To perform this deed of love believers are "God taught" (theodidaktoi, I Thess. 4:9). Love, then, is an eschatological phenomenon; in it the faith which transplants men into eschatological existence is at work (Gal. 5:6).⁴¹

This love, continued Bultmann, is possible only for the person who has died with Christ, has been resurrected (II Cor 5:15), and is obedient to the love command -- the "law of Christ." Paul and Jesus share a similar attitude to the Law, observed Bultmann.⁴²

⁴⁰ Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 344. (Hereafter referred to as NT Theology).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Fraser, Jesus and Paul, p. 23. Fraser summarized Bultmann's essay, "Die Bedeutung des geschichtlichen Jesus für die Theologie des Paulus." Regarding "law," he perceived Bultmann as saying: "How does the theology of Paul correspond to the teaching of Jesus? A strong link lies in their attitude to the law."

Bultmann did not credit Paul with using a Jesus-tradition as the basis for his ethical demands. Indeed, he observed that Paul used "words of the Lord" only twice (I Cor 7:10f. and 9:14), and both cases were examples of regulations for church life. Rather, the preaching of Paul was a "new structure" in relation to the preaching of Jesus.⁴³ Bultmann observed,

But of decisive importance in this connection is the fact that Paul's theology proper, with its theological, anthropological, and soteriological ideas, is not at all a recapitulation of Jesus' own preaching nor a further development of it, and it is especially significant that he never adduces any of the sayings of Jesus on the Torah in favor of his own teaching about the Torah.⁴⁴

In the few places where Paul did accompany his exhortations with appeals to the authority of "the Lord," Bultmann asserted that Paul was not thinking of the historical Jesus, but of the exalted Lord.⁴⁵

Bultmann viewed ethical actions, then, as the concrete expression of the radical obedience to which humans are called,⁴⁶ to subject themselves as "slave to all" (I Cor 9:19) and to be "servants of one another" (Gal 5:13).

For the believer has the freedom that is his as a "slave" of the "Lord", and he who is "not under the law himself" has become a slave "to those under the law" and "to those outside the law" as "one outside the law" because he is within "the

⁴³ Bultmann, NT Theology, p. 189.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 294.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 343.

law of Christ" (I Cor 9:20f).⁴⁷

Also worthy of serious attention, finally, is the provocative work of Maurice Goguel (1947), the notable French Protestant theologian. He observed that "Paul appears to have had two ethics."⁴⁸ One ethic was theoretical; it described the role of justification in creating a holy life, and was expressed in the present and past tenses of the indicative. The other ethic was one of imperatives, leading through great effort to the holy life. The fundamental problem of the Pauline ethic, then, was the relationship between the imperative and the indicative. Goguel wrote,

The two ethics are not just placed side by side as if Paul wavered between them, and professed one or the other according to the circumstances and situation of those who he happened to be addressing, or to differences in their personal characters. They are not alternatives, but are interpenetrated and influenced by each other.⁴⁹

Thus, Paul brought the ethic of Law to the person who had been justified and who possessed the Spirit. The Law was no longer simply an exterior restraint, but was a result of justification and the freedom from the domination of sin and the flesh, and took its shape in the inner depths of the person.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Maurice Goguel, The Primitive Church, p. 426.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 448.

Goguel attributed confusion about Paul's understanding of the Law to his "imprecision of terminology."⁵⁰ Paul used one word, "Law" (nomos), to express two different things: moral law, which was of permanent validity, and ritual law, which ceased to be valid after Christ's redemptive acts. Goguel held up I Cor 9:20-21 as a perfect example of this imprecision. Here, Paul wrote that he was "no longer under the law" but under the "law of Christ." Goguel perceived Paul in this way:

His ethical life consequently took two forms: (1) creative fulfilment of the life of the Spirit, and (2) spontaneous inner subjection to the law of Christ, and at the same time obedience brought about by an effort on his part and a strict discipline, which he had to impose upon himself, because there survived in him an element which did not submit to the divine law.⁵¹

A significant aspect of Goguel's perception of Paul's phrase "law of Christ" was that it is embodied in the ethical element of the Law of the Old Testament.⁵² Together with the element of OT Law, the themes of the ethical teaching of the first generation of Christians, the sayings and exemplary deeds of Jesus, and some aspects of moral practice among the churches provided the content for this "Christian law."⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 443.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 454.

⁵² Ibid., p. 516.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 504.

C. H. Dodd, a British scholar of considerable renown, began a new era in the discussion of the early Christian ethic with his work, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (1936). Here he systematically distinguished between preaching (kerygma) and teaching (didache).⁵⁴ For Dodd, this distinction corresponded with Gospel and Law, respectively. As we shall see, he viewed Paul's letters as primarily didactic, not kerygmatic, because "they expound and defend the implications of the Gospel rather than proclaim it."⁵⁵ Indeed, Dodd believed that Paul took Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer 31:31-34) that the Law would be "written on their hearts," and applied it to the new covenant which Christians have with God. In his major work that dealt most extensively with "law of Christ," Dodd wrote,

It turns out, then, that the law of Christ works by setting up a process within us which is itself ethical activity. His precepts stir the imagination, arouse the conscience, challenge thought, and give an impetus to the will, issuing in action.⁵⁶

Dodd did not believe that Paul was limited to a pneumatic understanding of the "law of Christ," which said that there was no law for the Christian except his own "inner light."⁵⁷

⁵⁴ C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), p. 9.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁶ Dodd, Gospel and Law, p. 77.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 70. There is a pneumatic element in the "law of Christ" for Dodd, though. See below, Ch. II, pp. 38-39.

Dodd also did not, however, attribute the confusion regarding "law of Christ" to Paul's "imprecision of terminology" regarding the term "law" (cf. Goguel). Paul clearly used "law" consciously. Finally, Dodd did not entirely agree with Goguel that the "law of Christ" was embodied in the ethical element of Law in the OT. Rather, he characterized the "law of Christ" as the "law of God"

which at one stage and on one level finds expression in the Torah, [and] may at another stage and on a different level find expression in the "law of Christ."⁵⁸

A student of Dodd's, W. D. Davies, expanded considerably upon Dodd's understanding of Paul's conception of the "law of Christ." In his book, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (1948), Davies argued that

Paul must have regarded Jesus in the light of a new Moses, and that he recognized in the words of Christ a nomos tou Christou which formed for him the basis for a kind of Christian Halakah. When he used the phrase nomos tou Christou he meant that the actual words of Jesus were for him a New Torah.⁵⁹

Davies defended this position by exposing the problem of Wisdom Christology in the Pauline epistles.⁶⁰ First, Davies showed that the OT figure of Wisdom became identified with the Torah in Judaism.⁶¹ Then, he showed that it was indeed

⁵⁸ Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 137.

⁵⁹ W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 3rd ed. (London: SPCK, 1970), p. 144. This work was first published in 1948, with the only substantial revision done in 1955.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 150ff. See Chapter II below for a more detailed explanation of Davies' argument.

possible that Paul identified Jesus with the Wisdom of God and ascribed to him pre-existence, creativity, and moral discipline.⁶² So, if Wisdom was equal to Torah, then Jesus, perceived as a figure of Wisdom, could also be identified as the New Torah in Paul's christology.

This very brief explanation of Davies' position shows that he, along with Dodd, provided us with an understanding of the "law of Christ" which was dramatically different and substantially more developed than that of their predecessors. We must await Chapter II for a more detailed outline of the positions of Dodd and Davies. Before moving on to that task, however, let us analyze the intentions of this thesis.

1.3 THE NATURE OF THIS STUDY

As we have seen in the previous discussion, there are, broadly speaking, two major directions which an understanding of the "law of Christ" may take. First, there is the pneumatic direction, where "law of Christ" may be seen as a spiritual, inner light, which leads the Christian to correct moral action; or secondly, "law of Christ" may be seen as a term embodying some connection with the Torah or the teachings of Jesus, providing specific moral injunctions for the Christian (cf. Dodd and Davies). The intent of this study

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 169, 172.

⁶² Ibid., p. 172.

is to analyze and consider carefully the latter understanding of "law of Christ."

There are several major issues with which this particular study is primarily concerned. First, we must show whether or not Paul perceived the "law of Christ" as a label for Christian ethical responsibility. Second, we must address the important issue of Paul's perception of the relationship between the OT Law/Torah and the "law of Christ." Is there absolutely no connection, as Donald Allan Stoike and E. Bammel hold, or is there fulfillment as well as continuity and clarification, as held by Dodd, Davies, James A. Sanders and others? And third, we must deal with the question of whether Paul had in mind a collection of Jesus' sayings when he used the phrase "law of Christ."

In Chapter II of this study, then, we will examine in detail the positions of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies regarding the "law of Christ." As already indicated, Dodd and Davies provided a turning point for the interpretation of "law of Christ," opening new possibilities of meaning and depth. The arguments of Dodd and Davies will be summarized. Their interpretations of the relationship between the "law of Christ" and the Torah will be outlined, and a summary of their exegetical analyses of important biblical texts will be provided.

Chapter III of our study will be composed of a summary and comparison of scholarship on the "law of Christ" since

the seminal work of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies. This review of scholarship will begin with work done in 1950 and proceed to include relevant works up to the present. In order to simplify the presentation, this chapter will be divided into two main parts.⁶³ First, the work of scholars up to and including two Th.D. dissertations done in 1971 (Gerberding and Stoike) will be reviewed and briefly discussed. Some of the major figures within this frame of time are C. E. B. Cranfield, E. Bammel, Victor Paul Furnish, Hans Joachim Schoeps, Birger Gerhardsson, Harald Riesenfeld, T. W. Manson, Ceslaus Spicq and Richard Longenecker. Second, Chapter III will provide a summary and discussion of scholarship, related to our interest in "law of Christ," that was done in Pauline studies since 1971. Important, indeed crucial, figures to consider in this decade include David Dungan, Herman Ridderbos, John E. Toews, E. P. Sanders, James A. Sanders, J. Christiaan Beker, Gerard Sloyan and others. Their contributions will provide significant new material for our own exegetical analysis of the texts under consideration. Throughout this chapter, significant breakthroughs and observations will be examined and compared.

Chapter IV will take into consideration the scholarship studied in Chapters II and III, and provide a fresh exegetical analysis of the passages relevant to our study of the meaning of "law of Christ." Again, this chapter will be di-

⁶³ Please see the notes on "chronological considerations" immediately following this section.

vided into two parts. The first section will outline some of the important exegetical considerations which must be taken into account. A position will be established with regard to Paul's understanding of "law" throughout his writings: we will review the different meanings of "law" implied in his usage, and determine the importance of the context for correct understanding. Further, the relationship of the Greek term nomos with the Hebrew term "torah" will be explained.

After these issues have been briefly dealt with, the study will proceed to an exegetical analysis of the passages containing Paul's phrase, "law of Christ." This exegetical analysis will be preceded by a discussion of exegetical pre-suppositions, in which a number of assertions will be outlined. The major exegetical questions will be listed, and an analysis of the relevant texts will be undertaken. The exegesis will consider the issues of whether the "law of Christ" is a label for Christian ethical responsibility and whether Paul had in mind a Jesus-tradition when he used the phrase "law of Christ." The exegesis will also have significant implications for the question of Paul's perception of the continuity between the old covenant and Christianity, and the question of the relationship of the love command and the Holy Spirit with Paul's understanding of the "law of Christ."

Chapter V, the conclusion of this study, will compare the results of the exegesis in Chapter IV with the arguments of Dodd and Davies as well as with the scholars outlined in Chapter III. This chapter will also briefly consider the implications of this study for biblical studies as a whole, the contemporary study of Christian ethics, and the Jewish-Christian dialogue. More will be said about these implications in section 5 of this chapter.

1.4 SOME CHRONOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies have been thoroughly criticized over the last thirty-five years for many aspects of their thinking on the "law of Christ." Victor Paul Furnish, for instance, strongly disagreed with the possibility that the phrase "law of Christ" could be used to support the thesis that Paul conceived of the traditional words of Jesus as constituting a new Torah or Christian Halakah.⁶⁴ Furnish assigned a completely different role to "law of Christ" by asserting that Paul used the phrase to define the true meaning of Christian freedom: quite simply, the Christian is not merely a libertine, insensitive to ethical responsibility, but has principles and guidelines to which he adheres.⁶⁵ J. S. Ruef also attempted to deflate Dodd's argument, asserting that "law of Christ" was simply one of Paul's "all-too-fa-

⁶⁴ Furnish, Theology and Ethics, pp. 63ff.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

miliar paradoxes."⁶⁶

In 1971, two Th.D. dissertations were completed, providing scholarship with an opportunity to pause and look back. Each dissertation responded critically and negatively to the arguments of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies. Each dissertation also summarized, to some extent, scholarship since Dodd and Davies. Donald Allan Stoike's study on "law of Christ" in Gal 6:2 was historically, not theologically, oriented and he concluded that Paul did not coin the expression himself nor did he appropriate it from any part of Judaism.⁶⁷ Rather, Stoike asserted that Paul seized the phrase from the preaching of his opponents and used it because he felt compelled to reinterpret and explain it, thus correcting the abuses of the Christian life that were apparently being perpetrated by those using the slogan.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, Stoike's dissertation has some significant weaknesses. Though his argument is smoothly presented, he did not in any way indicate the possibility that Paul was at least a "coherent thinker" (cf. E. P. Sanders). He did not address the presence of the phrase "law of Christ" in I Cor 9:21, nor did he attempt to come to grips with Paul's understanding concerning Christ's role in connection with the Law in Rom 10:4. Furthermore, Stoike did not deal with attempts in

⁶⁶ J. S. Ruef, Paul's First Letter to Corinth (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 84.

⁶⁷ Stoike, "Law of Christ," p. 238.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 247-248.

scholarship (e.g., Davies, Furnish) to identify "law of Christ" with the law of Moses or the love command. Even if, as Stoike argues, Paul did borrow the phrase from his opponents, perhaps he gave it greater depth and meaning in his ethical admonition than Stoike has allowed.

Kieth Arnold Gerberding, in his dissertation, asserted that for Paul, the entire law was inadequate and had simply been a temporary provision.⁶⁹ Criticizing Dodd for "importing his understanding of I Cor. 9 into Gal. 6," Gerberding went on to deny completely any possible validity to Dodd's hypothesis that Paul considered a collection of Jesus' sayings as authoritative tradition.⁷⁰ Gerberding's major interest was to show that the dominant element in Paul's thinking was the advent of the new aeon; Christ is the root of obedience, he said, not the giver of a law.⁷¹ As we shall see in our further examination of his dissertation in Chapter III, Gerberding's work is, unfortunately, inadequately reasoned and confusing in its assertions.

So, the dissertations of Stoike and Gerberding do not present the final word on Paul's conception of the "law of Christ." Though it can be argued that they have taken into consideration many of the arguments up to 1971, there have

⁶⁹ Kieth Arnold Gerberding, "The Pauline Understanding of 'the Law of Christ'," (Th.D. Dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1971), p. 15.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 46, 53.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 55.

been important works since that date that put into question the presuppositions of these two writers. For example, the study by David Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul (1971), provides the first thorough attempt to consider the suggestive theories of the Scandinavian School alongside the age-old question of Paul's use of the sayings of Jesus.⁷² After a detailed study of controversial passages, Dungan concludes that Paul cited a considerable number of Jesus' teachings as authoritative.⁷³ Such a conclusion has significant implications for this study. Further, there have been several weighty, large-scale works written on Paul since 1971. Of special importance is E. P. Sanders' work, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (1977), which sets out to challenge three major positions in Pauline studies: Bultmann and his school, Schweitzer, and W. D. Davies.⁷⁴ Other prom-

⁷² David Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p. xxix. He writes, "This investigation takes as one of its points of departure the old question of Paul's use of the sayings of Jesus, and as its other, the more recent Scandinavian interest in the question how Paul uses this kind of tradition. What is new with this study is the particular selection of material to be addressed in the letters of Paul." The Scandinavian School, the chief representatives of which are Harald Riesenfeld, Birger Gerhardsson, and Krister Stendahl, argues that the considerable evidence in Paul's letters as well as in the Gospel of Matthew of the use of technical terms for receiving and transmitting tradition demonstrates that the disciples of Jesus were highly-trained transmitters of the words and ministry of Jesus. The origin of this meticulously preserved tradition was Jesus himself.

⁷³ Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul, p. 149.

⁷⁴ E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism. A Compari-

inent scholars whose recent work addresses our concern include Herman Ridderbos,⁷⁵ James A. Sanders,⁷⁶ and J. Christiaan Beker.⁷⁷

1.5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

To this point, there has not been any thorough-going attempt to outline, analyze, and critique the work of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies on Paul's conception of the "law of Christ." The dissertations of 1971 have proven to be outdated, and have not, furthermore, provided the kind of summary of Dodd and Davies that is offered here. This thesis will provide a synopsis of the work of these two biblical scholars, as well as offer a reconsideration and evaluation of their positions in light of scholarship since 1950. As such, it will be a valuable bibliographical resource. The need for this kind of study is doubly important, however, because of the significant contributions made in Pauline studies since 1971. We will take into account this more re-

son of Patterns of Religion (London: SCM, 1977), p. xiii.

⁷⁵ Herman Ridderbos, Paul. An Outline of His Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975).

⁷⁶ James A. Sanders, "Torah and Christ," Interpretation 29 (1975), pp. 372-390; "Torah and Paul," God's Christ and His People, eds. Jacob Jervel and Wayne A. Meeks (Oslo, Bergen, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), pp. 132-140.

⁷⁷ J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle. The Triumph of God in Life and Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

cent work and provide a fresh and much-needed exegesis of the relevant biblical passages.

The work of this thesis will also be of value in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. One of the problems at the root of the division between these two faiths involves the conception of "law." John E. Toews powerfully poses the problem when he writes, "The study of the law in the New Testament has been shaped by a polemic against Judaism, indeed by a fundamental anti-semitism [sic] in Western Christianity."⁷⁸ Part of the anti-Semitism in Christianity has arisen out of the insistence upon a paradigm that presents Judaism as legalistic (which is perceived as a "negative" characteristic) and Christianity as free (a "positive" characteristic) and the view that Christianity has supplanted Israel as the people of God. This paradigm must be reconsidered. Lloyd Gaston believes that any attempt to find in Christianity a positive understanding of Judaism must begin by reconsidering what Paul's intent is, for it is Paul who has provided the supposed theoretical structure for anti-Judaism throughout the centuries.⁷⁹ One of the aims of this thesis is to examine the relationship of the "law of Christ" with the Torah. If we will be able to show continuity of respect for the Mo-

⁷⁸ John E. Toews, "Some Theses Toward a Theology of Law in the New Testament," The Bible and Law. Occasional Papers, no. 3, ed. Willard Swartley (Elkhart, Indiana: Council of Mennonite Seminaries, 1982), p. 44.

⁷⁹ Lloyd Gaston, "Paul and the Torah," Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity, ed. A. T. Sanders (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 48.

saic Law in Paul's understanding of the Christian life (cf. Davies), then this thesis will be of considerable value for Jewish-Christian relations.

Finally, the work of this thesis has deep implications for the contemporary discussion of Christian ethics. If indeed Paul understood "law of Christ" to be a label with considerable depth and content for Christian ethical responsibility, then he offers more substance to Christian ethics than implied by some ideas of a "Spirit-filled existence" or by a sentimentalized conception of love. Over the centuries, many Christian theologians have protested against a Christianity which "by introducing legal conceptions, seems to blur the splendor of the Gospel as the affirmation of the free and unconditioned grace of God to sinful men. . . ."⁸⁰ In this thesis, we will see that a balance can exist between the meaning of moral responsibility and the meaning of grace, thus addressing the law/grace dichotomy predominant since the Reformation. This study will also add a freshly analyzed biblical perspective to major figures in the modern theological discussion of Christian ethics. For example, Bernard Häring's three-volume treatise on moral theology, entitled The Law of Christ, devotes approximately ten pages (out of a total of over 1900 pages) to a historical-critical analysis of the meaning of the phrase "law of Christ" in the

⁸⁰ Dodd, Gospel and Law, p. 65.

New Testament.⁸¹ Reinhold Niebuhr⁸² and James Gustafson⁸³ also devote space to the idea of "law of Christ." It is not the intent of this study to address the large amount of scholarship on contemporary Christian ethics, but we will be able to make some brief, tentative suggestions which would explore anew the correct application of Paul's conception of "law of Christ" to our ethical and philosophical dilemmas.

⁸¹ Bernard Häring, The Law of Christ. Moral Theology for Priests and Laity, Vol. 1 (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1961), pp. 252-263.

⁸² Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943).

⁸³ James M. Gustafson, Christ and the Moral Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 214ff.

Chapter II

THE POSITIONS OF C. H. DODD AND W. D. DAVIES

As we saw in the brief history of scholarship on Paul's conception of "law of Christ" presented in Chapter I, the phrase was most often considered to refer to a spiritual presence within the believer that led to correct moral behavior. C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies, however, provided interpretations of the "law of Christ" that were unique and provocative. In this chapter, we will review their arguments. First, we will examine Dodd's work and then Davies'. Within each section of the discussion, several issues will be addressed. What is the significance of Paul's puzzling multi-valent use of the term nomos? Does Paul's conception of the "law of Christ" refer to Christian ethical responsibility? Is there implied in the phrase "law of Christ" some relationship to the Torah? Does Paul use a tradition of the words of Jesus, and if so, does he consider it authoritative? What is the significance of the love command? And finally, what is the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian ethical activity?

2.1 THE POSITION OF C. H. DODD

In 1950, the year before Gospel and Law was published, C. H. Dodd gave a speech where he spoke retrospectively of the previous three decades of New Testament studies. He outlined some new areas of special concern. In particular, he was interested in the possibility of identifying a broad pattern of precepts and admonitions in the NT which represented the common tradition of a primitive catechesis.⁸⁴ Dodd passionately spoke about his concern:

As the great tradition reveals itself afresh in its wholeness and essential unity, the yawning gap which earlier criticism left between the Jesus of history and the emergent church disappears; and we begin to see that to make a separation between the historical and the theological understanding of the Gospels is to put asunder what God hath joined. But here a task confronts us which has still to be taken in hand.⁸⁵

Following the direction exhibited in this speech, Dodd worked earnestly in exploring the perception in the early church of the relationship between "law" and the Gospel of Jesus. He linked Gospel and Law to the two aspects of the activities of the apostles, kerygma (proclamation) and didache (teaching). One of Dodd's major assertions was that kerygma, the activity of proclamation, always preceded didache, the activity of teaching ethical responsibility, and

⁸⁴ C. H. Dodd, "Thirty Years of New Testament Study," Religion in Life 47 (1978), p. 326. This is a reprint of Dodd's inaugural address as visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary, given in February 1950.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 329.

he found the Paul was no exception to this assertion.⁸⁶ Paul never constructed his ethics from some command or order, but always began with the proclamation of the grace of God. There could be no Christian faith apart from ethical behaviour, nor could there be any ethical behaviour apart from Christian faith.

C. H. Dodd was keenly aware of the ambiguity in Paul's use of the term nomos, and he tried to understand it. In a series of lectures delivered at Columbia University and published under the title Gospel and Law, Dodd observed that in the modern Christian church, especially the churches of the Reformation, this ambiguity resulted in a strong bias against any understanding of Christianity as a new law. This position was based on certain Pauline passages:⁸⁷ Rom 10:4 ("For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified") and Rom 6:14 ("For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace"). Dodd observed, however, that Paul, despite such anti-legal sentiments, also spoke very positively of the law. Paul acknowledged himself to be "under the law of Christ" (I Cor 9:21), and called upon his converts to "fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2).⁸⁸ Furthermore, Paul settled disputes by citing a "command of the Lord" (I Cor

⁸⁶ C. H. Dodd, Gospel and Law, p. 10.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

14:37), which demanded obedience.

Dodd endeavoured to sift through Paul's various uses of nomos. In an essay entitled "Ennomos Christou" (1953), he focused on Paul's puzzling statements in I Cor 9:20-21, and tried to describe the thought processes behind them. In this passage Paul states, in a series of antithetical clauses, several ways in which he presents himself in the course of his missionary activities. "To the Jews," he says, "I made myself like a Jew, to win Jews." To clarify what he means by "like a Jew" when he is already a Jew, Paul continues, "To those who are under the law I behaved as if under the law, though I am myself not under the law." Here, Dodd insisted that Paul clearly means that he behaves as if he were a Jew by voluntarily subjecting himself to the precepts and prohibitions of the Torah, though the Christian holds himself to be free from them.⁸⁹ But then comes the really puzzling sentence, where Paul asserts, "To the lawless, I behaved as if lawless, not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law." In this statement, Dodd observed with interest that Paul did not perceive the "law of God" as equivalent with the law of Moses.

Further, Dodd pointed to the section, extending from Rom 7:7 to Rom 8:10, where Paul also used the term nomos in an amazing variety of ways, and included a reference to the

⁸⁹ C. H. Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," More New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968), p. 135.

"law of God." Regarding this variety, Dodd observed that "the sense to be attached to nomos in any particular place is notoriously elusive."⁹⁰ While in Rom 7:7, the term clearly refers to the Torah, there is also reference in this section to ho nomos tou pneumatos tēs Zōēs en Christō ("the law of the Spirit of life in Christ," Rom 8:2), tō nomō tou voos mou ("the law of my mind", 7:23), and tō nomō tou Theou ("the law of God", 7:22, 25). It is not clear, puzzled Dodd, how these terms, which all contain the word "law," are related. Furthermore, the law of God is contrasted with the law of sin and death (tou nomou tēs hamartias kai tou thanatou, Rom 8:2). Dodd, then, provided two suggestions for understanding this variety in the use of the term nomos. These solutions are distinct from each other, but are also interrelated. First, he concluded a lengthy footnote on the phrase heteros nomos, saying

It is difficult to avoid the impression that in this discussion Paul is playing (consciously or not) upon various meanings of a Greek term of wide connotation, while he is yet haunted by the conventional equivalence, for a Jew, of nomos and Torah.⁹¹

Second, he suggested that possibly

the various forms of expression would be consistent with a conception of the "law of God" as something wider and more inclusive than the "law" simpliciter, in the sense of Torah.⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 136.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., p. 137.

At one stage and on one level, said Dodd, this "law of God" is represented by the Torah. On this level the person's response to the precepts of the Torah is a response to the law of God. On another level and at another stage, however, the "law of God" may be mediated by another "perhaps some more adequate form" (Jesus, Dodd would argue!), and may be obeyed by someone who is no longer subject to Torah.³ It is this sense of a nomos Theou which would suit the expression "not being without law toward God" in I Cor 9:21. On this basis, Dodd returned to the phrase ennomos Christou in I Cor 9:21, saying that this expression implies the existence of a nomos Christou.

But the law of God, which at one stage and on one level finds expression in the Torah, may at another stage and on a different level find expression in the "law of Christ."⁴

So, Paul has cogently argued in I Cor 9:20-21 that, although he is not subject to the Torah, this does not mean that he is a lawless libertine. Rather, he is loyal to the "law of God" as it is expressed or shown in the "law of Christ." The question remains, however, added Dodd, of how this "law of Christ" is to be conceived.

The actual occurrence of the phrase "law of Christ" is in Gal 6:2, observed Dodd, in the midst of a series of moral injunctions which form the "ethical section" of the Epistle. The implication in the passage is that if the Christian

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

obeyed these injunctions (especially Gal 6:2a), then he would be acknowledging that the Christian is bound by such injunctions, that is, he is ennomos Christou.⁹⁵

Could the "law of Christ" be inscribed in stone like the Decalogue, or could it be known solely by inner promptings of the Spirit? In the section of Galatians containing ethical exhortations, found in Gal 5:13 to 6:10, Dodd isolated Gal 5:25 as providing the key for interpretation.⁹⁶ Here, the admonitions to "live by the Spirit" and "walk by the Spirit" were perceived by Dodd as quite different, and he distinguished between them. Dodd identified the phrase "to live by the Spirit" as the way to liberty, parallel to the meaning in II Cor 3:17 and Rom 8:2. In Galatians, it is this liberty which provided the Christians with the ability to "serve one another in love" (Gal 5:13), or, to link these two texts, in Dodd's view, to "fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2).⁹⁷ "Walking by the Spirit," emphasized Dodd, was a consequence of "living by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25). Indeed, the term "to walk" was well established within Semitic

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 138. Dodd wrote, "The implication is that in obeying these injunctions -- or, less probably, in obeying the one which immediately precedes ('Bear one another's burdens') -- a man will be fulfilling the law of Christ; or, in other words, in acknowledging himself bound by such injunctions he is ennomos Christou. To this extent at least, it would seem, the law of Christ is such that it can be stated in the form of a code of precepts to which a Christian man is obliged to conform."

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 139.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

thought as a term connoting ethical activity, and could be perceived as a consequence of "living in" a particular religious mode.

Dodd perceived a significant difference between the meanings of "the law of the Spirit" (Rom 8:2), or being "led by the Spirit" (Rom 7:14; cf. Gal 5:18), and the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2; cf. I Cor 9:21).⁹⁸ In the expression ho nomos tou pneumatos, the term nomos was probably not used in a sense that corresponded to Torah, but rather approximated its Greek use in the sense of a "regulative principle."⁹⁹ Dodd went on to draw a sharp line of demarcation: the "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom 8:2) corresponds to pneumati zōmen ("live by the Spirit") and the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) corresponds to pneumati stoikōmen ("walk by the Spirit").¹⁰⁰ So, Dodd concluded that the way was open to considering the "law of Christ" in some way analogous to the Torah. To prove that this consideration could be substantiated, Dodd examined the precepts cited in I Cor 7:10-11 and 9:14 which were specifically attributed to "the Lord." He also outlined passages that were "notably full of what appear to be

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 140.

⁹⁹ Ibid. Dodd supported this assertion by noting the occurrence of the term ho nomos tou noos in the immediate context (Rom 7:23). He argued that this is significant because the concepts pneuma and nous lie fairly closely together in early Christian thought as well as in Hellenistic Judaism.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. "Walk" is an established Semitic term denoting ethical activity.

reminiscences" of the sayings attributed to a tradition of the sayings of Jesus.¹⁰¹ Especially significant here for Dodd's argument was the discussion in Rom 14, the reference to some kind of reception and delivery of a tradition in I Cor 11:23, and the specific allusions in I Cor 7:10. This allusive method of referring to basic maxims,

is in fact not essentially different from the method by which in rabbinic writings halakha is based upon precepts cited from the Torah. In other words, maxims which formed part of the tradition of the sayings of Jesus are treated as if they were in some sort elements of a new Torah.¹⁰²

Dodd admitted that it would be erroneous to confine the connotation of the "law of Christ" to the rather restricted body of the sayings of Jesus. But Dodd asserted that even though Paul had a "strong sense of the immediate governance of Christ through his Spirit in the Church," he still maintained as a solid nucleus that which the Lord "commanded" or ordained.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁰² Ibid. In Gospel and Law, Dodd studied the passages in I Cor 7 and 9 and came to some conclusions which complement the ones he outlines in "Ennomos Christou." He said, "From these two passages, apart from other less direct but quite cogent evidence, we conclude, first, that the early church possessed a tradition of the sayings of Jesus at a date earlier than the composition of the Gospels; secondly, that this tradition was so firmly established and so universally accepted that appeal to it was final; thirdly, that while the sayings were acknowledged as authoritative in substance, the precise wording was not necessarily fixed, since in each of these cases we have at least three different verbal forms of the same saying; and, fourthly, that some at least of these traditional sayings were later embodied in our Gospels." (p. 47)

It is important to recall Dodd's understanding of kerygma and didache here, however. He insisted that the order of importance always placed the proclamation (kerygma) before the teaching (didache). Dodd suggested that an analogy could be made to the formula of religion in ancient Israel.¹⁰⁴ The "covenant" between God and his people in the OT was represented by the Decalogue which began by declaring what God had done: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Exod 20:2). It was only after this proclamation that God listed his expectations: you shall have no other gods before me, you shall not make for yourself a graven image, and so on. Though the initiative lay with God alone, and he was the one who defined the terms of the agreement, argued Dodd,¹⁰⁵ the people were not passive recipients, but an active party in the covenant. With them lay the responsibility of accepting and fulfilling the terms of the agreement.

So also in the New Testament, there is a covenant, asserted Dodd, that rests upon divine initiative and lays upon the Christians "consequential obligations."¹⁰⁶ The divine initiative was God's redemption of humankind through Jesus' death and resurrection. Dodd argued that in light of this

¹⁰³ Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 148.

¹⁰⁴ Dodd, Gospel and Law, p. 66.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

new covenant, Paul was struck by its parallel with Jeremiah's conception of the "law written upon the heart" (Jer 31:31), as shown in II Cor 3:3. This "law" was not simply an inner command to show love, though, for the danger inherent in that kind of view, asserted Dodd, would be "barren sentimentality."¹⁰⁷ So, in contrast he declared,

As we have seen, Jesus Himself set forth a substantial number of ethical precepts, and these precepts are couched in markedly authoritative tone, and are accompanied by solemn warnings that they are intended to be obeyed.¹⁰⁸

Unlike the precepts in rabbinic teaching, the precepts of Jesus were not precise regulations for behaviour that would be enforced in a judicial court.¹⁰⁹ Yet, Dodd reminded the reader that Jesus' precepts dealt with highly concrete situations, and were intended to be taken with utmost seriousness. The demand was categorical. Dodd observed the relationship of Jesus' precepts with the love command.

I suggest that we may regard each of these precepts as indicating, in a dramatic picture of some actual situation, the quality and direction of action which shall conform to the standard set by the divine agape.¹¹⁰

So, Dodd perceived Paul as proclaiming the kerygma, that is, the good news about the salvation wrought in Jesus Christ. But, Paul consistently presented the didache as a part of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

his message, wherein he indicated the expectations that arise out of a true understanding and a correct response to the gospel message. The "law of Christ" was perceived by Paul as one way of referring to these ethical expectations.

2.2 THE POSITION OF W. D. DAVIES

In 1948, W. D. Davies established himself as a significant figure in Pauline scholarship with the publication of Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. One of his supervisors of the Ph.D. work was C. H. Dodd, and while Davies acknowledged his great indebtedness to his teacher,¹¹¹ he also exhibited throughout his book continual dialogue with and reference to Dodd's work. After this volume was completed, Davies devoted a large portion of his research to the question of what role, if any, the Torah was expected to play and did play in the messianic age. Significant works that Davies wrote in this area were Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come (1952) and The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount (1966). He has continued to publish, in subsequent decades, many articles dealing with the importance and position of Law in the early Church.

Throughout the years, Davies maintained and defended the same position:

in the New Testament also the early Christians born of a new Exodus, in Christ, were conscious of being bound to certain legal norms which they

¹¹¹ W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. xvii.

sought to live by and put into practice.¹¹²

Davies asserted that the emergence of Christianity as seen in the NT is to be perceived as parallel to the formation of Israel in the OT. "Law," the moral demand, was as bound up in the gospel of the NT as it was in the message of the OT. He observed,

The emergence of the Church was, not indeed that of a new Israel, but the entrance of Israel on a new stage of its history. In the creation of the Church the Exodus was, as it were, repeated. As a corollary to the experience of a New Exodus, the Church understood itself as standing under the Sinai of a New Moses. This complex of ideas largely governs Paul's references to the New Covenant (I Cor. 11:23f), Matthew's presentation of the Sermon on the Mount, Mark's new teaching (1:27ff) and John's new commandment (13:34).¹¹³

One of Davies' major concerns was to introduce into the discussion the importance of rabbinic materials in order to understand Paul better. In his preface to Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, Davies wrote that his work represented

an attempt to set certain pivotal aspects of Paul's life and thought against the background of the contemporary Rabbinic Judaism, so as to reveal how, despite his Apostleship to the Gentiles, he remained, as far as was possible, a Hebrew of the

¹¹² W. D. Davies, "The Significance of the Law in Christianity," Concilium 98 (1974-75), p. 25. Davies puts this slightly differently in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (p. 146) where he says that for Paul, the Christian "is one who has died and risen with Christ; he has undergone a New Exodus. We now see that he has also stood at the foot of a New Sinai, which implies that he is confronted with the teaching of Jesus. It is the latter that helps to give ethical content to the dying and rising with Christ. In other words, 'mysticism' and morality, Gospel and Law are inseparable in the man's experience."

¹¹³ W. D. Davies, "The Significance of the Law in Christianity," p. 25.

Hebrews, and baptized his Rabbinic heritage into Christ.¹¹⁴

For the purpose of this study on the "law of Christ," three of the ten chapters in Davies' classic book on Paul are important. We shall trace Davies' thorough, but convoluted argument, giving detailed attention to the chapter, "The Old and New Torah: Christ the Wisdom of God."

In attempting to understand the "inconsistency" of Paul's use of the term nomos, Davies insisted that Paul's attitude could be explained if his life was examined from a Rabbinic point of view. The idea of the authority and meaning of Torah, extending beyond commandments, statutes and ordinances (a fact recognized by Dodd¹¹⁵), was familiar to rabbinic Judaism, Davies noted,¹¹⁶ and was also reflected in Paul. So, perhaps in Paul's negative assertions about law he was attacking the aspect of commands and statutes while in his positive assertions (for example, Rom 3:31) he had in mind the wider sense of Torah. Even if this hypothesis is attacked, added Davies, the question still remained as to why Paul continued to observe the law (Acts 21:21ff., I Cor 7:18).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. xvii.

¹¹⁵ C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks (London, 1936), p. 35.

¹¹⁶ Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 70.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 71.

Davies argued that Paul, as a Pharisee, was immersed in the expectation that the Messiah, when he came, would be a wise exponent of the Torah (I Enoch 49:1-3) and that in that time the Torah would be spontaneously obeyed by everyone (Jer 31:31). Indeed, Jesus fulfilled this expectation, observed Davies, by preaching a "new Torah from the mount" and yet remaining "loyal to the old Torah."¹¹⁸ So, Paul had every freedom to believe that loyalty to the Messiah did not mean denigration of the Torah; but, he also asserted that the age of the Messiah welcomed the Gentiles without the necessity of them converting to Judaism.¹¹⁹

Paul also had a practical consideration in his continuing obedience to the Torah, argued Davies.

We may assume that Paul would be fully aware that once he forsook the observance of the Torah Judaism would close its door against him; that he could propound theories about the Law which were anathema to his Jewish co-religionists; that he could even accept Jesus as the Messiah and yet retain their respect, but that once he deliberately gave up the practice of the Torah he would forever forfeit the right to be seriously listened to by the other Rabbis.¹²⁰

Thus, the observance of the Law, Davies claimed, was Paul's "passport with Judaism."¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 73.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. Davies wrote, "There was no reason why Paul should not reject the view that Gentiles should be converted to Judaism before entering the Messianic Kingdom and at the same time insist that for him as a Jew the Torah was still valid."

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 75.

What, then, about the existence of a "law of Christ" in Paul's thought? Davies asserted that it was the words of Jesus himself which formed Paul's primary source in his work as ethical didaskalos (ethical teacher).¹²² Davies named two factors active here. First, Davies insisted that there is in the Epistles a "clearly traceable" process whereby memories of Jesus' words were interwoven in the material;¹²³ second, Davies believed that there is also concrete evidence to prove that Paul appealed to a collection of the sayings of Jesus as authoritative.¹²⁴

Paul's "profound sense of sin", exhibited in Rom 7, said Davies, came as "the result of standing under the judgement of that ethical absolute which we, like him, have found in the words of Jesus."¹²⁵ The words of Jesus, then, were regarded by Paul in the light of a "new Moses," and formed for him the basis for a kind of Christian Halakha. Davies added, "When he used the phrase nomos tou Christou he meant

¹²² Ibid., p. 136. This question is addressed in Ch. Six of Davies' book. The chapter is entitled, "The Old and New Man: II. Paul as Teacher."

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 138-141. Davies followed this assertion with an extensive list of references to Paul's epistles.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 140. Davies provided 6 explicit references to words of Jesus in the Epistles. He concluded, "From the above survey we gather that in addition to any traditional material that Paul used he had also the words of Jesus to which he turned for guidance, and he makes it clear that when there is an explicit word uttered by Christ on any question, that word is accepted by him as authoritative."

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 144.

that the actual words of Jesus were for him a New Torah."¹²⁶ While it is true that the recognition of Jesus as a New Torah is not made explicit in Paul's epistles, admitted Davies, the concept was "clearly implied" in II Cor 3:3-18, where Paul contrasted the Christian ministry with the Old Covenant.¹²⁷

Davies also defined more clearly his conception of the word "Torah." He observed that the Greek rendering of Torah as nomos over-emphasized its legal connotation,¹²⁸ and did not include its revelatory function. This restrictive sense does not do justice to the word. Davies explained,

It is clear, then, that this may be taken to mean that Paul would think of Jesus as the Torah of God not only in the sense that his words were a nomos but that he himself in toto was a full revelation of God and of His will for man.¹²⁹

So, when Paul referred to the "law of Christ," it signified a deeper meaning than was usually attributed to "law" in that day.

The major argument Davies used to support his belief that Jesus is the "new Torah" lay in his rather complex, detailed analysis of the figure of Wisdom in the OT rabbinic literature, and the Pauline epistles. He traced the lineaments of

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 148. The "upshot" of all this, concluded Davies (p. 145) was that it has probably been erroneous to consider Judaism as a religion of obedience and Pauline Christianity as a religion of liberty.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 149.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

the figure of Wisdom in the Christology of Paul through several passages:

1) Col 1:15-18: A disputable section termed an interpolation by some scholars, Davies declared it to be Pauline and chose to concentrate on the controversial question of the pre-cosmic generation of Christ and his role in creation. Referring back to the characterization of Wisdom in Prov 8-9, he asserted that Christ fulfilled every meaning which may be extracted from Rêshîth.¹³⁰ Wisdom operated both in the cosmos, that is, in creation, and in the world of humanity, that is, in the work of redemption. Davies wrote,

The twofold function is here transferred to Christ, who is not only the agent of creation in a physical sense but also the agent of the moral recreation of mankind.¹³¹

2) I Cor 10:1-4: In this passage, where Paul warned the Corinthians against self-indulgence, Davies drew attention to Paul's passing equation of Christ with the Rock (v. 4). It may be, Davies suggested, that Paul had in mind here a passage in the Wisdom of Solomon (2:4) where Wisdom was connected with the flow of "water out of the flinty rock."¹³²

3) Rom 10:6-10: Davies admitted the weakness of this passage as a reference to Wisdom, but nevertheless cited Hans Windisch's argument which linked the proverbial saying

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 152. In Prov 8:22ff. Wisdom is called rêshîth and is a dynamic term that refers to the "beginning" as well as "beginner" or "initiator."

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., p. 153.

in Rom 10 with the figure of Wisdom in Baruch 3: 29ff.¹³³

4) I Cor 1:24, 30: Davies considered these allusions to be "much firmer ground" because Paul actually calls Christ "the Wisdom of God." Here, Paul challenged the intellectual and spiritual snobbery of some of the Corinthians, showing that true Wisdom is constituted of righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Davies observed,

Here again we see Paul's two-fold emphasis in his inscription of the title of Wisdom to Christ -- it is a pre-cosmic Wisdom and a morally recreative Wisdom that He finds in His Lord.¹³⁴

Where, then, did Paul find this identification of Wisdom with the person of Jesus? Davies analyzed the Synoptic Gospels to discover whether Jesus considered himself to be Wisdom personified, and whether Paul then received such a Christology as a legacy from Jesus; but, Davies concluded that this could not be substantiated.¹³⁵ Then, Davies analyzed Messianic expectation within Judaism to see if the figure of Wisdom could be identified with the Messiah. This approach, too, was found to be unconvincing.¹³⁶ So, Davies concluded that he

must look elsewhere for the link between Jesus and the Divine Wisdom in the mind of Paul. We shall now seek to prove that this link is to be found in Paul's conception of Christ as a New Torah, who

¹³³ Ibid., p. 154.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 155.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 158, cf. pp. 155-156.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 162, cf. pp. 158ff.

had replaced the Old.¹³⁷.

Davies discovered that in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, the figure of Wisdom became identified with the Torah,¹³⁸ and he asserted that in the Judaism of Palestine during the time of Paul, "the identification of the Torah with Wisdom was a commonplace."¹³⁹ Citing various Rabbinic writings, Davies showed that three characteristics were prominent:¹⁴⁰ the Torah, just as Wisdom, was perceived as older than the world; the Torah was connected with the Creation event; and, the world was said to be created for the sake of the Torah.

Continuing this detailed, step-by-step process to prove the equivalence of Jesus with the Torah and with the figure of Wisdom, Davies analyzed the background of Paul's Wisdom Christology and asserted that "no Hellenistic source or sources need to be postulated for its explanation."¹⁴¹ He asserted,

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 162-163.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 168. Eldon Jay Epp, "Wisdom, Torah, Word: The Johannine Prologue and the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel," Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), p. 133, lists some references to show that "both the Wisdom hymns and the Judaism of the time recognized the equation of Wisdom and Torah." Included in the various references which attest to this are Bar 4:1, Sir 24:23, Prov 8:32-36, 4 Mac 1:17, 2 Apoc Ber 38:2-4, 77:16. It is also, he says, substantiated as well as assumed by rabbinical sources.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 170-171.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 172.

We have seen, moreover, that the Torah had become identified in Judaism with the Wisdom of God and had been given the qualities of the latter, both pre-existence and participation in the creation of the universe as well as the moral discipline or redemption of mankind. The way was therefore open for Paul to identify Jesus with the same Wisdom of God and to ascribe to him pre-existence and creative activity.¹⁴²

Davies also noted, however, that while in I Cor 1:30 Paul boldly proclaimed Jesus as the "Wisdom of God," in his later letters he never repeats the title.¹⁴³ In any case, Davies believed that "the essential ideas underlying his description of Jesus in cosmological terms are derived from Judaism."¹⁴⁴

What then, asked Davies, were the religious truths in the idea of Jesus as a "new Torah," parallel to the OT figure of Wisdom? Especially regarding pre-existence, Davies found much significance for Christianity:

In short, to claim that the Torah was the instrument of creation was to declare that Nature and Revelation belonged together, that in theological terms there was a continuity not a discontinuity between Nature and Grace.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 173. Davies cited scholarship (especially W. L. Knox and W. F. Howard) that argued that the prominent philosophical term logos was not used by Paul because of its possible "Gnostic" connections; it was also possible, then, that this inhibition was carried over to the closely related term "Wisdom."

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 174.

So, in perceiving Christ as an agent of creation, Davies believed that Paul was trying to show that to live after Christ is the natural life. Nature and Grace are thus not antithetical, but related.¹⁴⁶ This understanding is well grounded in Judaism, which Davies characterized as never failing to believe that "Nature was the expression of the Divine Wisdom."¹⁴⁷

Just as Davies sought to demonstrate that the conception of Jesus Christ as the "new Torah" could help the reader to understand the cosmic activity of Christ in Paul's thought, he also believed that this conception could explain, at least in part, Paul's teaching on the Spirit. Too often, it has been stated that there is no place for "law" in Paul's conception of the Christian life: for him, life was to be lived in the "freedom of the Spirit." It will not be crucial for us to outline Davies' process of argumentation against this position; but, his conclusions have some implications for this thesis. Taking into consideration Stoicism and Hellenistic mysticism, Davies argued that the Pauline doctrine of the Spirit would be "only fully comprehensible in the light of Rabbinic expectations of the Age to Come as

¹⁴⁶ In "The Relevance of the Moral Teaching of the Early Church," Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honour of Matthew Black, ed E. Earle Ellis and Max Wilcox (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969), p. 36, Davies argued that there was for Jesus an "inward affinity" between the natural and the moral. Davies called this a kind of "natural law" in the "Spiritual world."

¹⁴⁷ Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 175.

an Age of the Spirit and of the community of the Spirit."¹⁴⁸ What, though, was the meaning of the "Age of the Spirit"? As with the figure of Wisdom, the Spirit also had for Paul a role in the event of Creation. Paul's characterization of Jesus as the second Adam included, said Davies, his role as a life-giving Spirit. Significantly, Paul also insisted upon the ethical role of the Spirit and brought order into the church's confused apprehension of the activity of the Spirit.¹⁴⁹

The dichotomy which has often been employed, that Christianity is a religion of faith and Spirit, while Judaism is a religion of obedience and the Torah, was attacked by Davies as inconceivable.¹⁵⁰ The doctrine of "Justification by Faith," Davies said, must be relegated to its proper position on the periphery of Paul's thought. It was not a central pivot in Paul's thought but a "covenant polemic."¹⁵¹ Davies stated his argument succinctly:

In short, Paul found in Christ both Torah and Spirit. If our interpretation be correct, there is found in Paul not only a 'Christifying' of the Spirit but also a 'Christifying' of the Torah; Spirit and Torah for Paul are coincident as it were in Christ.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 217.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 220.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 222.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 223.

Paul, convinced that he was living in the Age of the Spirit, also described this age as one of the New Covenant (II Cor 3). The inwardness of the New Covenant of Jeremiah's hope (Jer 31:33) was understood by Paul to be the indwelling Christ -- the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of Christians, as well as the New Torah written within. Spirit and Torah were, asserted Davies, inextricable in Paul's thought.

The obedience of the Christian man is loyalty to the promptings of the Spirit, but since this Spirit derives His character from a person, and is rooted in the words, life, death and resurrection of Christ, it is also for Paul a kind of Torah.¹⁵³

To sum up, Davies believed that the Law had been "Christified" by Paul. Included in the Law were three inextricably bound up entities -- the earthly ministry of Jesus, the Risen Lord, and the Spirit -- which together constituted "the source of the demand under which the early church lived."¹⁵⁴ Paul retained a special emphasis upon the idea that in preparation for the final judgment by God, the Christian had a particular responsibility. This was to be obedient to the will of God; for Paul, Christianity meant a "way" to be walked. It was the Spirit that provided this "way";¹⁵⁵ or,

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 226.

¹⁵⁴ Davies, "The Moral Teaching of the Early Church," The Use of the Old Testament in the New. Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring, ed. James M. Efird (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1972), p. 317. See also Davies, "The Significance of the Law in Christianity," p. 26.

¹⁵⁵ W. D. Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 348.

as Davies wrote elsewhere, the Spirit provided "moral dynamism."¹⁵⁶

In The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, Davies offered a characterization of Paul's idea of the "law of Christ."¹⁵⁷ First of all, as we have already seen, the law of the Messiah was not merely a leftover concept from a pre-Pauline Jewish-Christian legalism that had no relation to the essential elements of Paul's thinking. Second, Davies wrote that, looking at the evidence, the interpretation of Jesus as a New Law was not necessarily "aboriginal" in primitive Jewish-Christianity, but came into prominence after 70 A.D..¹⁵⁸ Third, the "law of Christ" was not to be explained as some "vague equivalent" to an immanent principle of life as, for example, the Stoic law of nature. Fourth, the idea of the "law of Christ" being fulfilled in the law of love is inadequate, for it does not exhaust the meaning of the phrase.

Davies summarized his position as follows:

In the light of the above, it can be urged that Paul had access to a tradition of the words of Jesus. This he had "received" and this he "transmitted": to this, whenever necessary and possible, he appealed as authoritative, so that this tradition constituted for him part of the "law of Christ".¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Davies, "The Significance of the Law in Christianity," p. 26.

¹⁵⁷ Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 353.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. This statement is puzzling, because Paul likely wrote most of his letters before 70 A. D., and it would seem incongruous with Davies' statement for Paul to have any conception of a "law of Christ."

Davies cautioned, however, that to isolate and emphasize these prescriptive elements is to "risk a narrow, rigid, parochial legalism."¹⁶⁰ Within Paul and the New Testament, these prescriptions remain "uncomplicated."

This was because in the New Testament the moral teaching of Christ was not given autonomous centrality, but always understood in the total context of the agape of the life, death and resurrection of Christ and of the Spirit.¹⁶¹

This agape, however, had to preserve and even protect itself, added Davies; thus, prescriptions (the "law of Christ") were provided that both expressed and supported the true meaning of agape.

So, the New Testament presentation of Christianity, said Davies, "denies the old Torah on one level, and affirms and fulfils it on another, but also introduces a New Torah."¹⁶² This New Torah, however, not only fulfilled Jewish expectations of a New Torah, but also transcended them,¹⁶³ because Jesus, the Messiah, was in himself the Torah.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 366.

¹⁶⁰ Davies, "The Significance of the Law in Christianity," p. 31.

¹⁶¹ W. D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age And/Or the Age to Come, SBL Monographs 7 (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1952), p. 91.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., pp. 93-94.

2.3 CONCLUSION

C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies provided an interpretation of Paul's conception of the "law of Christ" which differed considerably from the explanations of previous scholars. In at least three ways, Dodd and Davies deepened and expanded Paul's meaning of "law of Christ." First, they argued that it embodied in some way a code of precepts for the Christian to obey that did not simply emanate from the pneumatic presence in one's "heart." Second, they held that Paul had in mind a Jesus-tradition, consisting of precepts and sayings of the Christ, which had been handed down as authoritative material to the churches via the apostles. And third, they showed that Paul conceived of the "law of Christ" as in some way similar to the OT Law in that it continued the revelation of God and expressed his election and grace. In the following chapter, we will explore scholarly work on the "law of Christ" which post-dates that of Dodd and Davies. In so doing, we will see the significant impact they made in Pauline studies, and we will be enabled to consider carefully the various aspects of the arguments of Dodd and Davies.

Chapter III

SCHOLARLY DISCUSSION SINCE C. H. DODD AND W. D. DAVIES

As was indicated in Chapter II, C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies provided a new direction in scholarly understanding of Paul's conception of the "law of Christ." Giving the phrase deeper meaning and significance than previous scholarship allowed, their positions could not go unheeded in subsequent study.

In this chapter, we intend to explore scholarly expositions on the "law of Christ" that postdate the work of Dodd and Davies. In this exploration, we will attempt to show several things. First, we will see that the arguments of Dodd and Davies provided a perspective that was impossible to ignore: scholars could agree or disagree with the conclusions of these scholars, but they were nevertheless obligated to address them. Second, we will be able to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of Dodd's and Davies' positions. This will provide a basis for our reconsideration of their work, a task we will undertake in Chapters IV and V. And third, this chapter will draw out the broad directions of contemporary discussion on the theology of the Apostle Paul, addressing particularly the role of the OT Law in Christianity.

Since 1950, an abundance of articles and books on Paul have been published, and many of these relate to our interest in understanding his conception of the "law of Christ." In order to review this work with clarity and in detail, this chapter will first deal with work written from 1950 to 1971, then with the two dissertations of 1971, and finally with work subsequent to 1971.¹⁶⁴

Within each of these time frames, however, there is still a wide variety of work representing a diversity of positions. Because one of the major features of Dodd's and Davies' understanding of the "law of Christ" was an emphasis upon its similarity with the Torah, involving the notion of Jesus being seen by Paul as the new Torah, we will deal with three basic positions within scholarship on this issue.

The first position, held by a small minority of scholars, is that the Christian is definitely bound by the OT Torah. We will call this position continuity.¹⁶⁵ The second broad position perceives the Christian to be bound to the OT but with certain changes in its demands that have been wrought

¹⁶⁴ The reasons for this distinction are explained in Chapter I, pp. 24-28. The reader will recall the the Th.D. dissertations of Stoike and Gerberding provided an effective turning point in the discussion.

¹⁶⁵ Clyde Thomas Rhyne, "Faith Establishes the Law: A Study on the Continuity Between Judaism and Christianity, Romans 3:31," Th.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, 1979, pp. 7-24, uses these divisions for exploring scholarly understanding of Paul's conception of the whole OT Law, although our definitions of the positions will differ slightly from those of Rhyne.

by Jesus. We will, for the sake of simplicity call this a "mediating" position. The third broad division of interpretation, which we will call "discontinuity", insists that the Christian is not bound in any way to the OT Law. There are, however, two schools of thought within this broad division. One group of scholars believes that the Christian is under no code except the demand by Jesus to practice love. The other group asserts that the Christian is bound to a new standard, separate from the OT Law, made up of the words and actions of Jesus. C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies could best be placed into this category, although in some ways we have witnessed a sympathy in their understanding for the role of the OT Law.

Though these divisions are somewhat arbitrary, and some expositions effectively blur the lines of distinction, we will explore representative scholars under each heading. The relation of the "law of Christ" to the OT Law will be indicated and analyzed with respect to each scholar. We will also explore the concerns with which we began this thesis.¹⁶⁶ A major issue is whether the "law of Christ" refers to the ethical responsibility of the Christian. If it does, then the nature of this responsibility must be outlined. Further, we will observe how scholars deal with Paul's muti-valent use of the term "law." And, the possibility of

¹⁶⁶ See p. 2, Chapter I, where it is observed, "Several major concerns are present in any effort to come to an accurate understanding of Paul's conception of the 'law of Christ'."

the relation of "law of Christ" with some sort of Jesus-tradition will be addressed, as will the relation of the "law of Christ" with the love command (often called the "law of love"). Paul's conceptions of the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life will also be considered.

3.1 SCHOLARSHIP SINCE 1950 ON THE "LAW OF CHRIST"

During the years spanning 1950 to 1971, a number of significant and controversial works on the Apostle Paul were published. The Pauline scholar will immediately recall the significant works of German scholars such as Johannes Munck, Hans Joachim Schoeps, and Ernst Käsemann, of British scholars such as C. F. D. Moule, C. E. B. Cranfield, and C. K. Barrett, of Scandinavian scholars such as Birger Gerhardsson, Harald Riesenfeld and Krister Stendahl,¹⁶⁷ and of American scholars such as Victor Paul Furnish and Richard Longenecker. In this portion of the thesis, these and several other scholars' examinations of the "law of Christ" will be explored and discussed. First of all, let us review those scholars who perceive the Christian to be bound by the OT Torah.

¹⁶⁷ Stendahl was a student of the Uppsala school of Anton Fridrichsen.

3.1.1 Continuity: The OT Law Remains Valid

While some scholars insisted that Paul's conception of the "law of Christ" was discontinuous with the Law of the OT, a small group of other scholars discovered indications in Paul of continuity between the Law and the Christian faith. We will review two scholars who represent this position.

In his article on "St. Paul and the Law," C. E. B. Cranfield called for a "full and thorough re-examination of the whole subject of the New Testament understanding of law and of law's place in the Christian life."¹⁶⁸ Beginning with Rom 10:4, then, Cranfield attempted to come to an accurate interpretation of telos in the phrase telos gar nomou Christos. While the translation "end" has many supporters and is used in the Authorized and Revised Standard Versions of the Bible, Cranfield argued differently. Citing passages where Paul spoke positively about the Law (Rom 7:12, 14a; 8:4; 13:8-10 and the categorical statement of Rom 3:31), and observing that Paul often appealed to the Pentateuch to support his arguments (particularly in Rom 10:6-8, the immediate context of 10:4), he concluded that the translation "goal" would be preferred.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ C. E. B. Cranfield, "St. Paul and the Law," Scottish Journal of Theology 17 (1964), p. 148. Cranfield listed Davies' article on "law in the NT" in the IDB as one of the most recent publications on this subject.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 152. Cranfield offered this translation of Rom 10:4: "For Christ is the goal of the law, so that righteousness is available to every one that believeth."

Although a number of passages in the epistles could, at first, seem to oppose his view, Cranfield asserted that for Paul, the law is not abolished by Christ.¹⁷⁰ He supported this opinion by observing that in the Greek language, there was no word-group available to denote the ideas of "legalism," "legalist," and "legalistic."

In view of this, we should, I think, be ready to reckon with the possibility that sometimes, when he appears to be disparaging the law, what he really has in mind may not be the law itself but the misunderstanding and misuse of it for which we have a convenient term. It should also be borne in mind that in this very difficult terrain Paul was to a large extent pioneering.¹⁷¹

Cranfield also addressed the popular position of "not law but love" (cf. Furnish, Murphy-O'Connor below) in the context of his discussion on the continuity of the law. Acknowledging that we certainly need the general admonition to love so that we do not apply commandments in a rigid or literalistic manner, he continued by insisting that,

we also need the particular commandments into which the law breaks down the general obligation of love, to save us from the sentimentality and self-deception to which we all are prone.¹⁷²

The OT Law itself provided the general command to love (Deut 6:5, Lev 19:8) and gave particular examples of this obligation. For Paul, Christ was the goal of the Law, who showed the impossibility of righteousness by works but also gave

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 157, emphasis his.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 167-168.

meaning and substance to the law.¹⁷³

John Murray in his commentary on Romans, also addressed the position which insisted on the primacy of the "law of love." He, too, insisted that we not regard love as dispensing with law. Citing the passage on love and the law in Rom 13: 8-10, Murray observed

Paul does not say that the law is love but that love fulfils the law and law has not in the last degree been depreciated or deprived of its sanction. It is because love is accorded this quality and function that the law as correlative is confirmed in its relative dignity.¹⁷⁴

Paul, in Rom 13:9, indicated that he regarded the Decalogue with high esteem. Murray wrote that the law which is fulfilled by love found its epitome in the ten commandments; therefore, the Decalogue was seen by Paul as having abiding relevance, providing the norms within which love operates.¹⁷⁵

Though neither of these scholars deals specifically with Paul's phrase "law of Christ," it would be fair to assume that they would consider it as positively connected with the OT Law. Unfortunately, this thoroughly continuous approach does not take into account the very harsh words of Paul regarding the Law (Rom 3:21; Rom 10:4; Gal 3:23). Even Cranfield's argument that Paul is disparaging "legalism" when he

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁷⁴ John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, The New International Commentary of the NT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959, 2nd ed. 1965), pp. 160-161.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 162.

attacks the Law is not completely satisfactory. Paul uses the term "law" in his negative statements, and we cannot skim over this fact.

3.1.2 Mediating Positions: The OT Law is Radicalized

Above, we have summarized scholars who found in Paul an expression of the continuity between the Law and the Christian life. Here, we propose to survey scholarship of 1950 to 1971 that addressed the question of the "law of Christ" in a manner which mediated between the two extremes of continuity and discontinuity. Significantly, the idea of "legalism," referred to above by C. E. B. Cranfield, surfaces a few times in this discussion, so we will first deal with the scholars who raise this point. The question of the "law of love" also appears and will be addressed.

C. F. D. Moule offered a more detailed analysis of the concept of "legalism" in Paul. He held that the term "legalism" could be a "helpful tool" in understanding Paul's argument. Paul's use of the term nomos was clearly made in two distinctive connections: "revelatory" law and "legalistic" law.

The short answer to the question "In what sense, if any, did Paul speak of law as abrogated?" is that Paul saw Christ as the fulfilment of law, when law means God's revelation of himself and of his character and purpose, but as the condemnation and termination of any attempt to use law to justify oneself. And it is this latter use of law which may conveniently be called (for short) le-

galism.¹⁷⁶

The important thing, according to Moule, is to distinguish between these two attitudes and uses of "law." What needs to be abolished, he insisted, is the human use of the "law" as a safety net or regime (Gal 5:3). The only realistic step toward fulfilling the demands of the Law is to recognize the importance of grace as providing the only way to fulfil God's law.

It is necessary, then, I would hold, to interpret Paul as seeing the antithesis to grace, not in law so far as it is the revelation of God's character and demand, nor even law as obligation, but in law as an arrogantly and arbitrarily chosen target of human ambition and as a use of human achievement, that is, legalism.¹⁷⁷

The answer to the question of how to break the vicious circle, in which God's Law is always turned, through man's self-centredness, into legalism, is to be found, asserted Moule, in Paul's profound analysis of the idea of repentance. Paul penetrated to the crux of the ethical dilemma when he recognized that the result of trying to meet the demands of the law with one's own strength was always simply frustration and more sin. The only way to meet the demands of the Christian ethic was to acknowledge one's inability to do so alone, and,

¹⁷⁶ C. F. D. Moule, "Obligation in the Ethic of Paul," Christian History and Interpretation. Studies Presented to John Knox, ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule and R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 391.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 397.

to capitulate, in penitence and love or, in Paul's vocabulary, in the self-surrender of faith and obedience, to God's forgiveness.¹⁷⁸

Regarding the interpretation of telos in Rom 10:4, then, Moule believed that both the meanings "end" and "goal" were compatible with Paul's thought; but, Paul probably intended it to be read, "Christ put an end to legalism."¹⁷⁹ Paul did more than merely affirm the correct use of and understanding of Law, continued Moule. Paul showed Christ to be the embodiment of the relation between God and humanity which had been represented by the Law as the revelation of God. So, Paul saw Christ as superseding the Law only in that Christ, by totally obeying the will of God as revealed in it, included and transcended it. Moule concluded, "To be united in Christ is, therefore, not to by-pass law, but to fulfil it in a supremely costly way."¹⁸⁰ Neither Jesus nor Paul encouraged antinomianism: they both attacked legalism, but they both affirmed law. For the believer, the grace of God and the act of repentance were on-going realities in the life of faith.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 401.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 402-403.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 404. Both Jesus and Paul, said Moule, "speak with the voice of the new age." Moule concluded, "What Paul added to the teaching of Jesus, maintaining to the full the eschatological dimension, was not a relaxation of ethical principles but a definition and analysis of the relation between, on the one hand, law (in the good sense) and grace, and on the other hand, legalism and merit" (p. 405).

George Eldon Ladd offered a slightly different perspective on the legalism discussion. He asserted that Paul's teaching on the Law must not be seen as an explanation of his conversion experience nor as a description of legalistic Pharisaism of the first century, but rather as a "theological interpretation by a Christian thinker of two ways of righteousness: legalism and faith."¹⁸¹ The Law of the OT was not given as a means of achieving a right relationship with God, but was given under the umbrella of the covenant. Paul, then, continued Ladd, offered a fresh Christian interpretation of the Law from the perspective of the Messianic age which was alluded to often in the OT. From this perspective of the new age in Christ, the Law assumes an entirely different dimension in God's redemptive work (II Cor 3:6-18). This dimension is "inwardness," that is, the Spirit.¹⁸²

The difference in the new age is that the Holy Spirit has been given to men to write the law upon their hearts, as Jeremiah foretold, and thus the law is no longer merely an external written code but an inward life-giving power which produces righteousness.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ George Eldon Ladd, "Paul and the Law," Soli Deo Gloria. NT Studies in Honor of William Childs Robinson, ed. J. McDowell Richards (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1968), p. 50.

¹⁸² Ibid., pp. 56-57. This new dimension of inwardness does not, said Ladd, carry with it the complete abolition of the Mosaic Law.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 57.

Regarding Rom 10:4, Ladd preferred the rendering, "Christ is the end of the law so far as righteousness is concerned for everyone who believes," because this understanding indicates that the Law is not abolished, and yet it is also no longer the way to righteousness. Both of the meanings of telos, "end" and "goal," are included in Rom 10:4, for Ladd perceived Paul as giving a "profound theological truth" here: "Christians belong to two worlds at once and have obligations to both orders."¹⁸⁴ Christians cannot deny their Jewish beliefs, and yet they belong not only to that old order, but also to the new order in Christ.

Paul never thought of the Law as being totally abolished, said Ladd, for it was to remain always an expression of the will of God. In Christ, however, the Christian was to keep this law not in terms of its external codes, but in its higher demands.¹⁸⁵ In the place of the written code is now the "law of Christ," which goes "far beyond legislation." Embodied in love, the "law of Christ" fulfills the Law.¹⁸⁶ Ladd concluded,

It is clear that the law continues to be the expression of the will of God for conduct, even for those who are no longer under the law. . . . It is quite clear, however, that the permanent aspect of the law is the ethical and not the ceremoni-

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 66. Ladd believed that Paul perceived the Law to be powerless at the point where it was seen as an external written code -- that is, in terms of "legalism."

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

al.¹⁸⁷

George A. F. Knight also took a positive view of the Law in Christianity. He asserted, "We must once again integrate 'the Law' with 'the Gospel'."¹⁸⁸ Just as the editors of the Torah viewed the Pentateuch as not simply a collection of legal demands but as a "growing revelation of God's ways in the past that acted as a guide for understanding his will for the future,"¹⁸⁹ so, too, the Christians must view Law in its revelatory sense. Knight interpreted Rom 10:4 from the perspective of the Hebrew word for "end" which could be translated "outcome" or meaning.¹⁹⁰ He perceived a direct line of continuity between the Law of Moses and the "law of Christ."

But the Law of Moses was temporary only in that it has found its end in Christ. This "end," not being the end of a series, does not mean that the law of Moses is now past and forgotten. In Christ it has found a new potency and validity, and has taken on a wholly new dimension. . . .¹⁹¹

So, it is totally erroneous for the Christian to perceive Paul as demanding only faith in Christ. Clearly, asserted Knight, the New Testament presents the challenge to "keep" the Law in connection with one's acceptance of the Gos-

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁸⁸ George A. F. Knight, Law and Grace. Must a Christian Keep the Law of Moses? (London: SCM, 1962), p. 9.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 115.

pel,¹⁹² for the Law has found a radicalized meaning in Jesus Christ.

C. K. Barrett, the prominent English scholar, asserted that in Paul, the "abolition" of the Law was not a complete negation, and even less a condemnation. "Between the old dispensation and the new," he said, "there is a parallel as well as contrast."¹⁹³ The word "end" in Rom 10:4 could be translated "termination," but also "purpose," or "intention," and Barrett found the key to interpretation in the words "by realizing righteousness": Christ is the "end" of the Law, he said, with a view to righteousness, not to anarchy.¹⁹⁴ The "law of Christ," he said, is not a new Law, but is the law of love laid down by Moses. The Law of Moses, however, was easily perverted. So, Jesus' role was to interpret and, indeed, to vindicate and establish the old Law (Rom 3:31).¹⁹⁵ His interpretation of the Law was so radical and so personal, continued Barrett, that Law came to an end. No longer could Law be seen as a means to salvation. Now, it became the "ethical channel through which the new life in

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁹³ C. K. Barrett, From First Adam to Last. A Study of Pauline Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 53.

¹⁹⁴ C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962), pp. 197-198. Richard N. Longenecker also found the key to interpreting Rom 10:4 in the words "by realizing righteousness."

¹⁹⁵ Barrett, From First Adam, p. 80.

Christ flows."¹⁹⁶ Love, that action which fulfils what the Law requires, and is embodied in the "law of Christ," is not the completion but the performance of the Law.

Love fulfils all the negative and positive commandments inclusively, from Lev xix. 18 downwards. When Paul says this, however, he is not instituting a new, though simplified legalism. He does not say that man is justified by fulfilling the law through love; rather, he is pointing out the ethical expression of the true meaning of the law, which, when rightly understood, itself points the way of faith . . . which expresses itself in love (Gal v.6).¹⁹⁷

Ceslaus Spicq, a Catholic scholar, also regarded love as the "fulfilment" of the Law, saying that "the total content of the law is fraternal charity" (Rom 13: 10b).¹⁹⁸ Spicq linked this ethic to the Christian's existence "in Christ," an expression that Paul used more than 160 times.¹⁹⁹ This union, he explained, is a "personal, reciprocal, an organic and living relationship," and is accomplished in the imitation of Christ (Col 3:9-11; Gal 3:28).

Our belonging to Christ, with the religious attachment and dedication to neighbor that flow from it, are not simply another slavery like the first one [i.e., the old law], St Paul explains, because we now serve Christ -- in agape.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Barrett, Romans, p. 251.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ceslaus Spicq, Agape in the New Testament Vol 2 (St. Louis, London: B. Herder Book Co., 1965), pp. 60-61.

¹⁹⁹ Ceslaus Spicq, "To Live in Christ: Reflections on 'Pauline Morality'," A Companion to Paul, ed. Michael J. Taylor (New York: Alba House, 1975), p. 142.

²⁰⁰ Spicq, Agape in the NT, p. 141.

Law within the Christian life is simply a principle of Christian morality, wrote Spicq, referring to Rom 13:8; it is the evangelical law.²⁰¹

Finally, Ernst Käsemann, the German biblical scholar, shed new light on the question of continuity/discontinuity by isolating what he believed to be sentences of "holy law" in the NT. Regarding Paul, he wrote,

There exists for him in very real terms a law which has to be observed within the community, although it has almost nothing to do with the forms of law which we assume and administer. . . . We are concerned with a divine law in which God himself remains the agent and which, inasmuch as God makes it to be promulgated and executed by charismatic men, may be called charismatic law.²⁰²

Käsemann cited I Cor 5:3ff. as an indisputable place where Paul was concerned with a legal process: there could be no possible way of placing the antithesis of Spirit and Law (one of the "most momentous errors of Liberalism") into Paul's theology.²⁰³ It was the Law, said Käsemann, which kept the people from resisting, and it was the Spirit that

²⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 57, 61.

²⁰² Ernst Käsemann, New Testament Questions of Today, tr. W. J. Mantague (London: SCM, 1969), pp. 72-73.

²⁰³ Ibid., pp. 70, 73. Later in the chapter, Käsemann wrote that his proof of the presence of sentences of "holy law" in the NT meant "the collapse of a basic tenet of Liberalism: in the very early days of the Christian religion Spirit and Law are not separated. At this point the Spirit creates law, and the fact that he does so is the constituent element of his being. The Spirit is the power which proclaims God's law on earth in the preached word, grounds it in the action of the universal Judge on the Last Day and gives it reality in the new obedience of the Christian" (p. 80).

made obedience possible. Only love, however, can really fulfil the demands of God's Law.

Therefore love is not here a substitute for law, but the radicalization of it. It appropriates for itself, as well as the body, the judgment and the heart.²⁰⁴

Unfortunately, Käsemann did not attach Paul's conception of the "law of Christ" to the sentences of "holy law" he found in the NT. His argument concerning the Law does, however, carry some implications for our study.²⁰⁵

Various other scholars presented these ideas of continuity in slightly different ways which we will briefly review. George E. Howard, for example, studied scholarship on Rom 10:4 and emerged with the opinion that the entire passage (Rom 10:1-13) was dominated by the theme of the inclusion of the Gentiles.²⁰⁶ The Jews had been convinced that they possessed salvation because they had the tradition of their fathers which included the Law and many blessings. But,

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

²⁰⁵ Käsemann wrote, "The difference between the holy law in the New Testament and the later Church law is that primitive Christianity understood the Law that was authoritative within it to be the foundation of obedience. The object of the law is not order as such, in the formal sense, but the order -- determined by its own content -- of the right relationship between Creator and creature; it is therefore in I Cor 14. 33 called eirenē and set over against akatastasia" (Ibid., pp. 80-81). This order of the "right relationship" may well be what the "law of Christ" is aiming at.

²⁰⁶ George E. Howard, "Christ the End of the Law: The Meaning of Rom 10: 4ff.", Journal of Biblical Literature 88 (1969), p. 336.

Their extreme hostility to the gentiles (I Thess 2:15-16) had caused them to miss the point of the law itself, i.e., that its very aim and goal was the ultimate unification of all nations under the God of Abraham according to the promise.²⁰⁷

Thus, it was in this sense that Christ was the telos of the Law, said Howard. He was the goal to everyone who believed, and Rom 10:5ff shows Paul's attempt to prove that the Law's ultimate goal corresponded to Christ's work in unifying all the nations.²⁰⁸

Beda Rigaux approached the issue of the continuity of the Law from a perspective emphasizing the Holy Spirit. Rigaux asserted,

The mission of the spirit is a bond between old covenant and new, Jesus and church, individual and community. It is the focus of grace, liberty and law.²⁰⁹

Paul felt "deeply" the divergence between the old and new dispensation, said Rigaux.²¹⁰ There was no real rupture between the two, though. There was "continuity" in that the Law remained permanent, and there was "discontinuity" in the antithesis between Law and faith.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. Howard concluded, "The passage [Rom 10:1-13] is one of the greatest of Paul's statements concerning his doctrine of the inclusion of the gentiles. In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that this doctrine permeates the entirety of his letter to the Romans" (p. 337).

²⁰⁹ Beda Rigaux, "Law and Grace in Pauline Eschatology," Louvain Studies 2 (1969), p. 333.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 329.

We cannot escape the terms of this dilemma. Paul works by antithesis: domain of law, domain of faith; yet he proposes neither an absolute contradiction nor a real identification.²¹¹

The reason for this was that there had been a radical change in situation. The arrival of Jesus had initiated a situation where human action must be completely integral with the message of the gospel. The demands of the "law of Christ," then, exceeded those of the Mosaic Law. Paul did not, however, place the "law of Christ" in confrontation with the Mosaic Law, but simply stated the Christian ideal in a "new perspective." This new perspective, said Rigaux, is the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:23-24).²¹² The central role of the Spirit in Paul's theology, Rigaux argued, has been neglected. He perceived, however, that contemporary scholarship was finally renewing its interest in this area.

Andrew John Bandstra addressed the problems that Paul, on the one hand, perceived the Mosaic Law as one of the "elements of the world" which holds people in bondage, and on the other hand seriously insisted that the commands of the Law are holy, righteous, good and spiritual (Rom 7:12,13). Bandstra argued that the reason for this was that Paul viewed the Law from "the vantage point of the new stage of redemption in Christ."²¹³ The Law, in its central intent,

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 330.

²¹² Ibid., p. 332.

²¹³ Andrew John Bandstra, The Law and the Elements of the World. An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul's Teaching (J. H. Kok N. V. Kampen, 1964), pp. 76-77.

was fulfilled by Christ and so continued to have validity in the new age.

The Christian life, therefore, is not without law, still less is it against law; it is a fulfillment of the just requirements of the law in deeds of love.²¹⁴

Only through Christ, however, was the Mosaic Law channelled into the church, asserted Bandstra. "He not only fulfilled it," Bandstra continued, "but becomes the one who guarantees its fulfillment in His church."²¹⁵ In this way, then, Christ has become the church's authority; thus, one can speak of the "law of Christ." This "law" consists basically of the necessity of love, seen in terms of Christ's words and deeds.²¹⁶ It also has, however, its basis in the OT Law, the events of which

constituted for Paul a preparation for and an analogy of the decisive revelation of God in Christ in the new age.²¹⁷

Though Paul perceived the Law as one of the "elements of the world," he also knew the Law to be a form of revelation from God. This revelation was radicalized in Jesus.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 108.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 114.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 95. Bandstra (p. 86) agreed with C. K. Barrett that there was in Paul a "sort of 'paradoxical glorification' of the Law, a glorification that finds its more illustrious, and eclipsing, counterpart in Jesus Christ and His glory."

3.1.3 Discontinuity: The Law Has Ended

In the previous section, we summarized the various scholarly positions that in some way perceived continuity in Christianity with the OT Law, while also holding that radicalization of the Law had taken place. The reality of God's grace and revelation in both eras was recognized. Yet, several new elements appeared in the Christian understanding of the Law's radicalized role: repentance, the Holy Spirit, and the imitation of Christ were recognized as important aspects of the new age. No longer was the Law to be obeyed in the spirit of "legalism"; rather, it was now revealed and embodied in Jesus Christ and fulfilled through him. Christians were able to "obey" the radicalized demands of the Law with the help of the Holy Spirit.

While these elements of the Christian life -- imitation of Christ, Holy Spirit, repentance, grace -- are central to most explications of Christianity, the place of the OT Law continues to be controversial. As we saw above, some scholars consider the Law to continue either basically unchanged or radicalized. There is, however, another large contingent in scholarship which considers the OT Law to be obsolete and no longer necessary. Within this school of thought, two directions emerge. One group perceives the OT Law to be replaced by the "law of love." The other group understands Paul, in particular, to hold up a new standard which must be obeyed.

We will survey this group of scholars (dating 1950-1971) under these two headings: "the law of love" and "a new standard." Within this discussion, various arguments will be outlined that deny completely that Paul perceived the OT Law as valid in the Christian era.

3.1.3.1 The Law of Love

John Knox in his book, The Ethic of Jesus in the Churches of Paul (1961), did not specifically address the phrase "law of Christ" as found in Gal 6:2 and I Cor 9:21. He did, however, assertively deny any particular significance to Paul's positive statements about the Law as found, for instance, in Gal 5:14 ("For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'"). Knox wrote,

I would insist, however, that in whatever way these scattered passages are understood, they do not obscure the fact that, according to Paul's theory of the Christian life, the law belongs to the past.²¹⁸

Knox viewed the OT Law as providing a "false legalism"²¹⁹ but cautioned that Christians would be in danger of succumbing to antinomianism if they clung to the idea of "freedom in Christ."²²⁰ He asserted that the Christian is "subject to a more exacting ethical demand than any written code could

²¹⁸ John Knox, The Ethic of Jesus in the Churches of Paul (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961), p. 103.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 8. "We are in danger of succumbing to a new antinomianism, of using such a phrase as 'our freedom in Christ' to cover our selfishness and our worldliness."

impose."²²¹ The two aspects of early Christian ministry, kerygma and didache, must be viewed as "ultimately inseparable,"²²² for the gospel of Jesus "presses every moral requirement to its extreme limit."²²³ The basic exhortation in Jesus' teaching was to be perfect as God is perfect, and this perfection found its basis in the act of love.²²⁴ There must not, however, be any perception of a "law of God" in terms of some code or legal instrument, for that would stand between God and the person. So, general ethical teaching could not be regarded as normative, but simply as "suggestive" or illustrative.²²⁵

To be sure, God does make absolute ethical demands on us, but he makes these demands directly, immediately, individually and always within the context of actual life situations. There is no universal or generally binding "law" of God, and it is a mistake to suppose that Jesus thought so.²²⁶

²²¹ Ibid., p. 7. Knox characterized this code as "a demand from which he [the Christian] cannot escape and which he can disregard only at the peril of his soul." Despite such harsh language, Knox categorically denies that the ethical demand placed upon the Christian can be termed a "law."

²²² Ibid., pp. 8-9. Knox said that the two aspects are closely related, and that any separation of them would be "false" and "baneful."

²²³ Ibid., p. 22.

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 48. Knox cited John Sittler as being representative of this position. Sittler said, "These teachings of Jesus are not the legislation of love (the very term contradicts the nature of love) but are rather the paradigms of love."

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

Thus it could not possibly be the case that Paul perceived of Jesus as bringing or endorsing a "law" of any kind. Indeed, Knox accused Paul of unconsciously and unintentionally relaxing the demand for God-like perfection and of sowing seeds of antinomianism by his doctrine of justification.²²⁷ This doctrine is misleading, maintained Knox, because it did not adequately provide the aspect of penitence which was so strong in Jesus' teaching.²²⁸

In a 1964 essay entitled "Nomos Christou," E. Bammel came out sharply critical of the positions of Dodd and Davies. He insisted that Paul, particularly in his letter to the Galatians, in no way supported the primitive Christian concept of the New Moses, which had been used by Dodd and Davies to support the idea of an Old and New Torah. Bammel says of Paul,

He neither makes Abraham an authority for an older, better law nor does he turn the nomos into a forerunner of the messianic age. The idea of a development which modern interpreters have discovered in Paul, is unknown to the early Paul. The relation of nomos to Christou is perfectly

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 76.

²²⁸ In his important essay, "Obligation in the Ethic of Paul," pp. 389-406, C. F. D. Moule (summarized above, pp. 66-68,) undertook to address Knox on this point. He asserted that Paul's neglect of penitence was only apparent, not real, because in Paul's conception of the faith-union with Christ he provided a "profound" analysis of penitence, though he used other vocabulary. Moule asserted that Paul had a doctrine of repentance that was as demanding as that of Jesus. "Indeed," he continued, "I would go further, and suggest that Paul offers an analysis of penitence where the teaching of Jesus does not, Paul making explicit what, in the teaching of Jesus, is only implicit." (p. 391).

negative.²²⁹

Bammel held that the positive functions attributed to the Law in Gal 3:19a and 24 served simply to indicate the great gulf which exists between humans and God.²³⁰ The complicated argumentation of Gal 3:17-29 showed absolutely no indication of a doctrine of Law which would have it either replaced or supplemented by the Messiah.

Only two points are emphasized: the Law as such is incomplete and its fulfillment is impossible. Thus it already miscarries itself.²³¹

Bammel addressed C. H. Dodd's argument that the term nomos Christou stands within the larger context of a nomos Theou.²³² In particular, he questioned Dodd's willingness to see the precepts of Jesus, recorded in I Cor 7, 9, and elsewhere, as various aspects of a nomos Christou.

The equation of various termini in this manner is daring, but the strength of a term is lost completely when it is made to describe many things. To prove one thing Dodd proves too much.²³³

²²⁹ E. Bammel, "Nomos Christou," Studia Evangelica III (Texte und Untersuchungen, 88, ed. F. L. Cross,) (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), p. 123.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 124.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 125.

²³² C. H. Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 137. Dodd suggested "that the various forms of expression of the 'law of God' [be seen] as something wider and more inclusive than the 'law' simpliciter, in the sense of Torah."

²³³ Bammel, "Nomos Christou," p. 125.

Bammel insisted on viewing the phrase "law of Christ" within the entirety of v. 2 in Gal 6. He asserted that the phrase does not refer to the OT Law; rather, the phrase "Bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:21) obviously showed that Paul was not harking back to the commandment of love in Deuteronomy.²³⁴ The term nomos in this verse was used "only with regard to the legalism of the Galatians."²³⁵ The phrase "law of Christ" was almost a rhetorical remark, said Bammel, used for the sake of emphasis, but with no deeper meaning. So, Bammel concluded that Dodd's attempt leads us "no further," and he pointed out what he considers to be a problem: Dodd seems to prefer to use the impressive term from Galatians (nomos Christou) but bases his arguments on Romans.²³⁶ But the circumstances in Romans were different, argued Bammel. The phrase nomos Christou occurs only in epistles (I Cor, Gal) which are not, as yet, dealing favourably with the Jewish Law. In Romans, however, the Mosaic Law is celebrated and the term agape (Rom 13:9) embodies the "quintessence

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 26.

²³⁵ Ibid. Bammel's argument here is packed with underlying assumptions and meaning. He said, "Just as the commandment of Love in 5,14 is described as one instance at which the nomos points beyond itself and just as the verse has only additional meaning within the proof, serving as a link for those who are attached to the Old Testament, so in 6,2 nomos is used only with regard to the legalism of the Galatians."

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 127. It seems that Bammel forgets that in the essay, "Ennomos Christou," Dodd deals in depth with the phrase in I Cor 9:21.

of the Old Testament Law."²³⁷ Here, insisted Bammel, is the continuity. So, in Galatians, where the entire Law is viewed in a negative way, the term "law" becomes "free," so to speak, and can be "usurped." Where the Law is still viewed in a positive way, as in Romans, the term "law" is not free to be used in truly Christian vocabulary. So Bammel concluded,

The formula nomos Christou shows itself thereby as a phrase which was only possible in one particular phase of Pauline theology when it was coined in an almost playful manner. But it was in no way destined to cover the whole problem of Pauline ethics. Therefore it is missing in Romans.²³⁸

Paul's many uses of the term "law" must be understood, said Bammel, "by distinguishing them as different aspects and spheres of thought."²³⁹ Paul's statements regarding the OT Law were "logically inadequate", admitted Bammel, but nevertheless the important point is Paul's overwhelming awareness that Jesus was something more than and completely different from the Jewish nomos.²⁴⁰ Taking a quick jab at Davies, Bammel concludes his article by writing, "A comparison with rabbinics, handled without safeguard, does not lead us nearer the truth, but further away from it."²⁴¹

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 128.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

Hans Joachim Schoeps, a Jewish scholar who explored the Jewish basis of Paul's theology, maintained that with the LXX, there was a tendency to ethicize the Law, to isolate it from the "controlling reality" of the covenant.²⁴² This was because, though the OT idea of "Torah" was best explained as including both Law and doctrine, in the LXX, "Torah" was rendered simply as nomos. With this translation, then, there was a shift in emphasis towards legalism. "Torah," said Schoeps, now implied a moral way of life prescribed by God. Looking particularly at "law" in Paul's thought, Schoeps asserted that it was this LXX interpretation of "Torah" which determined Paul's attitude to the Jewish Law, and enabled him to insist on substituting for the Jewish Law a new law (nomos tou pneumatos, Rom 8:2). So, Schoeps believed,

that the source of many Pauline misunderstandings with regard to the evaluation of the law and covenant is to be sought in the legalistic distortion of the perspective for which Hellenistic Judaism was responsible.²⁴³

Paul, then, in his reflection on the role of the Law, formulated a sharp alternative: the Law or the Messiah.²⁴⁴ Schoeps asserted, "The abolition of the law is a Messianolo-

²⁴² Hans Joachim Schoeps, Paul. The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), p. 29.

²⁴³ Ibid. It is interesting that Schoeps cites C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, as the basis for this position. Schoeps does not, however, address Dodd's essay, "Ennomos Christou," or Gospel and Law.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 168.

gical doctrine in Pauline theology."²⁴⁵ Schoeps emphasized Paul's deduction, as found in Rom 10:4, that "Christ is the end of the law," saying that even if telos was rendered "aim" or "fulfillment," it would not alter his interpretation.²⁴⁶ Obviously, he continued, Paul perceived the validity of the Law as a means to salvation to be at an end, because Jesus was resurrected from the dead. This resurrection proved both his Messianic status and the breaking in of the last age. Citing the well attested rabbinic view, "As soon as a man is dead, he is free from the obligation of the commands,"²⁴⁷ Schoeps contended that Paul drew from this idea the assertion that whoever "is dead to this aeon has become free from the law" (Rom 7:6) and that the new aeon has begun with the resurrection of Jesus. So, the Law in its totality was considered by Paul to be antiquated.²⁴⁸ The idea that a moral law (i.e., the Decalogue) continued to be valid in Christian life is a "non-Pauline later church doctrine," maintained Schoeps.²⁴⁹ He described Paul's "intertwined" thoughts on the Law in this way:

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 171. Schoeps footnotes a reference to Davies' book, Torah in the Messianic Age..., but does not indicate the connection. Davies would not hold with Schoeps's assertion.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. Schoeps cited Sabba. 30a, 151b; Nidda 61b; Pes. Rabb. 51b; Jer Kilaim IX,3 for this interpretation.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 199.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

. . . the old type of relation with the divine mediated by the law which brings the Jew face to face with God and is realized in the fulfilling of the commands, is now superseded -- to speak in Hegelian terms -- by the new situation "in Christ", by a new and more intimate relationship which enables man to share in the divine nature through the Incarnate Son. The new principle on which this participation rests is faith, which has annulled for Christians the old principle of the law that bound the Jew to his God.²⁵⁰

Schoeps asserted that it was this Pauline attitude which led to the final break of primitive Christianity with Judaism.²⁵¹ Judaism could not in any way tolerate the abrogation of the Mosaic Law, upon which was based the Jewish consciousness of the covenant. It was Paul's basic misunderstanding of the Law, however, which led to this break. Basing his interpretation of the Law in the LXX, Paul had "fundamentally misapprehended"²⁵² the Jewish meaning of "Torah."

Because Paul had lost all understanding of the character of the Hebraic berith as a partnership involving mutual obligations, he failed to grasp the inner meaning of the Mosaic law, namely, that it is an instrument by which the covenant is realized. Hence the Pauline theology of law and justification begins with the fateful misunderstanding in consequence of which he tears asunder covenant and law, and then represents Christ as the end of the law.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 209-210.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 199.

²⁵² Ibid., p. 213. "Paul's Fundamental Misapprehension" was the label Schoeps chose for the concluding section of his chapter on Paul's teaching about the Law.

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 218.

So, according to Schoeps, Paul does not represent a truly Jewish understanding of Law.

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, a Catholic biblical scholar, took a different approach to the question of the continuity of the Law in Christianity, and examined the imperatives Paul outlined in I Thess 4.²⁵⁴ Viewing these imperatives as "typical" of those found elsewhere in the Pauline letters, Murphy-O'Connor concluded that they have an educative function.

Thus we see that Paul's imperatives -- and this list is typical -- are directly related to his understanding of conversion as a transition from an egocentric form of existence to an other-directed mode of being. Their function was to enable the Christian to understand what had happened to him, and to aid him to interpret his conversion in terms of practical living.²⁵⁵

God's will is expressed in the Christian's "call" to holiness (I Thess 4:7). The moral imperatives function, then, to aid the Christian in fulfilling that call to holiness. However, Murphy-O'Connor asserted, Paul never spoke of man obeying "the law" or a "commandment".

Man's commitment to Christ in response to God's love is conceived as a form of submission but the determination of the practical modalities of that commitment is man's responsibility. Paul's silence can only be taken as emphasizing this point.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The Contemporary Value of Pauline Moral Imperatives," Doctrine and Life 21 (1971), p. 60.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 61. Murphy-O'Connor added, "The educative value of these imperatives is further confirmed by the literary form of this passage. It is not a piece of legislation, but a pastoral exhortation: ..." (p. 62).

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 64.

Murphy-O'Connor maintained that many of the imperatives in Paul's letters were not specifically Christian in content.²⁵⁷ Some were from the OT and some arose from the Hellenistic milieu. There were approximately a dozen allusions to Jesus' teachings, but these were mixed in with other exhortations. Unlike Dodd and Davies, Murphy-O'Connor insisted that,

Since it cannot be presumed that the apostle's different audiences were sufficiently familiar with the sayings of Jesus to recognize the allusions, we must conclude that Paul did not intend to present them as demands, enjoying a special authority because they stemmed from Jesus.²⁵⁸

Paul's moral imperatives were simply educative ways of explicating what real love is. Murphy-O'Connor perceived Paul to be saying that the true Christian must learn what true love is, not what the law demands.²⁵⁹ "Insight," he continued, "is acquired through reflection on lived experience, not through study of a set of precepts."

Hans Conzelmann reiterated the primacy of love over all else, saying,

love is the particularization of an eschatological relationship to the world, made possible by the faith which works through love (Gal 5:6).²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 67. Murphy-O'Connor insisted that Paul's interest was not in the imperatives' origin, but in their utility.

²⁵⁹ Murphy-O'Connor, "Moral Discernment," Doctrine and Life 21 (1971), p. 133.

²⁶⁰ Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, tr. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1969), p. 279.

Conzelmann perceived Paul to be making this argument in light of the end of the Law. Paul's life-work as well as his very understanding of the nature of salvation and Christian community, said Conzelmann, were dependent on "the assertion that the law is finished as a way to salvation."²⁶¹ There is, however, an imperative which is attached to the assertion of freedom: Gal 5:1 shows how these are attached ("For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery"). Conzelmann also found in Gal 5:13ff this "unity of freedom and demand."

But the demand is no longer understood in the light of the individual injunction, and the law is not the sum of its precepts. It has its summation, rather, in the commandment to love (Gal 5:14; Rom 13 8-10).²⁶²

Love is not a "moral principle" to be applied carefully in each case; rather, love is something that must be practiced, felt, done, and then it will be realized.²⁶³ So, through faith, freedom and obedience are joint entities that are fulfilled in love.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 276.

²⁶² Ibid., p. 278.

²⁶³ Ibid. Conzelmann explains, "If love were an ethical principle, there would be no answer to the question how love can be commanded: 'You shall love'. This commandment is possible, first, under the presupposition of the gospel -- in so far as this is not just doctrine, but the gift of salvation; secondly, as an absolute commandment."

Conzelmann did not specifically deal with the phrase nomos Christou, but his argument is representative of the widely held view that faith is to be the prime motivator in Christian life. This view asserts that, though Christ is the end of the Law (Rom 10:4), the result is not antinomianism. Rather, the doctrine of Christ being the telos of the Law presupposes that the Law is valid and holy, but it is only in faith and love that what the Law intends comes into effect.²⁶⁴

Victor Paul Furnish provides us with one of the most thorough responses to Dodd and Davies from the point of view of the discontinuity of the Law in Paul's understanding of Christianity. Furnish wanted his work to provide a thorough review and reevaluation of Paul's ethics, and his intent was to show that "the apostle's ethical concerns are not secondary but radically integral to his basic theological convictions."²⁶⁵

Furnish offered a critique of Davies' and Dodd's work with regard to several issues.²⁶⁶ We will, of course, focus

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 235. Unfortunately, Conzelmann, though including Dodd and Davies in his discussion at various other points, does not enter into dialogue on the place of the Law in the Christian life.

²⁶⁵ Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 13.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. For example, pp. 38-42, Furnish analyzes and criticizes Davies' arguments that Paul's ethical teaching is in some way dependent on the traditions of Rabbinic Judaism. On pp. 98-111, Furnish offers a thorough response to the problem of kerygma and didache, addressing C. H. Dodd.

primarily on his perception of the meaning of Paul's phrase "law of Christ"; but, several of Furnish's conclusions were in direct contradiction to Davies or Dodd or both, and should be reviewed briefly here. First, in his analysis of the sources of Paul's ethical teaching, Furnish insisted that Paul's Jewish background could not fully account for the manner or substance of his ethical teaching. Addressing particularly W. D. Davies' assertion that Paul could be understood within the framework of rabbinic Judaism, Furnish wrote that,

while Paul's letters reflect his familiarity with and use of various rabbinic modes of thought, form of teaching, and ethical motifs, there is no evidence which demonstrates any deliberate or self-conscious association with the rabbinic tradition on his part.²⁶⁷

Furnish held that any investigation of the sources of Paul's ethical teaching must also include the possibility of Hellenistic influence. Davies, of course, was aware of this necessity and had acknowledged it. He wrote in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism,

To-day it has become clear, however, that Paul was influenced not only by the religion of his father, but also by the religious movements of the Hellenistic world of his day; that both Hellenism and Judaism were his tutors unto Christ.²⁶⁸

Davies' intent, however, was to show that many elements of Paul's thought that were believed to be Hellenistic could, in fact, be attributed to his Jewish background. Furnish

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 43 (emphasis mine).

²⁶⁸ W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 1.

did not agree with this approach.

In a lengthy discussion on the distinction between kerygma and didache in Paul's epistles, Furnish particularly addressed Dodd as a well-known representative of this position. It is impossible to make "tidy distinctions" between the kerygmatic and didactic themes in Paul's preaching, insisted Furnish.²⁶⁹

In summary, when applied to Paul's letters the categories of "theological" and "ethical" tend to confuse rather than clarify. The apostle's ethical exhortations are expressed in a wide range of stylistic forms and appear in virtually every chapter, from first to last.²⁷⁰

Paul's concern was simply evangelical, concluded Furnish. "To preach the gospel" found its expression in both ethical exhortations and in theological statements, each interpreting and including the other.

In his further exploration into the sources for Paul's ethical teaching, Furnish reviewed the evidence that suggested that the teaching of Jesus constituted the major source of his ethical instruction. Furnish examined Davies' list²⁷¹ of seventeen "allusions" to Jesus' teaching, finding eight to be possibly valid and the remaining nine to be "not as convincing." Many of these statements had parallels in

²⁶⁹ Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul, p. 106.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 110.

²⁷¹ Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 140, 142, 144. Actually, Davies found 25 allusions, but 8 were from Colossians, which Furnish did not consider "indisputably authentic" (Theology and Ethics, p. 11).

Rabbinic or Hellenistic material, so Furnish concluded that they did not necessarily represent Paul's dependence on a Jesus-tradition.²⁷²

Furnish then addressed the possibility raised by C. H. Dodd²⁷³ that the phrase "law of Christ" referred to a Jesus-tradition. Dodd argued that both I Cor 9:21 and Gal 6:2, where the phrase "law of Christ" occurs, stand in contexts where Paul was issuing specific commands which were to be fulfilled. In I Cor, these commands include commands of the Lord forbidding divorce (7:10) and commending payment for those proclaiming the gospel (9:14). Furnish, however, considered Dodd's argument to be rather "farfetched" and offered his own interpretation of "law of Christ" in I Cor 9:21.

The general point of the context is clear: although the apostle considers himself free from the legalism of the Jewish law and even emphasizes this freedom in the course of his mission to the Gentiles, he is not therefore to be regarded as a libertinist insensitive to concrete ethical responsibilities. Paul's reference to the "law of Christ" is thus not the principal matter in the context, but is inserted to guard against a possible misunderstanding of the preceding remark that to those "outside the law" he was himself as one "outside law."²⁷⁴

Regarding Dodd's argument that the "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom 8:2) corresponds to living by the Spirit (Gal 5:25a) , and the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) corresponds to

²⁷² Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 61.

²⁷³ C. H. Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," pp. 138, 143-145.

²⁷⁴ Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 61.

walking by the Spirit (Gal 5:25b), Furnish argued that such an exegesis overlooks and may even contradict what Paul was trying to teach. He perceived Paul as wanting to point out that the life in the Spirit "in and of itself laid upon" the Galatians "moral imperatives," and their freedom was to be seen as a "freedom to obey" (5:13-14). So in Gal 5:25, Paul was attempting to show the unity of "living" and "walking" in the Spirit.

Therefore, Dodd's interpretation of the "law of Christ" in Gal 6:2 not only imposes an idea not clearly present in the context (viz. the idea of a body of dominical precepts), but also runs the danger of ignoring the controlling thought in the context which may be identified as the integrity and indissolubility of indicative and imperative.²⁷⁵

Furnish then went on to challenge W. D. Davies' interpretation of Gal 6:2, noting that the one certain rabbinic reference to the "law of the Messiah" (Midr. Quh. 11, 8 (52a)) does not provide the "impressive evidence for the kind of precedent Davies insists lies behind Gal 6:2."²⁷⁶ Further, Furnish doubted that Paul placed as high a value on a "law of Christ" as Davies held,²⁷⁷ because Paul did not refer to it in any of the other contexts where he was exhorting and appealing to the Lord's authority.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 62.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

²⁷⁷ Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 144.

So, Furnish interpreted the "law of Christ" in connection with the "love commandment." Linking the phrases "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) and "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:2), Furnish observed that both were in contexts "which speak of God's act of divine love by which the believer is given life and claimed for obedience in love."²⁷⁸ Thus, the "law of Christ" is the "law of love", and there is no basis for the hypothesis that Paul considered the traditional words of Jesus to constitute a new Torah or Christian Halakha.²⁷⁹

3.1.3.2 A New Standard

Several scholars between 1950 and 1971 published books or articles that represented various traditional and well-established views on Paul and his understanding of Jesus and the Law. In 1964, for example, Leonhard Goppelt published a book on Paul which briefly introduced the idea that Jesus

²⁷⁸ Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul, p. 64.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 64-65. Later in his book, Furnish clarified this view: "The law is by no means irrelevant to the Christian's practical conduct, and the apostle himself appeals to the binding force of the law's command in the Christian's life (Rom 13: 8-10; Gal 5:14). But the believer understands the content and force of the law in a new way, within the perspective of his new life in Christ. It is for him the "law of faith" (Rom 3:27), the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2), and it does not offer the security of prescribed rules for conduct, but emphasizes the one great imperative to 'love'." It is striking, though, that Furnish does not address I Cor 9:21 in the context of attaching the "law of Christ" to the "law of love" (cf. pp. 64-65, 228, 235).

brought a "new standard" for ethical behaviour.²⁸⁰ With regard to Jesus' view of the Law, Goppelt maintained that Jesus explicated God's command and will for the Christian in antithesis to the Law, not by an exegetical analysis of it.²⁸¹ In Paul's preaching, then, the gospel of Jesus and the message of the OT were "authoritatively combined into a new unity, namely, the gospel free from the law."²⁸² Goppelt attributed to Paul the distinctive service of explicating and defending this law-free gospel.

Lucien Cerfaux, although following a school of thought similar to that of Goppelt, addressed Paul's multi-valent use of the term "law" more thoroughly. He maintained that Paul did not consider Christianity as a "new nomism."²⁸³ Though Paul spoke of the "law of the Spirit" (Rom 8:7), of the life in Jesus which set him free from the "law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2), and of the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2; I Cor 9:21), he did not have in mind any kind of "spiritual law." Cer-

²⁸⁰ Leonhard Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism. An Introduction to New Testament Theology, tr. and ed. Edward Schroeder (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964), p. 5.

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 72. Goppelt went on to assert that "Israel remained the people of the covenant, but the covenant was no longer that one to be fulfilled by the coming Christ, but rather the one which was annulled by Him who did come, and therefore could be maintained only in opposition to Him or surrendered in favour of Him" (p. 94).

²⁸² Ibid., p. 119.

²⁸³ Lucien Cerfaux, The Christian in the Theology of St. Paul (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), p. 457.

faux posited that Paul was trying to say that "freedom is a new slavery, but one of justice," and cited Rom 6:18-20 as proof of this.²⁸⁴ Phrases such as these are "few and far between," however, added Cerfaux, implying that one should find "more significant" concepts to analyze.

Despite these rather shallow attempts to understand the role of the Law in Christianity in the decades post-dating the work of Dodd and Davies, there also arose a new school of thought which challenged many presuppositions and brought new depth to the argument that Christianity possessed a "new standard." Represented especially by Birger Gerhardsson and Harald Riesenfeld, this Scandinavian school provided some interesting ideas on the continuity of the Law and the existence of a tradition of the sayings of Jesus which were considered to be authoritative.

Harald Riesenfeld asserted that Paul was definitely dependent on an "overmastering" tradition, though he usually refrained from directly quoting this tradition.²⁸⁵ This ret-

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Harald Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 18. This is a collection of essays, written by Riesenfeld during the late 1950's and 1960's. J. H. Vincent in his article "Did Jesus Teach His Disciples to Learn by Heart?" Studia Evangelica III ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), pp. 105-118, summarized and provided a critique of Riesenfeld's argument. He questioned the validity of Riesenfeld's identification of Paul as a bearer of the tradition of the words and deeds of Jesus, saying that Paul's references "are still confusingly few and comparatively insignificant" (p. 109). The principle of "oral tradition" is relied upon too much, continued Vincent (p. 111), and Riesenfeld wished

icence, however, was intentional.

The words of Jesus and the reports of his deeds and his life, although originally transmitted by word of mouth, were conceived from a very early date to be the New Torah, and hence as the word of God of the new, eschatological covenant.²⁸⁶

Because this tradition was holy, said Riesenfeld, it was thus not readily transmitted on paper or in conversation. He was convinced, however, that an analysis of the themes of the parables in the epistles showed that Paul knew at least some of Jesus' sayings, and presupposed the same knowledge in the church he was writing to.²⁸⁷

Birger Gerhardsson, a pupil of Riesenfeld's, examined in greater detail the ideas which Riesenfeld presented in his essay on the Gospel tradition. Gerhardsson insisted that

the gospel tradition is not one section among many in the Pauline tradition. It forms a foundation and a focus: . . . Paul's teaching on various questions, his commandments, directions and advice -- all are constantly being placed in relation to this centre or are motivated on this basis: not from some basic abstract principle contained in the tradition, but from the manifold divine secrets given, according to Paul, in the person of Christ, in his words and works.²⁸⁸

to prove too much by his suggestion (p. 110). Though Vincent's critique has some validity, Riesenfeld's ideas have made an impact on modern scholarship and must be considered.

²⁸⁶ Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition, p. 20.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 189. This indication in Paul's writings "may be illuminating for all studies of Pauline theology," said Riesenfeld (p. 204).

²⁸⁸ Birger Gerhardsson, Memory and Manuscript, tr. Eric J. Sharpe (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1961), p. 301.

So, acknowledging C. H. Dodd's similar argument, Gerhardsson concluded that Paul evidently built on a gospel tradition,²⁸⁹ and regarded Jesus' sayings as particularly important. Paul's teaching, which interpreted and complemented both the scriptures and the Jesus-tradition, could be divided into three sections, argued Gerhardsson: doctrinal, ethical, and ecclesiastical, though the boundaries between them were fluid.²⁹⁰ Regarding the ethical sections, Gerhardsson believed that although other sources (e.g., Scriptures, Hellenistic rules) were used to provide some of the precepts, the material "was drawn principally from the teaching of Jesus."²⁹¹

Paul possessed a certain "mildness" in his legislative activity, admitted Gerhardsson.²⁹² He attributed this to the basic certainty of Paul that the Torah in its nomos aspect was brought to an end by the Messiah (Rom 10:4) and replaced with a messianic law (Gal 6:2) which fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer 31:31). Regarding I Cor 9:21, Gerhardsson wrote,

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 302.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 303.

²⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 303-304. Gerhardsson wrote, "It appears to have been the case in the young church that various collections of texts were put together, for practical reasons, such as catechetical instruction on life 'in the Spirit' or 'in Christ'."

²⁹² Ibid., p. 310.

It is very difficult to interpret this otherwise than to mean that Paul accepts the concept of a messianic law (nomos Christou) built on the foundation of a tradition of, and about, the Lord, i.e., the gospel tradition, to the extent and in the form in which he had received it.²⁹³

The admonition to the Gentiles to keep all that Jesus had commanded was not confined to some legalistic groups in early Christianity, insisted Gerhardsson, but was also included in Paul's teaching (e.g., I Cor).²⁹⁴

Richard N. Longenecker, who wrote Paul, Apostle of Liberty (1964), did not address the question of Paul's use of a Christ-tradition, nor did he insist that the OT Law was entirely abrogated. But, he did speak of Christianity as possessing a "new standard," so his arguments are best presented here, although it is clear that he represents a view that effectively blurs the lines of distinction. Longenecker's major intent was to show Paul as espousing a Christianity of "liberty." So, regarding the presentation of the old covenant in II Cor 3:7-18, Longenecker wrote,

It [the old covenant] was indeed a bondage and a slavery, but this is only presented in its relation to the liberty that is found in Christ Jesus. And even then the bondage of the Old Covenant is not necessarily equated with a crushing legalism, though it was certainly that to a legalist. A God-ordained and supervising nomism is all that need be implied.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 319.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Richard N. Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty (New York: Harper and Row, 1964; reprinted Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 104.

In his discussion of the Jewish expectation regarding the status of the Law in the messianic age, Longenecker often referred to Davies' work in this area.²⁹⁶ He agreed with Davies in concluding that while the Jews expected the Law to continue as an expression of God's will in the messianic age, they also realized that some alteration or abrogation of the Law would occur as a result of the Messiah's presence.²⁹⁷ Paul's statement in Rom 10:4 concisely expressed his teaching about the Law, and included in it both the aspects of continuity and discontinuity. Longenecker translated Rom 10:4, "For Christ is the end of the law in its connection with righteousness." For him, this was the key to unlocking Paul's thought: the law in its contractual ("in its connection with righteousness") obligation was abrogated because God had established a new covenant in Jesus.²⁹⁸ It is only on this contractual level, however, that the Law has been fulfilled and terminated. There was "no hint" in Paul, said Longenecker, "that the Law as the standard and Judgment of God is also ended."²⁹⁹

Longenecker perceived Paul's references to the "law of Christ" to be very significant, because they raised the question, "Is there in Paul's use of the phrase any thought

²⁹⁶ Ibid., for example, pp. 130-132.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 132.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 146.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 147. Paul's use of "law" in Rom 2 shows this, said Longenecker.

of a standard in the Christian life which possesses an external significance and validity?"³⁰⁰ Criticizing Emil Brunner's description of Christian ethics as "morality beyond rules," dependent only upon the inward guidance of the Spirit, Longenecker cited Dodd and Davies as two men who raised serious exegetical objections to interpreting Paul's thought so one-sidedly.³⁰¹ Referring frequently to both Dodd and Davies in the ensuing discussion,³⁰² he concluded by quoting Dodd that "it is not, then, so clear, after all, that Paul intended to repudiate the understanding of Christianity as a new law."³⁰³ In Paul's thought, the Christian life possessed guidance in both internal and external aspects.

Longenecker's helpful contribution to scholarly discussion of the "law of Christ" lay in his attempt to show Paul's view of the inter-relationship between the internal and external aspects of guidance in the Christian life. He entitled these two aspects "the directing principles of the law of Christ"³⁰⁴ and "the pneumatic guidance of the mind of Christ."³⁰⁵ Regarding the "law of Christ," Longenecker in-

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 187.

³⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 183-184.

³⁰² Ibid., pp. 184-202. Longenecker uses Davies in particular to provide the Jewish background regarding a Messianic law, and Dodd to help show the content of the "law of Christ."

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 190. This quote is from Gospel and Law, p. 66.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

sisted that it stood as "the standard of God for Paul."

Thus the Law of Christ must be understood in the thought of Paul as not only the teaching of Christ but also the example of the person of Christ, both comprising the new Torah.³⁰⁶

This "new Torah" was not, however, represented by Paul as a detailed code, ready to respond to every circumstance. Rather, the "law of Christ," said Longenecker, "partakes of the nature of a principle" which points the way to a solution, but must be applied differently in every situation.³⁰⁷ He concluded,

While on the one hand we must argue that the Law of Christ was for Paul no legalistic code of ethics, on the other we must also insist that he understood its purpose to be more than merely to convey an impression of the atmosphere of the new life. . . . 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.³⁰⁸

The principles of the "law of Christ" would, however, remain "remote" and "unattainable" if the "mind of Christ" was not at work in the believer through the Holy Spirit.³⁰⁹ The role of the Spirit is to help the Christians to "test, determine and prove" (Rom 12:2; I Thess 5:21) the actions

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 194.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 191.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 191-192. Longenecker approvingly quotes C. H. Dodd's statement that the "law of Christ" indicates the quality and direction of action (Gospel and Law, p. 73).

³⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 193-194.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 194.

which they should take.³¹⁰ So, the Christian in his liberty is guided, according to Paul, by both the "law of Christ" and the "mind of Christ," and both of these aspects are conditioned by "love", that is, the love of God to us and our response to it.

It is not without significance that the two elements of the Law of Christ and Spirit-directed testing are joined so closely together in the opening verses of Galatians 6, and that they are both subsumed under the broader heading of "walking by the Spirit." Nor should we fail to notice that the same epistle, I Corinthians, which so stresses the Mind of Christ also contains the reference to being "in-lawed to Christ."³¹¹

3.2 THE DISSERTATIONS OF 1971

After the work of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies, few scholars focused major portions of time and energy on the question of the "law of Christ" alone. As we saw in the previous section, the issue was usually raised only in the context of larger questions (i.e., Paul's theology, the ethics of the early church), and then dealt with in a few pages. In 1971, however, two of the Th.D. Dissertations that were completed in Biblical studies dealt with Paul's use of the expression "law of Christ." Donald Allan Stoike's work

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 195. Lonenecker wrote, "Hence, whereas in the Old Covenant the individual was to 'determine the things which are best being instructed out of the law,' [Rom 2:18] in the New Covenant the Christian is to 'test all things' [I Thess 5:21] and 'determine the things which are best' [Phil 1:10] by reference to the working of the Holy Spirit in his life."

³¹¹ Ibid., p. 195.

narrowed its scope to Gal 6:2 alone, while Kieth Arnold Gerberding analyzed Paul's understanding of the term throughout his letters. These dissertations summarized previous discussion on the term and attempted to come to their own conclusions on the material. Let us examine each of their positions.

3.2.1 Donald Allan Stoike, "The Law of Christ: A Study of Paul's Use of the Expression in Galatians 6:2," Th.D. Dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971.

In 1971, Stoike completed his Doctorate of Theology at the School of Theology at Claremont. Included on his examining committee were Hans Dieter Betz, William H. Brownlee and James M. Robinson.

In the introduction to his dissertation, Stoike justified his work by observing that assumptions about the "law of Christ" were "passed on with little or no new fresh, critical reflections."³¹² A new stage of understanding has been reached about the history of the early Christian church, however, insisted Stoike. This new understanding is particularly significant regarding the role of history in the formulation of the proclamation and theology of that time, he continued. The occurrence of the phrase "law of Christ" in Galatians offers a great chance to apply this new stage of understanding.

³¹² p. iv. All footnotes in this section will refer to Stoike's dissertation unless otherwise indicated.

. . . this study is an investigation of the suspicion that a more adequate solution of the question of "the law of Christ" than has been previously found lies in a more thorough examination of the background of the Epistle to the Galatians than has previously been accomplished.³¹³

Stoike argued that the methodology in previous scholarship on the question of the "law of Christ" had been to view the term "law" as one locus within a dogmatic system. This meant that it immediately was treated as a theological question. Stoike insisted that his methodology, however, was to be a strictly historical one.³¹⁴ In his summary of the various attempts by biblical scholars to understand the phrase, then, he attempted to judge their work according to what extent they had related the "law of Christ" and other statements about the law to the historical circumstances behind the Epistles. Chapter One of the dissertation presented a history of research on the "law of Christ" from this methodological perspective. Here he dealt with scholars such as F. C. Baur, Carl von Weizacker and William Wrede. In Chapter Two, Stoike dealt with several suggested solutions, specifically those of Wilhelm Lütgert, Walter Schmithals and Dieter Georgi, and offered his critique of them. In particular, he focused on the nature and Christology of the Galatian heretics, with special reference to the conclusions of Georgi. Stoike concluded that the heretics in Galatia saw Christ as the definite expression and consummation of the

³¹³ p. vi.

³¹⁴ p. 1.

Law.

In him [Christ] the Law was not simply a particularistic moment in the cosmos inhibiting his rule over the nation; in Christ the law was the means of liberation from the demons and the world powers, not apart from the Law, but precisely "under the Law" just as he was "under the Law" and is now ruling through it.³¹⁵

This, Stoike argued, was the heretics' Christology, from which the phrase "law of Christ" arose. Chapter Three of Stoike's work was devoted to an examination of exegetical considerations,³¹⁶ and Chapter Four dealt with the religious-historical background to Gal 3 and 4. From his analysis of this section, Stoike concluded that the situation which Paul faced in Galatia seemed to include some

sort of legalistic understanding of Christ and of adherence to him together with some sort of veneration of the "elements" and an apparently heavy emphasis on the spiritual status of certain individuals.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ p. 114. So the "law of Christ" is Christ, the cosmic ruler, and his law which brings him into continuity with all the people of God.

³¹⁶ p. 126. Stoike prudently insisted that we must be "cautious" about harmonizing Paul's use of the term nomos in the various epistles. Regarding Paul's use of the traditional saying "love your neighbor as yourself," Stoike asked a question that would have an effect on his conclusions: "...is it legitimate to deduce on the basis of Paul's use of a traditional statement in both Romans and Galatians and his failure to use the expression "the law of Christ" in Romans that that expression or at least its usage in Galatians, is tied to the historical circumstances surrounding the epistle?" (p. 132). Stoike would conclude with an affirmative answer to this question. This stress on the historical background is also the key to Stoike's critique of C. H. Dodd. Dodd's weakness, asserts Stoike, is that he explains Paul's development "more or less apart from the historical background of the individual epistles" (p. 129).

Paul's opponents were advocating dependence upon the Law, even within Christianity. In Chapter Five, where Stoike focused on Gal 5 and 6, he gave a little more insight into the nature of the problem: according to the context of Gal 5:11ff., Paul and his opponents differed over what significance Christ's death had for the Law.³¹⁸ While Paul was accusing his opponents of "eclectic" or "selectic" observance of the Law, they were accusing him of the opposite, that he was only selectively rejecting the Law by still, at some carefully selected times and places, observing it.³¹⁹

The phrase "law of Christ," then, must be seen in its context as part of a sentence (Gal 6:2), and furthermore as a part of both a larger section (Gal 5:13-6:10) and an entire letter. Stoike insisted that the expression was not coined by Paul nor appropriated from Judaism or some other general source,³²⁰ but originated in the debate with the heretics. They seem to have understood the "law of Christ" as being a "law" in a real sense. In fact, Stoike asserted, "it is here also held that Paul has seized this term from the preaching of his opponents."³²¹

³¹⁷ p. 197.

³¹⁸ p. 199.

³¹⁹ p. 201.

³²⁰ p. 238. Obviously, this is addressed to Dodd and Davies, both of whom figure in Stoike's brief summary (and critique) of solutions to the question of the "law of Christ" on p. 241.

³²¹ p. 239. Stoike presents three factors in support of

Paul was not "free" to coin this expression here for any reason, playful or otherwise. Indeed, he probably felt compelled to use it here simply in order to explain it, to reinterpret it, to correct the abuses of the Christian life which were being perpetrated by those who were apparently using this expression, perhaps even using it as one of their slogans.^{3 2 2}

The houtos in Gal 6:2 showed, said Stoike, that Paul was indicating the direction in which he was pushing, directly in contrast to his opponents' lifestyle, theology and self-understanding.^{3 2 3} One fulfils the "law of Christ" not by vaunting it over the less spiritually-endowed (cf. Gal 5:13-26), but by "bearing one another's burdens" (no doubt those of the less spiritually endowed, insisted Stoike). So, Stoike concluded,

Thus it is here being argued from beginning to end that the expression "the law of Christ" must be understood -- indeed, can be adequately understood only -- within the context of the entire epistle, that is, within the context of its historical background.^{3 2 4}

According to Stoike, the evidence suggests that Paul was not formulating some sort of "new" law, but had only picked up the expression in the course of his debate with his oppo-

this hypothesis: a) the phrase is an anomaly in the epistle; b) Paul uses the expression at a point where he seems to be explaining or reinterpreting it within the context of a series of pointed, polemical statements; c) the theology, preaching, and self-understanding of Paul's opponents indicate that the phrase could likely have had a place in it.

^{3 2 2} pp. 247-248.

^{3 2 3} p. 249.

^{3 2 4} p. 249.

nents. In his use of "law of Christ," Stoike argued that Paul was attempting to weaken any of the legalistic implications inherent in the term nomos.

3.2.2 Kieth Arnold Gerberding, "The Pauline Understanding of The Law of Christ," Th.D. Dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1971

This dissertation, done at Concordia Seminary, dealt with the Pauline understanding of the "law of Christ" throughout Paul's Epistles. Gerberding did not provide in any depth an historical-critical analysis of one or both of the passages where the phrase occurs; rather, he approached the subject as a theological question, and used all of Paul's undisputed letters to address questions raised in one or another of them.

Gerberding started the dissertation with a brief discussion of preliminary considerations,³²⁵ where he looked for precedents within rabbinic, Qumran, and Septuagint literature for the phrase "law of the Messiah," "law of faith" (Rom 3:27), and "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom 8:2). The Septuagint, he observed, did not use any of these phrases, but frequently mentioned "the law of the Lord" and the "Law of God."³²⁶ In Rabbinic literature, the phrase "law of the Messiah" was mentioned only once,³²⁷ said Gerberding, and

³²⁵ Gerberding, pp. 1-29. The footnotes in this section will refer to Gerberding's dissertation unless otherwise indicated.

³²⁶ pp. 2-5.

provided "insufficient evidence to suppose that Paul borrowed the phrase from an already established Jewish teaching."³²⁸

In Chapter One, Gerberding also laid out some methodological guidelines for dealing with Paul's confusing use of the term nomos. Paul did not hold a concept of Law that separated it into two sections, commandments and a permanent ethic.

The law is a unit. What makes the question of the role of the law so difficult is that fact that for Paul the whole law is God's good gift.³²⁹

Gerberding insisted that the key to understanding Paul's use of the phrase "law of Christ" and similar statements cannot be found in positing different uses of nomos.

For Paul, nomos is the Mosaic law, the Torah of Judaism. Wherever nomos occurs in Paul's writings, this basic sense should receive first consideration in attempting to interpret the passage at hand.³³⁰

³²⁷ p. 11. Gerberding relied heavily on the out-dated Strack-Billerbeck Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (1926) for this information. Davies' fresh look at the material in Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come is not cited in this section, though it is used in other places.

³²⁸ p. 12.

³²⁹ p. 19. Gerberding continued, "The tension produced by Paul's discussion of the law cannot be reduced by imposing a distinction foreign to his own expression. Paul's reluctance to cite the OT also indicated his concern to show that the age of the law has been replaced by the new age with Christ."

³³⁰ p. 21.

Of course, Paul's statements about "law" must also be seen within their situational and textual contexts, continued Gerberding.

Chapter Two of Gerberding's dissertation, entitled "Is 'The law of Christ' a Reference to Jesus as the New Law-Giver?", was devoted to dealing specifically with the arguments of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies. In summarizing their positions, Gerberding offered basic agreement,³³¹ but emphasized, with Davies,³³² that there is little evidence in Paul that Christ brought a new messianic Torah.

Paul does not purpose to describe Christ as a giver of law. . . . He considers the law only in its relation to Christ, only to clarify how faith responds to God in Christ.³³³

Though it may be true that Paul perceived Christ as the personification of the Torah, this in no way implies that Paul spoke of the "law of Christ" as a new Torah.

Gerberding was unimpressed with Dodd's contention that Rom 8:2 and Gal 5:25a were related because both passages connected pneuma with zoē.³³⁴ He argued in contrast:

But zaō is used with a "consequence" meaning in Rom. 8:12-13, where it is connected with sarx, the pneuma antithesis. The use of zaō and zoē in Romans 6 also indicates that "to live" cannot be so

³³¹ p. 35. Gerberding concluded, "The Messianic Torah was not to replace the Mosaic Torah, but would bring a new interpretation of it. The Messianic Torah would indeed be the old Torah."

³³² p. 36

³³³ p. 38.

³³⁴ Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 140.

neatly separated from "to walk" in the Christian life.³³⁵

Gerberding was also not convinced of the verity of Dodd's argument that "maxims which formed part of the tradition of the sayings of Jesus are treated as if they were in some sort elements of a new Torah".³³⁶ For example, regarding the ethical instructions in I Cor 7, Gerberding challenged Dodd's position.³³⁷

Paul can speak positively of the law in writing to Corinth, but he nullifies his opponents' point of view by refusing to appeal legalistically to an authoritative command. Despite the use of the more colourless term parengellō, I Cor 7:10 seems to be an exception for Paul. That is not his usual procedure.³³⁸

Gerberding observed that a basic tenet of Dodd's understanding of the "law of Christ" was the assumption that Paul considered a collection of the sayings of Jesus to be authoritative tradition.³³⁹ Gerberding insisted that this remains an "undemonstrated assumption."

When Paul calls for obedience to the example of Jesus, the reference is not so much to his earthly existence as to his example of obedience in His preexistence, His becoming incarnate. What Dodd discovers in the writing of Paul as reminiscences of the person and words of the earthly Jesus are too easily identified as Dominical injunctions.³⁴⁰

³³⁵ Gerberding, p. 43.

³³⁶ Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 145.

³³⁷ Ibid., p. 142.

³³⁸ Gerberding, p. 45.

³³⁹ p. 53. This is also a basic tenet of Davies' argument.

³⁴⁰ p. 54.

Certainly Paul may have known some of Jesus' words and sayings, but there is no proof to support Dodd's thesis that these sayings constituted the "law of Christ." Paul did not regard Jesus as the giver of a "new law," reiterated Gerberding. If he had, he would have called for obedience to Jesus' words and quoted them often.³⁴¹ Rather, said Gerberding, the "dominant element" in Paul's thinking was the advent of the new aeon: "Christ as the new root of obedience, not as the giver of fresh law to be obeyed, was central to Paul's concern."³⁴²

Gerberding also gave special significance to Paul's use of ennomos Christou in I Cor 9:21.

That Paul does not call for obedience to the law is paralleled by his description of the Christian as being "in the law of Christ," not "under" the law of Christ, a nuance which Gerhardsson specifically ignores, and which Dodd does not seem to consider worthy of note. Paul's placing ennomos in such close proximity to hupo nomon in I Cor 9:20-21 certainly has the effect of the former cancelling out the latter. That subtle verbal change indicates the manifest change in relationship for the Christian, who is no longer under obedience to the Law, but united with Christ, is now under obligation to Christ as Lord.³⁴³

Gerberding cautions that Dodd's emphasis on Jesus' commands being "in some sort elements of a new Torah" is in danger of cancelling the distinction between, on the one hand, the true Pauline call for obedience to the Lord who brought sal-

³⁴¹ p. 55.

³⁴² p. 55.

³⁴³ p. 57.

vation in God's new creation, and on the other hand, to the law of some "right-teacher" or the "law of the Messiah."³⁴⁴

Chapter Three of Gerberding's dissertation focused on his major point, that the decisive factor in Paul's theology is the idea of a "new aeon." According to Paul, Law is now a past event which has been superseded.³⁴⁵ Christ has become Paul's criterion, though this does not remove the revelatory significance of the Mosaic Law.³⁴⁶ Christ has become the goal of the law (Rom 10:4), asserted Gerberding.

Christ is by no means the end of the law in the sense that God's law, its demand and its fulfillment in works, has ceased. The law, intended to bring life, comes to its realization now in Christ. Christians, therefore, are called to "the law of Christ," to seek its fulfillment in their lives.³⁴⁷

The phrase "law of Christ" is, for Paul, a way of asserting that in Christ we can understand the role of the Mosaic Law, that is, "to produce life and healing for mankind."³⁴⁸ Gerberding concluded,

The will of God revealed for mankind in the Mosaic law has a continuing validity. Even though it is no longer determinative as God's plan of salvation, seen from the viewpoint of redemption in Christ, it can still serve to a great extent as

³⁴⁴ p. 61. Unfortunately, Gerberding's assertions are not backed up with enough exegetical analysis of the texts to prove his points.

³⁴⁵ p. 62.

³⁴⁶ p. 67

³⁴⁷ p. 72.

³⁴⁸ p. 79.

the measure of man's moral response.³⁴⁹

In Chapter Four of his dissertation, Gerberding emphasized the role of the Spirit in actualizing the "law of Christ." For Paul, he insisted, "the Spirit brings the law into proper perspective for men in Christ."³⁵⁰

The law is a criterion for the man in Christ only to the extent that it is appropriated as the law of Christ. The Spirit is for the man in Christ the authority over all things. Through the Spirit "the mind of Christ" becomes operative in the life of the Christian (I Cor. 2: 16).³⁵¹

The "law of Christ," then, implied continuing obligation to the law of God, wrote Gerberding in Chapter Five. While the Mosaic Law and the "law of Christ" differ in form, their demand is basically the same: obedience to God. This is not some "ethical principle," i.e., the "law of love" (cf. Ladd, etc.), though.³⁵²

For Paul, not only the Mosaic law but the entire OT is a valid expression of how God would have His people live. That is what the phrase "the law of Christ," in part, suggests. Yet the final authority for moral responsibility before God is the Spirit of Christ, through whom Christ is present and at work in the hearts of the faithful.³⁵³

Gerberding perceived Paul to understand direct continuity existing between the OT Law and the life of the Chris-

³⁴⁹ p. 83.

³⁵⁰ p. 91.

³⁵¹ p. 118.

³⁵² p. 134.

³⁵³ p. 147.

tian.³⁵⁴ In the new aeon, the Spirit was present in believers to aid them in interpreting and applying the Law.

We have outlined in broad strokes the arguments and positions given in these two dissertations. As we have seen, both have been obligated to address Dodd and Davies on various points. Both have also basically reiterated arguments presented during the 1950's and 1960's (i.e., Stoike echoed Bammel; Gerberding echoed Longenecker). In our next section, where we will analyze work on the "law of Christ" since 1971, we will observe how some of these arguments remain in the forefront, and how a few scholars have brought new and significant insights to the discussion. We will continue to observe, however, that Dodd and Davies have made significant contributions to the discussion. While their names may have been eclipsed by others in Biblical studies, their perceptions of Paul's theology have remained at the basis of the discussion.

3.3 SCHOLARSHIP SINCE 1971 ON THE "LAW OF CHRIST"

The study of Pauline theology has not abated since 1971. Indeed, the debates are just as lively as ever. While one scholar challenges much modern biblical scholarship by declaring that Paul was not such a systematic or even coherent thinker about the law as everyone thought,³⁵⁵ another at-

³⁵⁴ p. 147.

³⁵⁵ Heikki Räisänen, "Paul's Theological Difficulties With the Law," Studia Biblical 1978: III, ed. E. A. Living-

tacks most discussion on Galatians by asserting that the ethical section in Galatians 5:13 to 6:11 is an interpolation.³⁵⁶ With regard to the discussion about the "law of Christ," too, we will observe that new insights are still being discovered. In this section, we will again review scholars' arguments from the perspectives of continuity, mediating positions, and discontinuity of the Law.

3.3.1 Continuity: The OT Law Remains Valid

Gerard Sloyan offers a slightly different approach to the question, "Is Christ the end of the Law?". He insists on a careful examination of the meaning of "law" in the Hebrew scripture and other Jewish writings.³⁵⁷ Sloyan notes the important fact that the covenant was a unilateral act by God, and was present before the Torah. The ten commandments, then, "told a people how to respond to God's love in trust."³⁵⁸

stone, JSNT Supp. Series 3 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), p. 314. He continues, "Indeed, it seems to me that almost any early Christian conception of the law is more consistent, more intelligible and more arguable than Paul's -- whether you take Matthew, or Luke, Hebrews or James, Marcion or Justin."

³⁵⁶ J. C. O'Neill, The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians (London: SPCK, 1972), p. 71. He explains, "The man who added this section did not, of course, make up any of the teaching himself, but merely inserted the corpus traditional in his church; he may well have thought that it derived from Paul."

³⁵⁷ Gerard S. Sloyan, Is Christ the End of the Law? (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), p. 15.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 26. "In the ancient world," adds Sloyan, "law

Whatever problems Paul and other Christians had with the purpose of the law, or human hardship in fulfilling it as it was interpreted in their time, they could not accept the Bible as expressing a revelation and deny that Torah was its core. On any reading of the biblical books, the two were one.³⁵⁹

The major question in Pauline theology, then, says Sloyan, is whether Paul's teaching on the grace of Christ serves to obliterate all guidance provided by Law. Obviously, Paul regards it a sin to rely on the Law for salvation (Gal 3:10). Only in Christ does salvation occur, and to be in him is to be morally renewed.

Thus, the correct contrast in Pauline theology is between the law of sin and the law of grace, says Sloyan.³⁶⁰ Both of these laws can, in fact, flourish either under the Mosaic Law or under the gospel. Sloyan explains that the Law can, indeed, be seen as continuous in Christianity.

The deed of Christ may no longer be praised at the price of deprecating the Mosaic deliverance. The Law and its commandments identify the power of sin but they do more than that. If adhered to in fidelity, they are the Law of the spirit of God. They are the law of Christ in embryo, because the spirit that enlivens both is the same spirit, the spirit of the one God who does not change.³⁶¹

stipulated as much of what we would call love as that world knew. Law assured justice in a milieu where the suffering of the oppressed derived from a lack of justice."

³⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 30.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 101.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

So, there are not two laws of God, Mosaic and Christian, but "the law of sin" which the one "law of God" overcomes. In the Spirit, the Christian is able to find salvation.³⁶² The "law of Christ," then, is simply the law of God, as is the Mosaic Law.

In 1979, Clyde Thomas Rhyne, in his Th.D. dissertation, challenged the assertion made by E. P. Sanders that "in short, this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity."³⁶³ Rhyne is unconvinced that Sanders was totally correct. So, he reopened the discussion about continuity by asking, "Is Christianity in any way continuous with Judaism?"³⁶⁴ and looked specifically at the status of law in Judaism and Christianity to answer his question.

After presenting a history of scholarly opinion on whether Paul perceived the Law as continuous in Christianity or not, Rhyne concludes that the way in which scholars interpret the word nomos seems to influence their conclusions.³⁶⁵ Our translation of nomos as "law" (=Torah) "is at best inad-

³⁶² Ibid., p. 100. Sloyan's major concern throughout his book is to release Christianity from the "parasitic existence of anti-Jewishness" (p. 101). Jack T. Sanders, Ethics in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), has a similar argument, though he calls the law of God "holy law" (pp. 47-48).

³⁶³ E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, p. 552.

³⁶⁴ Clyde Thomas Rhyne, "Faith Establishes the Law. A Study on the Continuity Between Judaism and Christianity, Romans 3:31," Th.D. Dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, 1979, p. 1.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 48. This concern is similar to that of Gerard Sloyan.

equate," he insists, and must be reconsidered. Rhyne argues,

Rather it [Torah] approximated the concept of divine revelation or instruction. This fact should warn us against a too narrow restriction of its meaning. In the final analysis, the meaning of nomos [as a translation of "Torah"] must be determined by its use in each individual context.³⁶⁶

Rhyne's method for showing whether Paul considered the Law continuous or not consists of a thorough examination of Rom 3:21-4:25 and Rom 9:30-10:21. In particular, Rhyne focuses on Rom 3:31 as a crux interpretum ("Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.") He considers the question in 3:31 to be in a significant place in the letter, coming right after Paul's climactic teaching on justification by faith for Jew and Gentile (3:21-30). The question and Paul's reply are puzzling for the reader who is accustomed to perceiving the Law as overthrown. Rhyne, then, analyzes in particular Paul's use of the phrase me genoito to see whether it is used to conclude discussion, anticipate some topic to be introduced much later, or introduce a subject for immediate discussion.³⁶⁷ He concludes that the phrase does not serve to answer a question totally, but is always followed with additional clarification or grounding. Thus, Rom 3:31 is connected with the content of Rom 4 but also intimately re-

³⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 127-128.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 69-70. Rhyne analyzes Epictetus' use of the phrase and then looks at the Pauline usage of me genoito.

lated to the preceding argument (Rom 3: 21-30).³⁶⁸

Accordingly, Rom. 4 can be seen as Paul's attempt to overthrow the false inference that faith abolishes the law (3:31a) but especially to expand his counter-assertion that faith actually establishes the law (3:31c). For this purpose he turns to the law itself, the principal authority in Judaism, and to its witness concerning Abraham.³⁶⁹

Rhyme concludes that Rom 4 intends to show that the Law, when falsely conceived as a way to salvation through works, is discontinuous with faith (so also Rom 3:20-21a, 27-28). In this perspective, Judaism is confronted by Paul as not continuous with Christianity (Rom 9:32; 10:15). However, when the Law is rightly understood as the means to righteousness by faith, the Law is continuous with faith (so also 3: 21b-22, 27e, 31). From this point of view, Judaism is not discontinuous with Christianity.³⁷⁰

In light of the positive relationship which Paul indicates between righteousness by faith in Christ and the Law (Rom 3:21-4:25), Rhyme says it is "preferable" to interpret telos in Rom 10:4 as goal.³⁷¹ So, Rhyme concludes his dis-

³⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 122.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 151. Rhyme clarifies, "Beginning with a rhetorical question (4:1), Paul moves to the case of Abraham to explain from the law itself that faith has always been the basis of justification (4:2-3)" (p. 188).

³⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 191. Rhyme continues, "Thus, with regard to the apostle's assertions that faith upholds the law (Rom 3:31c), we conclude that it is the law in its role as witness that is established in the apostolic preaching of justification by faith as Rom 4 illustrates" (emphasis his).

³⁷¹ Ibid., p. 212.

sertation with this observation:

. . . to understand Paul's theology properly, one must recognize, as our exegesis of Rom 9:30-10:21 demonstrates and as Rom 3:21-4:25 confirm, that the object of Christ's work was to provide the righteousness which the law both promised (9:31) and attested (3:21). If Christ's work had had any other outcome, it would have meant a break in the continuity of God's plan of salvation as it is revealed in the law.³⁷²

Unfortunately, Rhyne does not address the question of Paul's use of the phrase "law of Christ." His work does, however, bring a new perspective and argument to the question of the continuity of the Law, and will have some implications for our exegetical analysis in Chapter Four of this thesis.

3.3.2 Mediating Positions: The OT Law is Radicalized

One of the most helpful recent discussions of the role of Law in Pauline Christianity is that of James A. Sanders. Sanders clarifies the meaning of Torah as it was perceived in Judaism. From the canonical perspective, he says, Torah balances the intermingling of story and law (or muthos and ethos, haggadah and halakah).³⁷³ These two aspects belong together and must be seen together. While Rabbinic Judaism stressed the ethos or halakah aspect of Judaism, Christianity emphasized the muthos or haggadah aspect.

³⁷² Ibid., p. 243 (emphasis his).

³⁷³ James A. Sanders, "Torah and Christ," Interpretation 29 (1975), p. 372. Basically, the word Torah means "instruction," and is derived from the Semitic root which means to cast or throw. Torah also has the meaning "revelation" (p. 380).

Neither, however, emphasized one to the exclusion of the other: the Torah was for both a mixture of gospel and law.³⁷⁴

While most Biblical scholars are willing to acknowledge the story and law aspects in the Torah, they give greater weight to the latter when word nomos appears in the NT, especially when reading Paul. This, says Sanders, is a far too narrow interpretation of nomos. He insists that

nomos in the hellenistic age had at least the full range of meaning which Torah had, perhaps more.³⁷⁵

Paul himself used the word nomos in several different senses and Sanders lists these:³⁷⁶ 1) OT Law without distinguishing between the legal and non-legal parts of the Pentateuch; 2) the OT as a whole; 3) the general sense of "norm" or "principle"; 4) the sense of constraint or necessity; 5) the "law of Christ"; and 6) in the sense of Judaism itself (over against "in Christ" as the identity for Christians). Sanders explains Paul's teaching on the Law, then, as follows:

For Paul, the specific points of the law if overstressed or if absolutized were the surest way to overlook the Torah story itself, that is, God's righteousness. So Paul makes a big distinction between concentration on the sort of righteousness of which humankind is capable and the

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 374. "Torah is first and foremost a story about the mighty acts of God in creating a covenant people for himself; it is then, and immediately thereupon, a paradigm for understanding how Israel should live from age to age in varying circumstances and in differing contexts" (p. 381).

³⁷⁵ James A. Sanders, "Torah and Paul," God's Christ and His People, ed. Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks (Oslo, Bergen, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), p. 136.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 137.

righteousness of God which is the heart of the Torah story. This is precisely what he is saying elsewhere in Romans and Galatians, and when he appears to be anti-legalistic.³⁷⁷

For Paul, Christ was the Torah incarnate, the new identity symbol which availed God's work of redemption and election to all who would believe. Christ brought the messianic era, which succeeded the Torah-era, but he did not eradicate or annul the Torah. "Torah," says Sanders, "was caught up in Christ in a new age."³⁷⁸

For Judaism, Torah became the living Talmud; for Christianity, Torah became the living Christ (Rom 10:4). But Torah can finally never be lost or absorbed in the one or the other. . . . Torah, in that basic sense, is reaffirmed wherever the canon (of whatever extent) is read and contemporized. And Torah, in that basic sense, is the single foundation of both church and synagogue, two denominations in one Israel of God (Gal 6:15).³⁷⁹

Sanders' explication of Paul's understanding of Law in Christianity is helpful for perceiving how the phrase "law of Christ" could fit into his vocabulary. We will address this question further in the next chapter.

Herman Ridderbos bases his argument not so much on a particular understanding of Torah and Law, but on the perception that Paul radicalizes the Law. While Judaism, he asserts, knew no other way of salvation than that of Law,³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ Sanders, "Torah and Christ," p. 385.

³⁷⁸ Sanders, "Torah and Paul," p. 137.

³⁷⁹ Sanders, Torah and Canon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 121.

³⁸⁰ Herman Ridderbos, Paul. An Outline of His Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), p. 133.

Paul's major contribution is the explication of the absolute inadequacy of the Law as a means to salvation.³⁸¹ Paul radicalizes the Law both quantitatively (he shows that every sin makes a person guilty of the whole law) and qualitatively (Paul locates the criterion for the true fulfillment of the law in conversion to God and possession of the Spirit rather than in conformity to the letter of the law).³⁸² When one considers the motifs within Paul's pronouncements on the Law and in the OT revelation of God, Ridderbos insists that there is not a contradiction to be found, but a profound harmony:

one will as well be able to understand that Paul knows himself to be altogether consistent with the law and the prophets when, in his antithesis with Judaism, he now comes to his great positive formulation of the gospel: that of the revelation of the righteousness of God by faith without the words of the law (Rom 1:17, 3:21).³⁸³

Paul does not, however, deny the necessity of obedience. In fact, says Ridderbos, Paul often refers back to the Law, especially in his defining of the content of the new obedience.³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ Ibid., p. 135.

³⁸² Ibid., p. 136. Ridderbos asserts that Paul's "foundational insight" lies in his radically deepened concept of sin (p. 143).

³⁸³ Ibid., p. 158.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 279. Paul does this, for example, in Rom 8:3-4, 13:8-10; I Cor 7:19, 9:21; Gal 5:14, 6:2.

For Paul, the Law, the Spirit, Christ, and love constitute a unity. Love or the Spirit or Christ cannot be substituted for the Law in Paul. Indeed, says Ridderbos, it is "absolutely impossible" to deny the double significance of the Law, both as a pedagogue to Christ and as a rule for new life.³⁸⁵ Further, love does not function as a new norm, but as the summary of the Law (Rom 13:9). And finally, the Spirit is not simply a power that subdues the power of the flesh: the expression "to walk according to the Spirit" (Gal 5:25) speaks of a standard.³⁸⁶

I Cor 9:21, observes Ridderbos, contains three elements which clearly express the relationship between Christ and the Law in its continuing significance. First, the Law no longer has unrestricted validity for the church, so in a sense the church can be qualified as "without the law." Second, the law of God is not thereby abrogated, though, because, third, the continuing significance of the Law can be expressed as ennomos Christou (being bound to the law of Christ).³⁸⁷ Christ, asserts Ridderbos, "suo modo represents the law of God and thus the law of Moses."³⁸⁸

Not only does Christ by his Spirit bring about a new bond to the law in the hearts of believers, whereby the law retains its force as the expression of the will of God in the New Covenant (Jer.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 281-282.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 282.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 284.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 285.

31:33; cf. 2 Cor 3:3), but Christ also represents the new standard of judgment as to what "has had its day" in the law and what has abiding validity (Col. 2: 17).³⁸⁹

So, the Law has not been abrogated by Christ, but has been maintained and interpreted in its radical sense. Indeed, Christ, the Law, the Spirit and love constitute a unity for Paul (Gal 6:15,16, 5:6; I Cor 7: 19).³⁹⁰

Leander Keck and Brian Wintle also regard Paul as perceiving the Law in unity with Christ, the Spirit and love. Keck observes that for Paul there is no such thing as a person wholly free from obligation.

Paul implies that obligation is built into humanness, for obligation is the correlate of sovereignty. Accordingly, trust/faith does not abrogate obligation categorically, nor emancipate one from obligatory norms absolutely. Rather, trust/faith in God, and the attendant life in Christ and in the Spirit, transfers the self to another domain, where Christ is the norm because he is the Lord.³⁹¹

The "law of Christ," then, does not imply a substitution of Christ for Moses, but implies that trust and faith already exist and are actualized daily.³⁹² The Spirit provides the moral energy in the new age and enables the believer to fulfill the "just requirement of the law."

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 286. Robert Banks indicates a similar position in a footnote regarding Paul in Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 246.

³⁹¹ Leander E. Keck, Paul and His Letters (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 89.

³⁹² Ibid., pp. 89-90.

Brian Wintle asserts that Paul's perception of the "law of Christ" indicates the responsibilities and obligations of Christian as members of the body of Christ.³⁹³ These responsibilities and obligations are realized when believers stand under the lordship of Christ (through the Spirit) and live out their existence in loving concern for their fellow believers.

In the final analysis, one must conclude that Paul's reference to the believer as being 'ennomos Christou' can be understood only in the context of a wider truth: the believer has become a part of God's saving purpose to create in Christ a new humanity.³⁹⁴

In a recent article developing a theology of Law in the NT, John E. Toews asserts that "the concern for law in the New Testament is a function of three theological realities."³⁹⁵ First, Law is anchored in Christology.³⁹⁶ Second, the Law is related to ecclesiology.³⁹⁷ Third, the law is

³⁹³ Brian Wintle, "Paul's Conception of the Law of Christ and Its Relation to the Law of Moses," Reformed Theological Review 32 (1979), p. 49.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

³⁹⁵ John E. Toews, "Some Theses Toward a Theology of Law in the New Testament," The Bible and Law. Occasional Papers no. 3, ed. Willard Swartley (Elkhart, IN.: Council of Mennonite Seminaries, Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1982), p. 59.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., "Christ fulfills, validates and renews the Torah of God. He replaces only the law of the cult. . . . Christology radicalizes and expands the Torah by the new teachings of Jesus and the apostles."

³⁹⁷ Ibid., "The question of the law involves the identity of the church as a universal community of Jews and Gentiles. Jewish Christians continue to observe the Jewish Torah as Christians. Gentile Christians observe the

linked to ethics.³⁹⁸

Ethics is Torah ethics, the ethics of story and stipulation, instruction and law, salvation and discipleship.³⁹⁹

If one could be fully immersed in the Jewish literature contemporary to the writers of the NT, one would find, says Toews, a positive view of the Law which would challenge the current interpretive paradigm (that "late Judaism" is legalistic and antithetical to Christianity).⁴⁰⁰

Toews observes that in the law theologizing of Paul, it is the Jew/Gentile agenda that dominates, not the negative disparagement of the significance of the Torah for Israel. Paul's central concern was to assert that God's righteousness through Jesus' faithfulness effected salvation for the Gentiles, and that this salvation was a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Toews concludes,

The concern for law in Paul is a function of Christology -- Christ brings the law to fulfillment -- of ecclesiology -- Jews and Gentiles in the church relate to the law differently, but the church is one -- of ethics -- Christians do the law as an expression of faith and in the power of the Spirit active in the church.⁴⁰¹

ethical law, the law of love, as an expression of faith."

³⁹⁸ Ibid. Toews concludes, "Christians are exhorted to do the law of Moses, Jesus and Paul in the Spirit and in the church as an expression of faith."

³⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 45-48.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., p. 51.

The Law is by no means abrogated, but is given new depth of meaning.

Finally, Ragnar Bring also brings his perspective to bear on the question of Law in Christianity according to Paul. He insists that the distinctions between natural and ethical law, ceremonial and moral law, and religious and civil law are foreign to Paul's whole way of thinking. He warns that for Paul, the word "law" has other associations (for example, Torah includes the meaning of "revelation").⁴⁰²

One must be very careful not to interpret Paul as if his polemic against righteousness by the law involved a rejection of the law given by Moses or of the idea of a revelation from God in the OT.⁴⁰³

Bring interprets Paul to be saying that God did not send his son to give a new, better Law in place of the old, but to complete the Law's task of condemnation. This task had not been made clear enough previously, and thus the Law was used wrongly to gain legal righteousness. With Christ's coming, however, the Law attained its goal and revealed its radical content. The passage in II Cor 3 was not meant by Paul, said Bring, to insist that the Mosaic Law was abolished or made obsolete by Christ; the revelation of God could never be surpassed, but through Jesus' coming, God cast a new light over everything that he done before.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² Ragnar Bring, "Paul and the Old Testament. A Study of the ideas of Election, Faith and Law in Paul, with special reference to Romans 9:3-10:30 [sic]," Studia Theologica 25 (1971), p. 22.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p. 27.

Bring asserts that any talk of Paul preaching a "gospel without law" is dangerous. The gospel is not a liberation from the Law but a fulfillment of it. The only way, Bring adds, that a Christian can rightly employ or interpret the Law is through the Spirit of Christ, by being "in Christ."⁴⁰⁵ Bring summarizes the Pauline teaching on law as follows:

Since the contrast between faith and law can so easily be misinterpreted (for Paul, as has been said, faith is the fulfillment of what the law witnesses to), it should be stated again that the true contrast lies between, on the one hand, the righteousness of God, faith, election and law, and on the other, faithlessness and law-righteousness, the kind that is gained by oneself. The law, which is perfected by faith, is the opposite of law-righteousness or "law-mindedness."⁴⁰⁶

While many of the scholars who represent the mediating position regarding the continuity of the Law do not include the "law of Christ" in their discussion, their insights on the meaning of "law" for Paul will provide helpful background information for the exegesis in Chapter IV. We may also observe that Dodd's and Davies' arguments with regard to the Messianic Torah or a Jesus-tradition have not been addressed by these scholars. Perhaps in their neglect of Dodd and Davies, they have missed an important aspect of the Pauline thought on "law."

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 57.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

3.3.3 Discontinuity: The OT Law Has Ended

3.3.3.1 The Law of Love

During the 1970's, F. F. Bruce wrote several articles and books about Paul and the Law. He recognizes that within Paul's thought, there was a great deal of tension (i.e., between revelation and tradition, justification and judgment, Paul and Jerusalem),⁴⁰⁷ which characterized, for example, the relationship between Jewish Law and Christian guidelines. At his conversion experience, Paul was "persuaded in a flash of the inadequacy of the law,"⁴⁰⁸ says Bruce.

But how? He could find no fault with the law in itself: it was God's law, holy and righteous and good. The fault must lie, then, with the fallible human material on which the law had to operate. . . Unless a new way to be justified before God was available, the human condition was hopeless indeed.⁴⁰⁹

To understand truly Paul's attitude to the Law is "notoriously difficult," adds Bruce.⁴¹⁰ Clearly, however, Paul taught and believed that in its major sense, the Law had been abrogated by Christ (Bruce translates Rom 10:4, "Christ

⁴⁰⁷ F. F. Bruce, "'All Things to All Men': Diversity in Unity and Other Pauline Tensions," Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology, ed. Robert Guelich (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 82-99.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 87.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ F. F. Bruce, "Paul and the Law of Moses," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester 57 (1975), p. 260.

is the end of the law").⁴¹¹ The age of the Law was simply a small part of God's dealings with humankind (Rom 5:20a) and had been superseded by the new age in Christ. The Law which consisted of an external code with penal sanctions could never bring justification before God. So, when Paul used the term nomos with respect to guidance for the church, as in "law of Christ" or "law of the Spirit," Bruce insists that Paul is using the term in non-legal sense.⁴¹² The believer is not under the Law in the sense of a rule of life; the believer is, though, under the "law of love" which is fulfilled by the work of the Spirit, not by obedience to a code. Bruce continues, "If the law of the Spirit is the law of love, then it is identical with what Paul elsewhere calls 'the law of Christ'."⁴¹³ It may well have been that Paul was familiar with Hallel's summary of the Law in the injunction, "Do not to another what is hateful to yourself." But, Bruce asserts that when Paul speaks,

of the bearing of one another's burdens as the fulfillment of "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2), it is a reasonable inference that he knew of the way in which Christ had applied the law of Leviticus 19:18 ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself"). Moreover, the injunction "bear one another's burdens" seems to be a generalising expansion of Galatians 6:1. . . . This is strangely reminiscent of a dominical injunction found in Matthew only [18:15].⁴¹⁴

⁴¹¹ Ibid., p. 265.

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 265.

⁴¹³ Ibid., p. 277.

⁴¹⁴ F. F. Bruce, Paul and Jesus (London: SPCK, 1977), p.

Bruce also finds further features of the "law of Christ" in Rom 12:9-21 which encourages deep and practical love towards those within and outside the believing community.

For Paul, says Bruce, the Mosaic Law gave way to a new tradition stemming from Jesus (i.e., I Cor 11:23).⁴¹⁵ This tradition consisted of three major elements: the most important was the basic Christian message, which placed special emphasis on Jesus' death and resurrection. The Jesus-tradition also consisted of words and deeds of Jesus; and finally, it included ethical and procedural rules.⁴¹⁶ Paul was thoroughly imbued with the teachings of Jesus, says Bruce, and exhorted his readers to imitate the example Christ gave.

While Paul did not know the written Gospels as we have them, he knew the qualities which the Evangelists ascribe to Jesus, and commends these qualities, one by one or comprehensively, as an example to his Christian friends.⁴¹⁷

73.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., p. 38.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. In his article, "Paul and the Historical Jesus," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester 56 (1974), p. 318, Bruce writes, "Even where he [Paul] does not quote actual sayings of Jesus, he shows himself well acquainted with the substance of many of them. We have only to compare the ethical section of the Epistle to the Romans (xii. 1-xv. 7), where Paul sets out the practical implications of the gospel in the lives of believers, with the Sermon on the Mount, to see how thoroughly imbued the apostle was with his Master's teaching." This argument is complementary to that of Dodd and Davies regarding Paul's use of a Jesus-tradition.

⁴¹⁷ Bruce, Paul and Jesus, p. 76.

The role of the Spirit, given minor significance by many of the previous scholars, holds a position of greater importance in scholarship that stresses the discontinuity of the Law. Peter Richardson puts it forcefully when he writes,

Paul's understanding of what a Christian is encouraged him to adopt a view that Spirit, not law, directs the Christian life. This was such a fundamental point for Paul that he must have found it difficult to "lay down the law" when faced with differences of opinion.⁴¹⁸

The Law plays no role in proper Christian behavior, says Richardson. Paul's advice, encouragement, and commands were simply given to help Christians become more mature in faith.⁴¹⁹ The Spirit, however, is the motivating force for all Christian life.

H. H. Esser, in his article on "law" in the New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, also summarizes the role of the Spirit succinctly.

The commandment to love, which can be fulfilled in the Spirit, can now be called the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2; cf. I Cor. 9:21: to be ennomos of Christ, to be under the law of Christ). It is the Torah of the Lord, which he himself has lived out. Now, on raising men to spiritual life, he can require of them its fulfilment.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Peter Richardson, Paul's Ethic of Freedom (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), p. 79. Richardson's thesis is that Paul played down obedience to the Torah and emphasized freedom; no one, however, followed Paul in this emphasis (p. 13).

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

⁴²⁰ H. H. Esser, "Law," The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. Colin Brown (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1976), p. 446.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer expands the role of the Holy Spirit. He observes that Paul's main discussion of the Law is found in polemical contexts. It would, therefore, be a mistake to think of his teaching on the Law as occupying the centre of Paul's theology. Rather, the centre of his theology can be found in his idea of the "new creation" which is brought about in Christ and through the Spirit.⁴²¹ Instead of the Mosaic Law, there is the "law of Christ" which, when it is scrutinized, is seen to be the "law of love," and is attached to the "law of the Spirit."

Christ has not simply substituted for the Law of Moses another legal code. The "law of the Spirit" may be a reflection of Jer 31:33, but it is more than likely that Paul has coined the phrase to describe the Spirit's activity in terms of nomos about which he has just been speaking [cf. Rom 8].⁴²²

The Spirit brings the vitality through which love characterizes the Christian's ethical behavior. The "law of the Spirit" is, says Fitzmyer, a principle or figurative law. Paul's catalogue of vices and virtues, then, are all to be seen as subsumed by love: in this sense, he speaks of a "law of Christ."⁴²³

⁴²¹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Paul and the Law," A Companion to Paul, ed. Michael J. Taylor (New York: Alba House, 1975), p. 73. This "new creation" is a new phase in salvation history.

⁴²² Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology," Jerome Biblical Commentary, Vol.2 (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 826.

⁴²³ Fitzmyer, "Paul and the Law," pp. 84-85.

In summary, then, Paul's teaching is a reaction to the Mosaic law, on the one hand abolished by Christ Jesus who has now enabled man through his own Spirit to transcend the earthbound condition of sarx, and on the other hand summed up and fulfilled in the dynamic principle of love.⁴²⁴

Paul's precepts, then, are not to be seen as a code or norm to be interpreted casuistically, but as examples of Christian love responding in a community of faith.

Finally, J. Christiaan Beker also perceives the Spirit as the power behind the moral life.⁴²⁵ Paul's ethic, Beker asserts, is characterized by the interaction of coherence and contingency. Paul operates with both an ethic of theological principle and with a situation ethic; both of these are employed in a contingent manner within the ethically serious life in the Spirit.⁴²⁶ Regarding the "law of Christ" in this ethical process, Beker writes,

Nevertheless, because Christ is the fulfillment of the law (cf. Rom 8:4), and "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:10; cf. Gal 5:14), works are now defined with a new focus. "The law of Christ" (Gal 6:2; cf. I Cor 9:21) is indeed the law of love that makes the Christians' work transparent to God's redemptive purpose.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ Ibid., p. 87.

⁴²⁵ J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 289. Beker writes, "The Spirit in the mortal body expresses the ethical task of believers, so that they must manifest the victory of the Spirit in the world."

⁴²⁶ Ibid., p. 312.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., p. 247.

Hans Dieter Betz, in his work on Galatians, believes that Paul's use of the phrase "law of Christ" is bound up with the historical context. Though the use of the phrase is strange because it seems to advocate what Paul has repeatedly rejected in the letter, Betz outlines a number of reasons that make it look probable that Paul took the notion from his opponents:⁴²⁸ first, the phrase appears only once in Galatians, indeed, only once in Paul; second, the notion "law of Christ" played a larger role in other non-Pauline Christian traditions; third, it was highly likely that the opponents in Galatia connected Torah-obedience with obedience to Christ; and finally, Paul is forced to defend himself against the accusation of "lawlessness".

If the hypothesis holds true, Paul would have taken a key concept [i.e., 'law of Christ'] from the theology of the opponents in order to make it fit his theology. . . . Paul, to be sure, gave the notion a completely different interpretation: since the love command is the fulfillment of the whole Torah (Gal 5:14), he who loves fulfills the Torah; and since such love is Christ's love (Gal 2:20), that Torah can be called "Christ's Torah."⁴²⁹

Further, insists Betz, the idea of "law of Christ" cannot be fundamental to Paul's theology; if it had been, Paul would have introduced it at the beginning of his letter, and would have used the concept more in his other writings.⁴³⁰ So,

⁴²⁸ Hans Dieter Betz, Galatians (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 300.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., pp. 300-301.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., p. 301. Unfortunately, Betz does not address Dodd and Davies at all in this commentary. He seems to

Paul perceived the OT Law as discontinuous with Christianity, and used the phrase "law of Christ" simply as a device in his debate with his opponents in Galatia. This argument is similar to that of Stoike, who was a student of Betz.

3.3.3.2 A New Standard

In 1977, E. P. Sanders published his book, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, which challenged much previous scholarship on Paul. Sanders referred to the book as his answer and challenge to the positions of Rudolf Bultmann and his school, Albert Schweitzer, and W. D. Davies.⁴³¹ Sanders characterizes Paul's attitude to the Law as being quite different from that of rabbinic Judaism. In rabbinic Judaism, "doing the law" is set in the context of gratuity; the requirement to obey the law comes as a consequence of election.⁴³² When Paul, however, says that "man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ" (Gal 2:16), he is in fact placing works of the Law into a different role than they actually occupied in rabbinic Judaism.

align himself with the argument of Bammel.

⁴³¹ E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (London: SCM, 1977), p. xiii.

⁴³² E. P. Sanders, "On the Question of Fulfilling the Law in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism," Donum Gentilicum, ed. E. Bammel, C. K. Barrett, and W. D. Davies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 123.

Paul's opposing faith to works as the gateway to salvation has misled Christians ever since. The reason Paul is so adamantly opposed to the Galatians' accepting the Mosaic legislation is that doing so would deny the unique efficacy of Christ for salvation (Gal 2:21; 5:2). The real point of opposition, in other words, is election.⁴³³

So, according to Sanders, Paul sees the Jewish Law as a false path to salvation rather than as a required consequence of the saving election.

In Romans 1-4, Paul's explication of faith is primarily an argument against salvation by the Law. In fact, no particular positive definition of faith emerges in the discussion. Sanders notes,

Faith represents man's entire response to the salvation offered in Jesus Christ, apart from the law and the argument for faith is really an argument against the law.⁴³⁴

So, too, in Galatians 2:16, the term "faith" is played off against "works of the law." Yet, observes Sanders, there is a "new standard" to be followed. Paul sometimes insists on certain kinds of actions that not only flow out of the person who is "in Christ" or "in the Spirit," but are required.⁴³⁵ So Paul is, in fact, maintaining the traditional

⁴³³ Ibid., p. 124.

⁴³⁴ Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, p. 491 (emphasis his). Later, Sanders says that Paul is saying, "What is wrong with following the law is not the effort itself, but the fact that the observer of the law is not seeking righteousness which is given by God through the coming of Christ (Rom 10:2-4)" (p. 482).

⁴³⁵ Sanders, "On the Question...", p. 124. As examples, Sanders cites Gal 5:16-21, Rom 8:3ff, Gal 5:14, Rom 13:8-10, Gal 6:2, Rom 8:2, I Cor 9:21.

Jewish pattern of election followed by obligation. Paul denies, however, the decisiveness of the theophany on Mount Sinai, and he redefines election.

This leads to a fundamental redefinition of what the law is which must be fulfilled as a consequence of election. It is no longer the Mosaic legislation as such (the doing of which is a denial of grace) but the "law of Christ" which those follow who walk "according to the Spirit", the individual elements of which Paul works out only as need arises, although frequently in agreement with Judaism.⁴³⁶

Thus, while Paul emphatically denies the efficacy of the Law for gaining righteousness, he is willing to maintain that the "law of Christ" consists of the moral aspects of the Jewish law⁴³⁷ (e.g., Gal 5:14; Rom 13: 8-10) and provides some kind of standard for ethical activity.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Since 1971, E. P. Sanders has been a lonely voice in representing the thinking that Paul perceived some kind of a "new standard" in Christian ethical behavior. Does this mean that Dodd's and Davies' arguments have been refuted? As we have discovered in this chapter, the arguments of Dodd and Davies have seldom been systematically addressed since 1971.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., p. 125.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

We have seen in this chapter, however, that the discussion of the "law of Christ" continues to be spirited and controversial. It has become clear that the issue of the meaning of "law of Christ" must be analyzed in the context of Paul's understanding of the role of the OT Law in Christianity. The three positions, discontinuity, mediating and continuity, have been well-represented in Pauline scholarship since 1950. Major features of the discussion have included questions about the role of the Holy Spirit, the role of love as a commandment, the meaning of "law" in Jewish thought, the possibility of "legalism", and the polemical context of Paul's writings.

In the next chapter, we hope to be able to look anew at Dodd's and Davies' arguments by undertaking a fresh exegetical analysis of the passages that refer to the "law of Christ." In order to do this, several exegetical considerations will be outlined. It is hoped that in the process of the exegesis, we will be able to view Dodd's and Davies' arguments in the light of the three decades of subsequent research and writing. Then we will be able to assess independently the impact and verity of their positions.

Chapter IV

THE "LAW OF CHRIST" IN PAUL'S THOUGHT

In Chapter III, we summarized the representative scholarly positions in literature written since 1950 regarding the "law of Christ." In this discussion we noted some distinctive positions in connection with the place of "law" in Paul.

First, a small minority of scholars (e.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, J. Murray, G. Sloyan, C. T. Rhyne) perceived Paul to be saying that Christians are bound to the Old Testament Torah/Law. Second, several scholars (e.g., C. F. D. Moule, G. E. Ladd, C. K. Barrett, J. Bandstra, J. A. Sanders, H. Ridderbos, J. E. Toews) interpreted Paul as insisting that the Christian is bound to a radicalized OT Law. Many other scholars believed, thirdly, that Paul was arguing that Christians are in no way bound to the OT Law. This school of thought, however, had two sub-groups: some scholars (e.g., J. Murphy-O'Connor, H. Conzelmann, V. P. Furnish, F. F. Bruce, H. D. Betz, J. C. Beker) perceived that Paul viewed Christians as entirely free from Law and only obligated to carry out the principle of love through the Holy Spirit; other scholars (e.g., L. Goppelt, L. Cerfaux, H. Riesenfeld, B. Gerhardsson, R. Longenecker, E. P. Sanders),

however, understood Paul to be negating the OT Law, but then providing a new standard of responsibility, based on a tradition of the teaching and actions of Jesus. As we saw in Chapter II, Dodd and Davies must be placed somewhere between the positions of radicalization of the Law and the existence of a new standard.

In this chapter, then, we intend to undertake a fresh exegetical analysis of the Pauline texts to understand Paul's phrase "law of Christ." We must, of course, place the phrase into its historical context in Paul's letters. We will further attempt to discover independently whether Paul taught fixed ethical obligations. If we find that this is true, we will explore Paul's conception of the phrase "law of Christ" to see if the phrase can be identified with an ethical standard. The role of the Spirit in ethical activity will be explored in this connection, and the place of the love commandment will be discussed.

Before this exegetical analysis is undertaken, however, we must deal with several exegetical considerations in light of the scholarship outlined in Chapters II and III.

4.1 EXEGETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Chapters II and III have clearly shown that a wide variety of opinion continues to exist on the role of the "law of Christ" in Paul's theology. The exegesis in the second part of this chapter will outline a possible approach to the is-

sue. Chapter V will then provide a comparison of the results of this chapter with those in Chapters II and III, and will outline some of the implications of this study.

First, however, it is important to provide a transitional section in which we may consider the opinions expressed in recent scholarship in light of the task set for our exegesis. This section will be concerned with three exegetical considerations:

1. In light of the scholarship outlined in Chapters II and III, what factors or concepts can be validly presupposed in our discussion of Paul's concept of "law of Christ"?

2. What ideas or positions are we able to dismiss without resorting to detailed exegesis?

3. What are the major exegetical questions that must be asked of the scriptural texts?

4.1.1 Bases for Exegetical Analysis

There are several ideas and factors which we will use as a basis for our exegesis of Pauline texts related to the concept "law of Christ." One important observation is that Paul's attitude towards the Law must be seen within a complex of factors. Joel Rustad writes, "The problem of the Law for Paul is not solved by one single formula."⁴³⁸ So, to

⁴³⁸ Joel Olaf Rustad, "Matthew's Attitude Toward the Law in Matt. 19: 16-22," Th. D. Thesis, Concordia Seminary in Exile, St. Louis, 1976, p. 124 (emphasis mine). Rustad identifies a "double attitude" towards the Law in Paul

assert categorically that Paul abhors the Law and considers it abolished (i.e., Knox, Goppelt, Bruce) serves to weaken statements in which he writes positively about the Law and its role. Ragnar Brings observes,

One must be very careful not to interpret Paul as if his polemic against righteousness by the law involved a rejection of the law given by Moses or of the idea of a revelation from God in the OT.⁴³⁹

Paul's theologizing about the Law is based on his concern to show that one cannot attain salvation by adhering to a "regime" of OT Law. Only through Jesus Christ is salvation now made available.

For Paul, one aspect of the "complex of factors" was the question of the role of the Gentiles in Christianity. Consequently, Paul's most energetic polemic about the Law occurs mainly within the context of his discussion of the mission to the Gentiles. Of his 84 uses of the term "law," 72 occur in Romans and Galatians⁴⁴⁰ where the Jew/Gentile ques-

(p. 126).

⁴³⁹ Ragnar Bring, "Paul and the OT...", p. 27.

⁴⁴⁰ John E. Toews, "Some Theses...", p. 50. Toews summarizes, "Paul's central concern is not a negative disparagement of the significance of the Torah for Israel, but the assertion that the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus effects salvation for the Gentiles in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham." See also James A. Sanders, "Torah and Christ," pp. 379-82, regarding Rom 9-11 and Clyde Thomas Rhyne, "Faith Establishes the Law," pp. 53, 151, regarding Rom 3:21-4:25. Both of these passages are primarily concerned with the Jew-Gentile issue. Krister Stendahl, Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), likewise emphasizes the decisive importance of the Jew-Gentile relationship as the crucial context in which Paul's ideas regarding the Law and justification by

tion is uppermost in his thoughts. His concern is to show the Gentiles that righteousness is not attained by following a strict set of rules (something which they may have considered attractive or achievable), but through faith in Christ. So, we concur with Toews and Gerhardsson who both assert that Paul's concern about the Law was related to three theological areas: Christology, ecclesiology, and ethics.⁴⁴¹ Christ serves to bring the Law to fulfillment; the church, made up of both Jews and Gentiles who relate to the Law in different ways, nevertheless remains a unity; and finally, in their ethical activity Christians "do the Law" as an expression of their faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit. These ideas will be expanded in subsequent analysis, but they serve to present our position, as stated by Samuel Sandmel:

At no point does Paul propose lawlessness; to the contrary. It might be put this way, that he saw no prospect of man's achieving through obedience to the Law the ethical goal in them; that ethical goal, though, was achievable through faith and the Spirit. The ethical goal was no less precious to Paul than to other Jews.⁴⁴²

Of course, there remains the question of the identity of these ethical goals, but Paul does not negate the Law in order to provide the ethical direction.

faith are worked out (see, for example, pages 4, 5, 26, 40, etc.).

⁴⁴¹ Toews, "Some Theses...", p. 51; Gerhardsson, Memory and Manuscript, pp. 303-305.

⁴⁴² Samuel Sandmel, Judaism and Christian Beginnings (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 320.

Several other assertions must be outlined. Paul does not perceive of Jesus as bringing a new Torah, so to speak, but as being a new Torah (cf. Davies, Bring, J. A. Sanders). Throughout the NT, it is clear that Christ himself was God's new and complete revelation, the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament. We echo Davies, who wrote about Paul's perception of Jesus.

Although Paul regards the words of Jesus as the basis of a kind of Christian halakah, it is Christ Himself in His person, not only or chiefly in his words, who constitutes the New Torah.⁴⁴³

Unfortunately, this perception has not registered with many other scholars. Riesenfeld asserted that the words and actions of Jesus constituted a new Torah,⁴⁴⁴ but his "person" did not. C. H. Dodd also considered the precepts of Jesus to be the elements of "some sort" of a new Torah,⁴⁴⁵ but was unclear about the possibility of Christ as the Torah. The closest he came to identifying Jesus as the Torah was in Gospel and Law:

. . . the law of God, which is revealed and interpreted in Christ, is a universal law, capable of being observed in its measure at every level, while infinite in its ultimate range.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ W. D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age And/Or the Age to Come, p. 93. "This personification of Torah in Christ goes beyond anything which we have found in Jewish sources: there is there no premonition of a Messiah becoming in Himself the Torah."

⁴⁴⁴ Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition, p. 20.

⁴⁴⁵ Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 145; Gospel and Law, p. 72.

⁴⁴⁶ Dodd, Gospel and Law, p. 80.

So, Davies' insistence upon the fact that Christ was seen by Paul as being the new Torah is a major assumption which must be recalled.⁴⁴⁷ There is a wholeness in this approach that is not present in the perception of only the words and deeds of Jesus as being the new Torah. When the person of Jesus is perceived as the Torah, this includes not only his teaching and actions, but also the OT understanding of Torah as revelation and the source of life for the believer.⁴⁴⁸ Christ is presented in the New Testament as functioning in much the same way as Torah/Wisdom functions in the Old Testament. The attributes of pre-existence and activity in Creation, mentioned in Gen 1:1 and Prov 8-9, are also given to Jesus in John 1 as well as in I Corinthians (1:24, 30; 10:1-4) and Colossians (1:15-18). Perhaps the attitude towards the Torah in the daily morning prayer of the Jew may also be applied to the Christian's devotion to Jesus Christ:

Blessed is our God, who hath created us for His glory and hath separated us from them that go astray, and hath given us the Torah, and thus planted everlasting life in our midst. May He open our heart unto his T. [Torah].⁴⁴⁹

Further, the role of the Torah/Law in Judaism must be reviewed with regard to two concerns: first, the role of Law as a maintenance, not entrance, requirement, and secondly, the meaning of the term "Torah" and the use of the Greek

⁴⁴⁷ See above, Chapter II, pp. 48-54.

⁴⁴⁸ Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion, "Torah," p. 387.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 389.

term nomos for translating the Hebrew term "Torah" in the Septuagint.

In ancient Israel, the Law was given to Israel as a gift (a fact recognized above by E. P. Sanders, G. Sloyan, J. Toews, J. A. Sanders). This gift was to be seen as a sign of God's grace, providing the chosen people with a means for staying within the covenant which God had established with them. Indeed, it was not the law which served as the soteriological category in Judaism, but the covenant. Obedience to the Law was considered necessary. Nevertheless, Judaism did not lose its awareness of God's mercy, grace, and forgiveness. The Law in Israel served to provide a direction for ethical activity in consistency with the intent of the covenant. E. P. Sanders calls this aspect of Judaism "covenantal nomism."⁴⁵⁰

Secondly, the prevailing interpretive paradigm, that the term "Torah" connotes both story and stipulation while the Septuagint's use of nomos stresses only the aspect of stipulation, must finally be corrected.⁴⁵¹ John Toews and J. A. Sanders laud the value of L. M. Pasinya's work⁴⁵² in which he demonstrates that the notion of nomos in the Hellenistic age had at least the full range of meaning that Torah had,

⁴⁵⁰ E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, pp. 1-24.

⁴⁵¹ This fact was recognized and emphasized by W. D. Davies in Chapter II and J. Toews, C. T. Rhyne, J. A. Sanders in Chapter III.

⁴⁵² L. M. Pasinya, La Notion de Nomos dans le Pentateuque Grec (Rome, 1973).

and perhaps more. Nomos, he says, connotes not only "law" but also "revelation" and covenant.⁴⁵³ James A. Sanders asserts that this recognition of the non-legalistic aspect of the term nomos has significant implications for a correct interpretation of the Pentateuch. It may also have some very interesting implications for understanding Paul's use of the term. Sanders is cognizant of the depth of meaning in the Greek term nomos as well as in the Jewish conception of Torah. He observes that Paul used the word nomos in at least four senses: its Greek philosophic sense, its broader revelatory sense, its legalistic sense, and in the sense of symbolizing mainstream Judaism of his day.⁴⁵⁴

W. D. Davies recognized that interpreters frequently have overemphasized the legal character of the term "Torah". Indeed, he observed that this diminution of the scope of the Torah has had "momentous historical consequences."⁴⁵⁵ A perception that Jesus is somehow related to the Torah must include the important features of Torah: full revelation of God, and complete explanation of his will for humanity⁴⁵⁶ T.

⁴⁵³ J. Toews, "Some Theses...", p. 49; J. A. Sanders, "Torah and Paul," p. 136.

⁴⁵⁴ J. A. Sanders, Torah and Canon, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁵⁵ W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation," Paul and Paulinism, ed. M. D. Hooker, S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), p. 5.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 4. Davies asserted that "Torah" or "law" had a broad range of meanings for Paul: "Torah" as commandments which have to be obeyed; "Torah" as the accounts of Israel's history, including the prophetic and wisdom literature; "Torah" as connected with the figure of

W. Manson summarized this view,

The idea that underlies the word Torah is not primarily the formulation of a series of categorical commands and prohibitions with appropriate sanctions, though such an idea is part of its meaning. It is rather a body of instruction regarding man's place in God's world and his duties to God and his neighbour. The Torah is the divine guidance as to the right in which which man should behave as a subject of the heavenly king.⁴⁵⁷

As in any discussion of demand and stipulation, the idea of "legalism" confronts us here. C. E. B. Cranfield, C. F. D. Moule, and G. E. Ladd shed new light on this concept. Cranfield observed⁴⁵⁸ that the Greek language had no word-group to denote "legalism," "legalist," and "legalistic." So, it is very likely that at some points when Paul appears to be disparaging the Law, he was really criticizing the misunderstanding and misuse of the Law. Moule⁴⁵⁹ and Ladd⁴⁶⁰ each detected that Paul saw two ways of responding to the Law: one response was "legalism" through which the individual tried to use the Law to justify oneself; the other response was a recognition of the revelatory significance of the Law, and a response to that revelation by both faith

"wisdom", having a cosmic role in creation and redemption; and finally, "Torah" as the expression of a whole culture, including the revealed will of God in the universe, nature, and society.

⁴⁵⁷ T. W. Manson, Ethics and the Gospel (London: SCM, 1960), p. 29.

⁴⁵⁸ See Chapter III, pp. 63-64 for a summary of Cranfield's view.

⁴⁵⁹ See Chapter III, pp. 66-68.

⁴⁶⁰ Chapter III, pp. 69-70.

and obedience. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a new understanding of Law was made clear to Paul, and for him, "legalism" was a totally inappropriate response to the Law/Torah revealed anew in Jesus.

We must also declare a position regarding the use and authority of a tradition of the sayings of Jesus in Paul's writing. John Piper holds that the early church drew on the sayings of Jesus for its earliest parenetic material. The early church also based this ethical tradition on other OT and Jewish Hellenistic sources. The Jesus- tradition, however, is primary, and so Piper concludes,

The notion that Paul and others involved in the Gentile mission and in the formation of the tradition were either unaware or deliberately ignored the words of the earthly Jesus is, in view of our conclusion, untenable.⁴⁶¹

David Dungan, at the conclusion of a careful and detailed analysis of two instances where Paul refers to some tradition of the Lord, is also convinced that Paul used and applied the words of Jesus in a way similar to that of the Synoptic editors.⁴⁶² Clearly, Paul used creative innovation to apply Jesus' words; yet, Paul was also hesitant and unwilling to "stretch" beyond certain limits Jesus' words in order to make them serviceable. Dungan's conclusion is controversial, but it represents a recent, detailed analysis which has not been, and in my opinion will not likely be, refuted.

⁴⁶¹ John Piper, 'Love Your Enemies', p. 65.

⁴⁶² David Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul, p. 141.

He does not advocate a blanket endorsement of Arnold Resch's analysis, which found over two hundred allusions to the sayings of Jesus in Paul's epistles. But, it is clear that Paul is not divorced from the tradition of Jesus' words and teachings that was available to and used by the Synoptic editors.⁴⁶³

We will, of course, in our exegetical analysis, refer to the clearest instances of a Jesus-tradition. It is necessary to be keenly aware, however, of the ambiguity involved in trying to ascertain the actual traditional words, and so we will concentrate more on identifying Paul's ethical admonitions to see if they are to be viewed as authoritative and binding in some way as a standard for the Christian.

So, in summary, we can say that the following concepts can be safely presupposed in our discussion of Paul's phrase, "law of Christ":

a) Paul's attitude toward the Law must be seen within a complex of factors. He was operating in a complicated religious-philosophical environment and had to respond to many situations and factors.

b) Paul's attitude toward the Law must be understood within his attempt to clarify the ethical requirements of Gentiles within Jewish-Christian congregations.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., p. 150.

c) Paul perceived Jesus Christ as the new Torah, the embodiment of the Law of God for humanity.

d) The term nomos had a broad range of meaning for Paul, including "revelation" and "covenant."

e) The early church as well as Paul drew upon a tradition of the ethical sayings of Jesus, and considered these sayings to be authoritative for their ethical responsibility.

4.1.2 Dismissed Positions

If there are concepts and factors that can be validly presupposed in our discussion of Paul's phrase "law of Christ," we will also see that there are ideas and positions that must be regarded as so seriously incorrect that they can be set aside at this point. In view of the material amassed and summarized above, it is clear that one assertion, that Paul considered the OT law, in all of its meanings, to be absolutely inviolate in Christianity, is not tenable. John Murray, George A. F. Knight, Gerard S. Sloyan, and others who hold this view, have helped to show that Paul did not deny the glory of the OT law, but, indeed, recognized its great value⁴⁶⁴ (Rom 7:7-9, 12; 13:8-10; Gal 3:19-21) and continued role in Christianity. We must recognize, however, that Paul did not assert the absolute validity of the Law. The change in salvation history effected by the life,

⁴⁶⁴ Chapter III, pp. 65, 71, and 120-121.

death and resurrection of Jesus resulted in some undeniable changes for the place of the Law.

John P. Meier, in his work on the Gospel of Matthew, recognized what he called a "difference-within-continuity" in the schema of salvation history as it developed with Jesus.⁴⁶⁵ Meier saw that this difference is true particularly with respect to the Law, and that the early Church had to provide a reinterpretation of the Law's place. Similarly, we realize that Paul, though he recognized the positive nature of the OT Law, also perceived that the Law must be understood in the face of Jesus' incarnation as the Son and revelation of God. In the words of J. A. Sanders, "Torah was caught up in Christ in a new age."⁴⁶⁶

Another position that can be justifiably set aside is the methodological approach of Donald Allan Stoike. Stoike asserted that his methodology was to be "strictly historical,"⁴⁶⁷ an approach he justified because the "predominantly theological" approach had brought "no new fresh or critical reflections."⁴⁶⁸ Stoike's intent in his dissertation was to judge scholars as to what extent they had succeeded in relating Paul's phrase "law of Christ" to the historical circumstances behind the letter to the Galatians. In Stoike's

⁴⁶⁵ John P. Meier, Law and History in Matthew's Gospel (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), p. 163.

⁴⁶⁶ J. A. Sanders, "Torah and Paul," p. 137.

⁴⁶⁷ Stoike, "'The Law of Christ'...", p. 1.

⁴⁶⁸ Stoike, p. iv.

analysis, the letter indicated that

The situation Paul faces in Galatia seems to include something of this sort of legalistic understanding of Christ and of adherence to him together with some sort of veneration of the "elements" and an apparently heavy emphasis on the spiritual status of certain individuals.⁴⁶⁹

So, while the opponents were enamoured with the idea of a "law of Christ," Paul was obligated to correct their erroneous legal notions, continues Stoike. The phrase "law of Christ" was not a phrase coined by Paul or lifted from Judaism; rather the phrase belonged to the preaching of Paul's opponents, says Stoike, and Paul used it only to answer them.⁴⁷⁰ So, the use of the phrase is for "polemical reasons":⁴⁷¹ Paul, explains Stoike, was saying that the "law of Christ" was not to be carried out by flaunting one's spiritual status, but by "bearing the burdens of others," the less spiritually endowed.

In our estimation, Stoike's methodology is not sufficiently historical! He assumes that the origin of the phrase "law of Christ" (a theory which he cannot fully demonstrate) gives its full meaning. This assertion is not historically adequate. Though Stoike provides an interesting and possible hypothesis that Paul used the phrase of his opponents, he does not provide an adequate analysis of what the phrase meant for Paul. Stoike does not address Paul's

⁴⁶⁹ Stoike, "The Law of Christ...", p. 197.

⁴⁷⁰ Stoike, "The Law of Christ...", pp. 247-248, 236-239.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., p. 249.

use of legal language in his other writings (i.e., "walk," "obedience," "test), and he also does not deal with the passage in I Cor 9:21 where Paul used a remarkably similar term, ennomos Christou. Furthermore, Stoike does not explore the meanings of the term nomos and he does not devote any attention to the place of the Torah in Judaism and Christianity.

So, while Stoike asserts that his methodology is to be "strictly historical," we must conclude that it is not historical enough. Our methodology must take into consideration the questions that Stoike ignored (meaning of nomos, legal language in Paul, the meaning of "law" in Judaism and Christianity) and provide a more complete historical analysis.

A third position which may be judged incorrect at this point is the argument that Paul dispenses entirely with the ceremonial demands of the OT Law but upholds the ethical demands. George Eldon Ladd represents this position, asserting that "in Christ," a Christian was expected to keep the Law in its higher demands, not in its external commandments. He concludes,

It is quite clear, however, that the permanent aspect of the law is the ethical and not the ceremonial.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷² G. E. Ladd, "Paul and the Law," p. 67.

This position does not recognize the necessity that the OT Law be perceived as a unit, including the elements of story, ethical demands, ceremonial demands, and revelation. The OT Law was not, for Paul, to be simply divided into ceremonial and moral demands. In fact, there is no textual basis for the assertion that Paul considered the Law to be made up of ceremonial and ethical demands. Gerberding observed,

The law is a unit. What makes the question of the role of the law so difficult is the fact that for Paul the whole law is God's good gift. The tension produced by Paul's discussion of the law cannot be reduced by imposing a distinction foreign to his own expression.⁴⁷³

Our final analysis of Paul's perception of the role of the OT Law in Christianity must not fall into the easy trap of seeing continuity of the moral demands and discontinuity of the ceremonial demands. Rather, we will have to come to grips with the place of the whole Law in Paul's theology and in his understanding of the "law of Christ."

There is a fourth position, expressed by Beda Rigaux, which holds that there exists an antithesis between faith and Law. He wrote,

Paul works by antithesis: domain of law, domain of faith; yet he proposes neither an absolute contradiction nor a real identification.⁴⁷⁴

E. P. Sanders also wrote,

⁴⁷³ Gerberding, "The Pauline Understanding of 'the law of Christ'," p. 19.

⁴⁷⁴ Beda Rigaux, "Law and Grace in Pauline Eschatology," p. 330.

Faith represents man's entire response to the salvation offered in Jesus Christ, apart from the Law and the argument for faith is really an argument against the law.⁴⁷⁵

This expression of an antithesis between Law and faith does not do justice to Paul's theology. Clyde Thomas Rhyne observes that Paul sees faith and Law as antithetical only when the Law is improperly conceived as a way to salvation through works⁴⁷⁶ (Rom 3:20-21a, 27-28; Rom 9:32; 10:15). But when the Law is properly perceived as a true revelation (albeit historical) of God's righteous standard, the Law is compatible with faith (Rom 3:21b-22, 27e, 31).

Accordingly, Rom 4 can be seen as Paul's attempt to overthrow the false inference that faith abolishes the law (3:31a) but especially to expand his counter-assertion that faith actually establishes the law (3:31c). For this purpose he turns to the law itself, the principal authority in Judaism, and its witness concerning Abraham.⁴⁷⁷

Leander Keck observed that Paul saw obligation as built into humanness.⁴⁷⁸ Faith in no way, however, abrogates obligation. Rather, faith and its attendant life in Christ and in the Holy Spirit transfers one into a domain where Christ is the norm, and obedience/Law are concurrent realities. Hans Conzelmann followed a similar argument when he asserted that the doctrine in Rom 10:4, that Christ is the telos (end,

⁴⁷⁵ E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, p. 491 (emphasis his).

⁴⁷⁶ Chapter III, p. 123.

⁴⁷⁷ Rhyne, "Faith Establishes the Law," p. 151.

⁴⁷⁸ Leander Keck, Paul and His Letters (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 89.

goal) of the Law, presupposes that the Law is valid and holy. It is only through faith (and love) that the intent of the Law comes into effect.⁴⁷⁹

So, there are four concepts that we believe can be validly set aside in our attempt to come to an understanding of Paul's use of the phrase "law of Christ."

a) The assertion that the OT Law is absolutely inviolate in Christianity cannot be upheld. Jesus' incarnation has provided a unique and provocative event in salvation history.

b) Our methodology must move beyond Stoike's incomplete historical analysis of the phrase "law of Christ."

c) We put aside the assertion that Paul divides the Law into ceremonial and moral demands, a position that holds that the ceremonial demands are abrogated while the moral demands are continuous with Christianity.

d) The concept of an antithesis between faith and Law must be dismissed. Faith serves to fulfill and complete the Law in its various meanings, not to negate or deny it.

4.1.3 Exegetical Questions

We have been able, above, to indicate our presuppositions, both positive and negative, for our exegetical task. It remains for us, however, to indicate the questions that must be addressed to the texts. These questions have become

⁴⁷⁹ Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the NT (London: SCM, 1969), p. 235.

clearly evident to us. First of all, we face the question, "Does Paul consider some code of ethical responsibility to be present in Christianity?" or, in other words, "Does Paul have some kind of ethical standard?". In the previous work outlined in Chapter III, we have observed three schools of thought on this question. In our exegetical analysis, we will present a fresh look at the question.

Secondly, we must address the meaning and role of the phrase "law of Christ" in Paul's expressions of ethical responsibility. Here, an analysis of the contexts and occasions of Paul's two uses of the phrase will be carried out. In answering the question, "What is the role of Paul's phrase 'law of Christ'?", we will be obligated to provide a historical perspective that takes into consideration Paul's intent in using the phrase "law of Christ."

Third, in our exegetical analysis of I Cor 9:21 and Gal 6:2, we will need to address Paul's understanding of the roles of the Holy Spirit and of love in Christian ethical responsibility. Behind this analysis will be the question, "Are Spirit/Love and Law mutually exclusive concepts in Christian ethics?" Are we being true to Paul if we insist that an uncoded "law" of the Spirit and of Love is accurate?

In the exegetical analysis in this chapter, then, we will follow a sequence of steps. In order to accurately answer the first exegetical question, it will be necessary to out-

line passages in Paul's writings that address the question. Only after we have been able to view his various statements and perceive his position regarding some "code/standard" in Christianity will we be enabled to understand the depth (or lack) of meaning in Paul's phrase "law of Christ" (I Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2). And, finally, we will be able to arrive at some understanding of the relationship of Love and the Holy Spirit to the Law.

4.2 EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS

The first major question that we face in our exegetical analysis is whether Paul believed there to be in Christianity some kind of code for ethical responsibility. In Chapter III, we approached this question by analyzing scholarly understanding of the place of the OT Law in Christianity. We noted three different views: continuity of the OT Law in Christianity, radicalization of the OT Law in Christianity, and complete discontinuity of the Law in Christianity. Under the view of discontinuity, however, there were some scholars who perceived Paul to be expounding some sort of "new standard" in Christianity beyond a simple "law of love." Morna Hooker expresses this position:

. . . just as Palestinian Judaism understood obedience to the Law to be the proper response of Israel to the covenant on Sinai, so Paul assumes that there is an appropriate response for Christians who have experienced God's saving activity in Christ. Those who now partake in the blessings brought by Christ are expected to respond in certain ways. They are not the law, but they are the law of Christ (Gal. 6.2) and they can even be de-

scribed as a fulfilling of the Law (Rom. 13.8-10).⁴⁸⁰

There are several passages in which the theme of obedient response to this new action of God in Christ appears. Let us look at each of the uncontested letters of Paul to see if he speaks of or alludes to some kind of standard in Christianity. We will look in particular detail at the occurrences in Galatians and I Corinthians, as these are the letters where Paul's phrase, "law of Christ" appears.

First, we will look at Galatians, believed by scholars to be one of Paul's earlier letters. Traditionally perceived as Paul's great work on "justification by faith alone" (Augustine, Luther), this letter has been touted as Paul's great statement against the Law. Charles Cousar has pointed out the problems that arise from this rather narrow view, especially the individualistic aspect of justification,⁴⁸¹ and observes that this narrow view is not really being true to Paul's intent in the letter to the Galatians. He notes that Paul's great passage on "justification by

⁴⁸⁰ Morna Hooker, "Paul and 'Covenantal Nomism'," Paul and Paulinism, ed. M. D. Hooker, S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), p. 49.

⁴⁸¹ Charles Cousar, Galatians (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), p. 57. Cousar writes, "There is no hint in Luther that one's fellow human beings have any part in the event of justification. It is unnecessary to review the whole history of the doctrine since the sixteenth century, but certainly one tendency in Protestantism (and the few exceptions prove the rule) has been to become preoccupied with the individual experience of grace and to articulate the doctrine of justification (and also sanctification) biographically and psychologically."

faith" in Gal 2:11-21 is in fact in the context of a social setting.

The specific point Paul wants to make in that context is that God's favorable judgment in Christ means by its very nature that Gentiles are included in the Christian community on no different level or no different terms than Jews. Both belong at the same table.⁴⁸²

The term "justification" must be redefined, then, in its relational terms. Justification does not have to do with the good qualities of the judge or of those justified, but it has to do with the determination of the relationship. Furthermore, "justification" implies that a divine activity is carried on in this established relationship; this is where the necessity of obedience enters into the discussion.

In giving believers a new relationship to himself God does not then abandon them. His gift becomes a power which both obliges them to obey him and makes the obedience possible.⁴⁸³

Where in Galatians, then, is this aspect of obedience made clear? Further, is there implied the existence of some sort of Christian ethical standard? There are several passages in Galatians that include these ideas.

a) Gal 2:20-21

⁴⁸² Ibid., p. 57. See also Krister Stendahl, Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, p. 26. He writes, "Paul's doctrine of justification by faith has its theological context in his reflection on the relation between Jews and Gentiles, and not within the problem of how man is to be served, or how man's deeds are to be accounted, or how the free will of individuals is to be asserted or checked."

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p. 60.

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. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose.

There are several elements in this passage that are related to our concern for the elements of obedience/demand in Paul's understanding of Christianity. Significantly, Paul uses the perfect tense, "I have been and continue to be crucified with Christ,"⁴⁸⁴ in which he indicates an action in the past which continues to shape and affect the present. Dying with Christ is meant here as a description of what it means to "live in" and "live for" that revelation and incarnation of God who came to earth and lived a fully human life.

Paul continues, then, to talk about his present life "in the flesh." He is no longer thinking of carnal living but of a new kind of living, which Donald Guthrie labels a "faith-life."⁴⁸⁵ Clearly, this is not a life which gratifies the "desires of the flesh" but a life that operates on a new basis. While in the next chapter, Paul uses the example of Abraham to show that one must trust God's grace and not rely on human accomplishments, here and in Gal 5 and 6, he broadens the issue by asserting that salvation is more than just getting one's name in a divine book. As Cousar

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 61.

⁴⁸⁵ Donald Guthrie, Galatians (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1969), p. 93.

says,

It has to do with living one's life under the reign of God and of coping with the tension between existence "in the flesh" and existence "by faith." . . . To live in the new age into which believers are transferred means to follow the lordship of the self-giving, crucified Christ, to participate in his continuing mission in the world.⁴⁸⁶

The response to the gift and demand of justification, then, is active obedience. It is implied in these verses, and more clearly said in later chapters of Galatians, that in Christianity there is a demand of ethical responsibility.

W. D. Davies wrote of Gal 2:20,

When therefore Paul goes on to speak of Christ living in him he is not referring to any ecstatic experiences whereby his own individuality is submerged: true, the old . . . is dead, but he himself still lives in the flesh and his relation to Christ is determined by an act of personal commitment, by faith, so that his allegiance is now given to a new master.⁴⁸⁷

b) Gal 5:13-14

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

These verses open the section of Paul's letter to the Galatians wherein he exhorts the readers on how to exercise their "freedom in Christ." In the Greek text of Gal 5:13-6:10, there are at least fifteen imperatives or implied

⁴⁸⁶ Cousar, Galatians, pp. 60-61.

⁴⁸⁷ W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 197 (emphasis mine).

imperatives,⁴⁸⁸ so here we have only the beginning of this series of injunctions. Paul writes that Christians are "called" to freedom, but it is not a simple freedom. Guthrie writes,

The ethical implications of freedom, which Paul deals with in the next portion of the epistle, are a vital part of his whole discussion. The freedom for which he is contending is not a theoretical matter, but intensely practical.⁴⁸⁹

The meaning of the term "freedom" turns in v. 13b to a sharply contrasting issue, that is, the danger of abusing and misusing freedom. Paul introduces the seemingly paradoxical exhortation to be one another's doulos (slave, servant) through the exercise of freedom and love. Why does he introduce a clearly legal term into his powerful statement of freedom? Hans Dieter Betz believes Paul did this very intentionally:

It is the necessity of commitment and the difficulties of maintaining human relationships that cause Paul to describe the free exercise of love as a form of mutual enslavement.⁴⁹⁰

Betz cautions, however, that we not translate Paul's concept of freedom" immediately into a new form of "non-freedom."⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁸ Cousar, Galatians, p. 122.

⁴⁸⁹ Guthrie, Galatians, p. 142.

⁴⁹⁰ Betz, Galatians, p. 274.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p. 274, f.n. 24.

In v. 14, Paul introduces, as a demand, the idea that love fulfills the whole Law. This verse, seen so frequently as a weakening or softening of the OT Law, must be carefully interpreted. First of all, when Paul speaks of "love", it is not just one virtue among others, but it is the sum and substance of the person of Christ and the person in Christ (II Cor 5:14-15; Rom 5:5, 8; Gal 2:20). Secondly, Paul asserts that love does not annul the Law, but fulfills it: love describes the Law's correct interpretations and con-
firms the Law. Cousar writes,

Love finds its true expression in God's giving of himself in Christ (2:20; Rom 5:6-8), and just such concrete and substantial self-giving lies at the heart of the command to love. The obligation demanded by the law is in no way lessened by love; it is instead made more radical and comprehensive.⁴⁹²

c) Gal 5:16-26

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. . . . Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another."

In this passage, three elements strike us as relevant to our intent of discovering an aspect of Christian demand in Paul's understanding of Christianity. First, Paul uses the phrase, "walk by the Spirit" twice in this passage (5:16, 25). Second, Paul lists the "works of the flesh" and says that these works are "plain" or obvious. Third, Paul lists the "fruit of the Spirit" and adds (v. 24), "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its

⁴⁹² Cousar, Galatians, pp. 131-132.

passions and desires."

Regarding the use of the imperative phrase "walk by the Spirit," (pneumati peripateite), we observe that Paul summarizes his parenesis therein, and thus defines his conception of the Christian life. Betz observes that the concept of peripateo ("walk") is an important term in ancient Greek and Jewish anthropology and ethics.⁴⁹³ It implies that the human life is basically "a way of life." Betz explains,

A human being must and always does choose between ways of life as they are presented in history and culture. For ancient man, ways of life are more than "styles of life": they are not only different in their outward appearance, but their different appearance is the result of different underlying and determining factors.⁴⁹⁴

The "way of life" is more than just an outward style. It carries a depth of meaning that includes continuity, guidance and assistance for coping with everyday struggles.⁴⁹⁵ Paul frequently uses the concept of "walking" (peripateō) with reference to ethical activity and responsibility (Rom 8:4, 13:13, 14:15; I Cor 7:17; II Cor 12:18).

Secondly, Paul provides a list of vices (5:19-21a) which are not to be done by those "who live in the Spirit," but are "works of the flesh." Clearly, these actions are out of the range of correct living for the Christian. From Gal 5:21b,c, it seems likely that the original Sitz im Leben of

⁴⁹³ Betz, Galatians, p. 277.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

the whole passage was primitive Christian catechetical instruction.⁴⁹⁶ We may assume that Paul quotes the passage here to remind the readers of what they had been taught previously.

Following the list of vices is a catalogue of virtues, the "fruit of the Spirit" (5:22, 23a). Betz asserts that this list must not be identified with the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2); rather, the virtues are "benefits" which were given as or together with the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹⁷ Whether or not these virtues were part of the Christian life automatically is immaterial for our discussion. We observe that in Paul's use of the phrase "walk by the Spirit" as a bracketing concept for this section (vv. 15, 25), these virtues provided a standard from which a Christian would take direction. The Christian life was not to be seen vaguely as "being good" and "practicing love", but was to be perceived as embodied in the actions implied by the "spiritual gifts."

So, we see that in Galatians there is evidence that Paul perceived Christianity to include some kind of standard or code for ethical responsibility. We will reserve analysis of the passage in Gal 6 for the second stage of our exegesis.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 281.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 286.

We continue our brief review of Paul's letters by surveying I Corinthians to see if Paul spoke of an ethical standard or code in Christianity.

a) I Cor 4:16-17

I urge you, then, be imitators of me. Therefore I sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in the church.

The theme of imitation recurs later in this letter in 11:1 ("Be imitators of me as I am of Christ"); the theme appears elsewhere in Paul's writings, (Gal 4:12; Phil 3:17; I Thess 1:6, 2:14; II Thess 3:7, 9), as well. The purpose of Paul's call to imitation was not to emphasize his own good life, but to assert the necessity of imitating Christ in one's ethical activity. C. K. Barrett observes,

Behind it lies the idea . . . that the life of an apostle is a particularly clear reflection of Christ crucified.⁴⁹⁸

Paul also reminds his readers of the "ways in Christ" which he had taught them and which he teaches everywhere. These "ways" are clearly moral standards that are expressed, to a certain extent, in recognized patterns of behavior which Paul alludes to later on in the letter, and which we will summarize below. C. K. Barrett draws attention to the fact that the word "way" suggests Paul's Jewish, rabbinic background where "way" had moral significance (cf. the word

⁴⁹⁸ C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1968), p. 116.

halakha).⁴⁹⁹

b) I Cor 7:10-12

To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord .
 . . To the rest I say, not the Lord. . . ."

I Cor 7:25

Now concerning the unmarried, I have no command of
 the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the
 Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

I Cor 9:14

In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who
 proclaim the gospel should get their living by the
 gospel.

I Cor 11:23

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered
 to you. . . . (cf. I Cor 15:3)

I Cor 14:37

If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spirit-
 ual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing
 to you is a command of the Lord.

At several points in I Corinthians, Paul alludes to
 "words of the Lord" which he seems to consider to be author-
 itative demands. We have previously asserted in this chap-
 ter (pp. 10-11) that Paul possessed a tradition of the words
 of Jesus. In I Corinthians, his use of these words is seen
 to be particularly clear in showing that Paul considered
 some kind of ethical standard to be normative in Christiani-
 ty. We see this clearly in Paul's emphasis on precepts that
 "the Lord commanded." He carefully delineates between Je-

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 117.

sus' words and his own words, though both carry authority. Jesus' commands, however, appear to be particularly weighty in ethical admonition and denote the existence of an ethical ideal or pattern.

c) I Cor 6:9

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

I Cor 10:24

Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

I Cor 15:33

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals".

The above statements by Paul have the nature of "slogans" or pithy statements for Christians, and point again to the existence of an ethical norm in Paul's thought. Paul seems to use these statements as truths that must be adhered to in order to live a Christian life. In I Cor 6:9, Paul clearly understands "unrighteous" in a strictly moral sense. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, that is, they will not see the time of God's blessedness, where all evil will be vanquished (I Cor 15:28). Paul goes on to specify examples of unrighteous behavior -- fornicators, idolators, adulterers, catamites, sodomites, and so on.

I Cor 10:24 is a colloquial expression, used here by Paul to explain the Christian's responsibility in building up the church. Barrett points out that "the neighbor" is meant by Paul to refer not only to one's friend or the "one who is

like me," but to also include the "one with whom I instinctively disagree."⁵⁰⁰ Christian moral responsibility, then, includes respecting and considering the interests of others with whom we may not agree.

I Cor 15:33 is a quotation from Menander's comedy Thais (the line had taken on proverbial usage in the ancient world),⁵⁰¹ and indicates Paul's demand that Christians should not deliberately cultivate and take pleasure in the seeking of "bad morals."

d) I Cor 7:17

Only, let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

I Cor 11:34b

About the other things I will give directions when I come.

Clearly, Paul considers his apostleship to give him authority in the churches to lay down rules and expectations of moral/ethical behavior and responsibility. He seems to have had some operative "standard" of ethical behavior under which he would outline his directions and rules. These two passages show clearly his ease in reminding the believers to remember his "rules" and "directions." These terms probably had connotations of legal rubric for those who read or heard them.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 240.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., p. 367.

We will reserve Paul's statement in I Cor 9:21 for our detailed exegetical analysis below. We do see, however, that there is in I Corinthians clear evidence that a standard of Christian ethical responsibility existed for Paul.

Because the phrase "law of Christ" occurs specifically in Galatians and I Corinthians, we have listed references to a Christian standard in these writings. This idea also appears in Paul's other writings. It will suffice simply to list these occurrences here.

II Cor 5:17-18. "Therefore if any one is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."⁵⁰²

II Cor 10:5-6. "We destroy arguments . . . and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete."

II Cor 13:5. "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding your faith. Test yourselves. . ."

Rom 1:5. ". . . through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith⁵⁰³ for the sake of his name among all the

⁵⁰² This passage indicates the transformation that takes place in the person "in Christ." Verse 18, however, indicates that the "new creation" includes the aspect of ethical effort. There has been divine initiative: God reconciled us to himself through Christ. But, there must also be human initiative: believers are given the ministry of reconciliation, that is, the responsibility to proclaim and live ("walk") the life of "new creation."

⁵⁰³ This phrase, "obedience of faith," appears at the beginning and the end of the letter to the Romans (1:5; 16:26). I am aware of the controversy regarding the authenticity of Rom 16:25-27. Larry W. Hurtado, "The Doxology at the End of Romans," New Testament Textual

nations . . ."

Rom 1:17. "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live'."⁵⁰⁴

Rom 2:6-11. "For he will render to every man according to his works. . ."

Rom 3:31. "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law."

Rom 6:4. ". . . we too might walk [cf. Rom 8:4, "walk"] in newness of life."

Rom 7:6. "What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! . . ." [cf. Rom 7:12 and the legalism discussion above].

Rom 8:2. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death."

Rom 12:1-2. "I appeal to you . . . to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship . . . that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

[Rom 12:1-15:13 is a collection of ethical admonitions.]

Criticism, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Gordon D. Fee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 185-199, reviews recent debate on this question and concludes that the origin of the doxology remains an open question. He points to close connections between the doxology and the Roman letter (p. 199). So, if Rom 16 was a part of the original letter, the use of the phrase "obedience of faith" may show an attempt to bracket the letter with a phrase that carried importance for Paul.

⁵⁰⁴ It is possible that the phrase "righteousness of God" refers here to the righteousness that God approves (J. C. O'Neill, Romans, p. 38), and so denotes the morally correct life the believer is to live. This is made clear by the reference to Hab 2:4 ". . . but the righteous shall live by his faith."

Rom 16:25-26. "Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ . . . to bring about the obedience of faith."

I Thess 4:1-8. ". . . as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God. . . For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification. . . . Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you."

Phil 2:5. "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus. . ."

Phil 2:12-13. "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

Phil 3:17. "Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us."

From the above passages, it is clear that Paul had in mind some kind of normative ethical standard for his readers to follow. This standard seemed to have three elements: imitation of Christ's actions and teachings (which were known to them because of a tradition); obedience of the instructions which Paul, by the authority of being an apostle, delivered to them; and thirdly, obedience to the Holy Spirit, which acted in a believer to make clear what actions would be appropriate.

So, we come to our second exegetical question: what was the meaning of Paul's phrase "law of Christ" in Gal 6:2 and I Cor 9:21?

a) Gal 6:2

Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.

The context of this verse is a section of ethical teaching in Paul's letter to the Galatians extending from 5:13 to 6:10. This ethical section is made up of four parts:

i) 5:13-16 - freedom and love; ii) 5:16-26 - life in the Spirit and life in the flesh; iii) 6:1-5 - instructions in bearing the burdens of others; iv) 6:6-10 - encouragement to persevere in the doing of good.

C. H. Dodd, among others, observes that the reference to "law of Christ" here occurs in the context of various exhortations.⁵⁰⁵ It is Furnish, however, who brings the major issues into focus in his negative assertion:

Yet there is not, in the whole of Galatians, a single explicit citation of the Lord's words, and it is doubtful if Paul is thinking of the exhortations in 5:26ff. as comprising in any cohesive sense a body of material attributable to Jesus. Rather, these exhortations follow and serve as the elucidation of the words about living and walking in the Spirit (5: 16ff).⁵⁰⁶

Is Furnish accurate in this statement? It will be our task in our exegetical analysis of Gal 6:2 to focus on three main questions: 1) Is the phrase "law of Christ" intended to refer to authoritative sayings of Jesus? 2) What is the relationship of "law of Christ" to the work of the Holy Spirit? 3) What is the meaning of the phrase "law of Christ" here?

⁵⁰⁵ C. H. Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 146.

⁵⁰⁶ Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul, p. 61.

Before we address these questions, the historical context of the letter must, of course, be summarized. The letter to the Galatians was written for clearly stated reasons, and the historical situation behind the letter is frequently alluded to. Obviously, Paul had had a special relationship with the readers, for he had been the first to preach the gospel to them and they were his converts (1:6-9; 4:12-14). The Galatians were a "Hellenized" and "Romanized" people,⁵⁰⁷ who were probably sophisticated and well-educated. Their Christian experience, then, was a powerful one, for, as Paul writes, they had made momentous changes in their lifestyles: they had stopped worshipping pagan gods (4:8-10), they now held a monotheistic view, the "one God" (3:20; 4:6), and their new religion led them to disregard religious, social and cultural distinctions (3:28). There was, however, some sort of anti-Pauline opposition in their midst. Clearly, Paul wrote the letter in order to address issues that these opponents raised (1:6-7; 5:7, 10, 12; 6:12-13), but we are never told who these opponents are. Guthrie observes one of the problems Paul had to face.

It is clear that the Galatians were being persuaded to heed other teachers at Paul's expense, because he was said to compare unfavourably with the original apostles in status, whereas they were claiming the support of the leaders in Jerusalem.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁷ Betz, Galatians, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁸ Guthrie, Galatians, pp. 9-10.

There were also among the Galatians some kind of Judaizers (2:11-12; 3:1, 10; 4:17; 5:7, 10, 12; 6:17) who insisted on circumcision for Gentile believers and the securing of salvation through works.

Paul, then, deals with the issues by giving a historical analysis of his relationship to Jesus Christ and the apostles (Gal 1-2), and by offering a doctrinal analysis of the role of the Jewish Law in Christianity (Gal 3-4). The result of the process of his argument is the pivotal statement, "For freedom Christ has set us free: stand fast therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." (Gal 5:1)

But Paul does not end his argument with the climactic statement of 5:1 (repeated in 5:13). Rather, he gives instructions regarding circumcision in 5:2-12, and adds a precautionary note in 5:13b, "only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another." This rather abrupt change in direction suggests a sudden realization on Paul's part that the Galatians' freedom might degenerate into licentiousness. So, on the one hand, he has fought legalism in Gal 1-4, but, on the other hand, he is fighting licentiousness in Gal 5-6. Gal 5:13-6:10, then, represents Paul's attempt to show the true nature of Christian freedom in its aspects of love, obedient responsibility to one another, and life in the Holy Spirit.

Paul's sentence, "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ," comes at the end of a long series of moral imperatives (Gal 5:13-6:2). In this section, three things have become clear for the Christian: first, love "fulfills" and brings to expression the whole Law of Judaism (5:14); second, the desires of the flesh are "against the Spirit" (5:17) and are not to be given in to by those who live for the kingdom of God; and third, the fruits of the Spirit are not automatic gifts, but are moral qualities to be striven for (Gal 5:25, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit").

Paul, we hold, intentionally used the phrase "law of Christ" in this context to emphasize that obedience and correct moral behavior complement and are united with the fact that the Christian lives in freedom. While Donald Allan Stoike asserts that the phrase "law of Christ" was simply a "slogan" of Paul's opponents,⁵⁰ we assert that Paul used the phrase with particular intent and depth. As we have seen in our list of passages where Paul implies the existence of some kind of moral standard for ethical behavior, the use of quasi-legal language was not unusual for Paul (i.e., "walk," "way," "imitate," "test," "obedience," "rules," "commands"). This kind of halakhic language occurs frequently in this section in Galatians (i.e., 5:13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 25) and it culminates in Paul's admonition, "Bear

⁵⁰ Stoike, "Law of Christ," pp. 247-248.

one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Furthermore, we recall that Paul was imbued with the awareness that the term "law" (nomos) did not refer only to OT precepts and demands, but also had the elements of "covenant," "revelation," "instruction," and "story," all of which were very appropriate in connection with the person and work of Christ.

Does Paul's phrase "law of Christ" refer, then, to specific authoritative words of Jesus Christ? As we have seen, Paul certainly used words of Jesus in other situations and considered them to be authoritative (e.g., I Cor 7:10, 12, 25; 9:14; 11:23; 14:37). We have also seen, however, that Paul, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, considered his own words to hold authority and to divulge correctly the will of Jesus Christ in specific instances. (e.g., I Cor 7:17; 11:34b). In Galatians, we have observed that Paul had in mind a standard for action and responsibility (Gal 2:20-21; 5:13-14, 16-26; 6:2, 4) which he knew his readers were aware of to a large extent. This is implied in Gal 6:4, where Paul assigns each one a responsibility that they full well know the meaning of, "But let each one test his own work. . .". F. F. Bruce writes,

In fine, the "law of Christ" is for Paul the whole tradition of Jesus' ethical teaching, confirmed by his character and conduct (cf. Rom. 13: 14; 2 Cor 10:1) and reproduced within his people by the power of the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:2, . . .). The existence of this tradition provided a criterion by which claims to be guided by the Spirit were to be

tested.⁵¹⁰

So, the "law of Christ" referred to the authoritative words of Christ as well as Paul; but, the "law of Christ" was not to be perceived as simply a written set of rules. The "law of Christ" also possessed the attributes of Torah: pre-existence, story, revelation, covenant, and grace. The "law of Christ" was embodied in Jesus, the Torah, who by his teachings and actions provided a standard for Christian ethical responsibility.

How is this conception of the "law of Christ" linked with the activity of the Holy Spirit? In Paul's statement, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit," (5:25) I believe we have a clue to the answer. Throughout his career, Paul outlined principles and rules of behavior to the believers, showing them how to "live." But, these principles remain remote and unfulfillable unless the Holy Spirit is present. In "walking" with the Holy Spirit, that is, having an ethical way of life (halakha) determined by the Spirit, the principles of Christian living (the "law of Christ") are made attainable and clear. Herman Ridderbos wrote,

The claim of the law which was once given [the Mosaic Law] continues in effect (cf. 5:14), but this accrues to the believers from Christ. He stands between the law and believers. He guarantees its fulfillment in believers by the Holy Spirit.⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), p. 261 (emphasis his).

⁵¹¹ Herman Ridderbos, The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of

What, then, is Paul's definition of the "law of Christ" in Gal 6:2? Clearly, Paul had in mind an ethical standard of responsibility that was to be normative for Christians. Being aware of the full meaning of the term "law" in Judaism and Hellenism (cf. Sanders, Pasinya), Paul was able to use nomos in connection with the discussion of freedom and love with no intention of contradiction. In summary, we agree with Richard Longenecker, who wrote,

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.^{5 1 2}

In our analysis of Gal 6:2, we have moved beyond Donald Stoike's inadequate historical analysis. Stoike perceived the "law of Christ" as one of the slogans or catchwords of Paul's opponents, and insisted that Paul used the phrase only in order to reinterpret it. We remain uncertain of the origin of the phrase "law of Christ." But, in our analysis of quasi-legal language in Paul's writings, we have seen that Paul was not afraid to speak of Christianity in terms of a halakha. The phrase "law of Christ" in Gal 6:2 was one of Paul's ways of saying that Christian moral responsibility is a "way to be walked."

b) I Cor 9:21

Galatia (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956), p. 213.

^{5 1 2} Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty, p. 194.

To those outside the law I became as one outside the law -- not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ -- that I might win those outside the law."

C. K. Barrett writes of this verse,

This is one of the most difficult sentences in the epistle, and also one of the most important, for in it Paul shows how the new relation of God which he has in Christ expresses his debt of obedience to God.⁵¹³

I Cor 9:21 provides us with the only other place in the Pauline writings where he links "law" with Christ (here, ennomos Christou, Gal 6:2, ho nomos tou Christou). In order to be able to understand Paul's intent here, we must first identify the historical context of I Corinthians. Then we must analyze the textual context of I Cor 9:21. After these tasks have been completed, an exegetical analysis of I Cor 9:21 will be possible.

Corinth was an ancient city of Greece, mighty in wealth and commerce, and located on an isthmus between two seas.⁵¹⁴ With the Greek god Aphrodite as the centre of worship, this city had a reputation for immorality and vice: this fact explains Paul's repeated warnings against fornication in his correspondence with the church there (I Cor 5:9-10; 6:9, 16, and so on).⁵¹⁵ As a port city, Corinth also had a varied

⁵¹³ C. K. Barrett, I Corinthians, p. 212.

⁵¹⁴ Conzelmann, I Corinthians (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, E. T., 1982), p. 19.

⁵¹⁵ See Peter Richardson, "Judgment in Sexual Matters in I Cor 6:1-11," Novum Testamentum XXV, 1(1983), pp. 37-58. He argues that all of I Cor 5 and 6 has to do with sexual questions. For the latest treatment of the social

crowd of sailors and ship-workers of low social castes. In 27 B. C., Corinth became a seat of the Roman government. Consequently, many of its citizens were Roman. The population was augmented, however, by Greeks and Levantines, including Jews.⁵¹⁶ Acts 18:4 indicates that when Paul visited Corinth (in approximately 50 A. D.), there was a synagogue and a Jewish community which he visited and where he argued.

Paul introduced Christianity to Corinth, but he was not the only leader to visit the church. Evidently, Appolos also worked in Corinth (I Cor 3:6), and it is possible that Peter did, as well (I Cor 1:12). As a result of this, the church membership broke down into factions, each appealing to the name of a Christian leader (1:11-13). The disunity of the church became clear on several lines: the demarcation of rich and poor at the Lord's supper (11:18-22), public litigation among members (6:1-8), a controversial case of immorality (5:1-5), disputes over eating food sacrificed to idols (8:1-3; 10:14-11:1), disagreements about the propriety of marriage (6:12-20; 7:1-40), various views on resurrection (15:12), and disagreements on Paul's apostleship (4:3, 15; 9:1-27). Various labels have been given to the Pauline opposition in Corinth: gnosticism, enthusiasm, aesceticism.

make-up of the churches of Paul, see Wayne A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

⁵¹⁶ F. F. Bruce, I and II Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), p. 19.

So, the letters to the Corinthians were written to address these issues, and Paul campaigns simultaneously on more than one front. "This," says F. F. Bruce, "is one reason for the difficulty which modern readers find in understanding these letters."⁵¹⁷ Paul's response to various problems does not make I Corinthians theologically empty, though. Hans Conzelmann writes,

The great attraction of I Corinthians, however, lies in the fact that here Paul is practicing applied theology, so to speak. . . . Theology is here translated into an illumination of the existence of the church and of the individual Christian in it.⁵¹⁸

One theological element in I Corinthians, as in Galatians, is freedom in Christ (7:22; 9:1, 19; cf. Gal 5:1, 13), and it is Paul's intent to indicate the responsibility of obedience included in the freedom in Christ.

In our study of Paul's use of the phrase "law of Christ," we are most concerned with his discussion of his apostleship in I Cor 9. Though in the previous chapters, Paul has been discussing the freedom of Christians in general, here he narrows the discussion to his own freedom and his own apostleship.⁵¹⁹ There are two reasons for this development in the discussion. First, at the end of I Cor 8, Paul announced that he would abstain from eating meat for the rest of his

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Conzelmann, I Corinthians, p. 9.

⁵¹⁹ Conzelmann observes, "The style -- a series of questions in the first person -- shows that Paul is now making his own person the subject of discussion." Ibid., p. 152.

life if meat was a barrier to his Christian brother or sister. Since the eating of meat was admissable in some groups within the Church, though, Paul quickly realized that his opponents could take his statement and turn it against him. They could ask how someone, who had to become everything to everyone in order to please them, could be an apostle. Barrett explains,

He [Paul] had, it seems, good reason to suspect that this attitude would not only provoke opposition among the Christians at Corinth whose watchword was spiritual liberty, but also lead to a questioning of his own authority.⁵²⁰

The second reason that Paul addressed the question of his apostleship in such length was because his apostleship had, indeed, already been contested (9:2), though not yet by his own congregation in Corinth.

The outline of Chapter 9, then, is as follows:⁵²¹

- i) assertion of his freedom and apostleship (9:1-2);
- ii) proof of his right to the same privileges and maintenance as the other apostles (9:3-14);
- iii) the true reason for foregoing his rightful aim (9:15-18);
- iv) reaffirmation of the principle upon which he uniformly acted (9:19-22);
- v) Paul's continuing work at his own salvation (9:23-27).

What, then, is the context of Paul's reference to a "law of Christ" in I Cor 9:21? The phrase occurs in the midst of Paul's assertion of his relationship to the Law in various situations and with various people. In verse 20, he indi-

⁵²⁰ Barrett, I Corinthians, p. 200.

⁵²¹ I am indebted to Marcus Dods, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.), p. 198, for this outline.

cates his relationship to the Law when he is among Jews:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law -- though not being myself under the law -- that I might win those under the law. (RSV)

Paul, as a Jew, was able to practice Jewish customs without teaching that the Law was the means to salvation (cf. Acts 21:23-26). Indeed, for Paul, the Law, in its 613 written precepts of the Pentateuch, was not the means to salvation, nor had it ever been, as we saw above in Chapter III. The Law in Judaism served, we recall, as a maintenance requirement, not an entrance requirement; here, Paul perceives the maintenance requirement of Christianity as consisting in the "law of Christ," not the Jewish Law. For Paul continues,

To those outside the law I became as one outside the law -- not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ -- that I might win those outside the law.

Paul explicitly affirms that he is not without a law: he is not anomos theou, free of obligation to God, but ennomos Christou, under legal obligation to Christ. Because of the use of the genitive here, it is not clear whether one can easily justify the translation, "law of Christ." We maintain the wording for the sake of simplification in reference. The Greek may be translated better, however, by the phrases "in-lawed to Christ"^{5 2 2} or "Christ's law-abiding one."^{5 2 3} Our concern, however, is to understand the meaning

^{5 2 2} See, for example, Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 60.

^{5 2 3} C. K. Barrett, I Corinthians, p. 214.

of Paul's allusion to the necessity of obedience.

Hans Conzelmann asserts that Paul uses the words nomos here in an "improper sense": Paul, he says, simply means that Christ is the norm.⁵²⁴ At the risk of challenging a tried and true scholar, we must come to the opposite conclusion, that Paul intentionally used the word nomos in connection with Christ. Paul, in remarkably parallel clauses, asserts that he is not anomos theou, without a legal responsibility towards God; rather, he is ennomos Christou, under a law more comprehensive and revelatory than even the OT Law -- he is "under the law of Christ."

What does Paul mean when speaks of this "law of Christ"? The phrase may refer to references in I Corinthians to the example Christ set for his followers (I Cor 11:1) and to explicit demands and precepts of Christ (I Cor 7:10-12; 9:14; 11:23; 14:37). The First Epistle to the Corinthians is studded with other references to the existence of a standard for Christian ethical responsibility (I Cor 4:16-17, 25; 6:9; 7:17; 10:24; 11:34b; 15:33). For Paul, the assertion that he is ennomos Christou is not devoid of depth or meaning. Remembering the positive aspects of Law (revelation, covenant, story, stipulation), Paul is not hesitant to portray himself as "in-lawed" to Christ. Furthermore, Paul's conception that Christ sets before us both an example of behav-

⁵²⁴ Conzelmann, I Corinthians, p. 161. Conzelmann dismisses Dodd's argument in "Ennomos Christou" as being "at variance with the whole Pauline use of nomos."

ior and an ethical demand provides the phrase "law of Christ" with depth. Herman Ridderbos has observed that I Cor 9:21 contains three elements clearly expressing the relationship between Christ and the Law.⁵²⁵ a) The Law no longer has unrestricted validity, because Paul says he can be qualified "without the law." b) Yet, the Law of God is maintained. c) This maintenance of the law of God is expressed as ennomos Christou. "Christ," Ridderbos asserts, "suo modo represents the law of God and thus the law of Moses."⁵²⁶

Paul, throughout his letters, refers to a standard of behavior which he considers to be clearly expected. At some points he clearly labels this standard as "words of the Lord"; at other points, it takes on the character of the imitation of Christ; at still other points, the standard is embodied in Paul's directions and teaching. In Romans, he can call this standard the "obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5; 16:26; cf. 3:31), the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:2). The standard of Christian ethical responsibility has three aspects: obedience, love, and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not perceived by Paul as inappropriate to label this standard the "law of Christ." Indeed, in his understanding of nomos (as divine revelation, covenant, demand), and his understanding of the demands of

⁵²⁵ Ridderbos, Paul, pp. 284-285.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., p. 285.

Christ (cf. Mt 5; Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:22-24), Paul's phrases ho nomos tou Christou and ennomos Christou embody the basis and meaning of Christian ethical responsibility.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have attempted to provide a fresh exegetical analysis of Paul's use of the phrase "law of Christ" in Gal 6:2 and I Cor 9:21. In order to do this, we outlined our exegetical presuppositions. Positions that we consider to warrant assertion, and positions warranting dismissal were explained. Three exegetical questions were deemed necessary: 1) Does Paul consider some code of ethical responsibility to be present in Christianity? 2) What is the meaning and role of Paul's phrase "law of Christ"? 3) Are Spirit/Love and Law mutually exclusive terms?

Paul's writings were then surveyed in order to decide whether a motif of obedience or ethical demand could be perceived throughout his letters. A significant number of references to some kind of ethical standard were discovered. We also saw that Paul frequently employed quasi-legal language in his admonitions to the churches: halakhic language such as "walk," "way," and "imitate" was used, and legal terms such as "test," "obey," "rules," "demands," and "fulfil the law" arose with surprising regularity. We concluded that Paul perceived the Christian life to include faithful obedience to the demands and example of God which he revealed in Jesus Christ.

Finally, an analysis of the historical background of I Cor 9:21 and Gal 6:2, and a study of the contexts of each occurrence led us to an understanding of Paul's phrase "law of Christ." For Paul, this phrase provided one way in which he could define the basis, direction, and meaning of Christian ethical responsibility. Life in Christ demands obedience to the obligations he brings. This obedience is not a legalistic one, but a legal obligation which is fulfilled by the imitation of Christ, the practice of love, and the help of the Holy Spirit. In this regard, Paul does not consider the Jewish Law to be abrogated, but to be fulfilled and revealed in Christ's life, death and resurrection. As in Judaism, the legal obligation is not a means to salvation, but a maintenance of salvation. Spirit, Love and Law are not, then, mutually exclusive terms, but inform and define the meaning of obedience to the will of God.

In the next chapter, then, we will be able to summarize the contributions of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies to modern scholarly understanding of Paul's phrase "law of Christ." We will also undertake to offer some tentative suggestions for application of Paul's intent in the phrase "law of Christ" to modern Christian moral theology.

Chapter V

THE "LAW OF CHRIST" AND MODERN BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Chapter IV of this thesis provided a fresh analysis of Paul's use of the phrase "law of Christ." In our survey of the writings of Paul, we discovered a significant number of references to an ethical standard or code of behaviour (e.g., Gal 2:20-21; 5:13-14, 16-26; I Cor 4:16-17; 7:10-12, 25, etc.). We also discovered that both of Paul's uses of the term "law of Christ" occurred in the context of describing freedom in Christ (I Cor 9:1, 19; Gal 5:13-14). Yet, it was clear that Paul had a definite understanding of what he meant by "freedom in Christ." This expression denoted responsibility and obedience, not just simple freedom.

With an enlarged and more precise understanding of the Jewish idea of Law/Torah and of the term nomos in the Roman culture of first century Palestine, we have gained a key to understanding Paul's phrase "law of Christ." The word "law" has more than a superficial sense, implying a set of precepts. It designates a depth of meaning including "revelation," "covenant," and "story," as well as "stipulation," "instruction," and "obedience".

In this chapter, then, we intend to compare these findings with the conclusions that C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies

drew in their studies more than thirty years ago. Their contribution to NT theology will be summarized and evaluated as it relates to this area of studies.

Further, in this chapter we intend to make some tentative comments on the significance of our understanding of Paul's phrase "law of Christ" for Christian ethics and moral theology as well as for the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

5.1 THE CONTRIBUTION OF C. H. DODD AND W. D. DAVIES TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF PAUL'S PHRASE "LAW OF CHRIST"

C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies did not turn Pauline studies on its head.⁵²⁷ But, over the years we may observe a growing and developing tendency to acknowledge and appreciate the Semitic aspects of Paul, an understanding to which Davies was especially devoted and to which Dodd pointed. We see this development particularly in the past decade with the work of James A. Sanders, Clyde Thomas Rhyne, Herman Ridderbos and John Toews. This growth of appreciation is evidenced in the argument that Paul was clearly a Jew (e.g., Markus Barth), in the assertion that law" denoted more than obedi-

⁵²⁷ E.P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, p.7, observes wryly that Whitely considers Davies' book to be "one of the best books ever written on Paul," while Conzelmann, in his short history of Pauline research, does not even mention Davies. I have observed that W. G. Kümmel, The NT: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems (London: SCM, 1977), pp. 384-85, recognizes Dodd as having exerted significant influence in NT studies, but he makes no mention of Davies. On the other hand, Patrick Henry, New Directions in NT Study (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), p. 83, recognizes Davies as an insightful thinker, but makes absolutely no mention of Dodd!

ence (especially J. A. Sanders and John Toews), and in the continuing technical analysis of Palestinian Judaism (e.g., E. P. Sanders' work, Paul and Palestinian Judaism).

Can this development be attributed at least in part to the work and inspiration of Dodd and Davies? It seems certain that this is so. Both of these scholars provided unique contributions to the discussion of Paul and the Law. It is our intent in this section to indicate these unique contributions in connection with Paul's phrase "law of Christ," and to examine criticisms that have been tendered against Dodd and Davies. Following this, we will evaluate the development their ideas have undergone in subsequent scholarship. In other words, this section will be devoted to a reconsideration of their arguments and positions.

F. W. Dillistone, the biographer of C. H. Dodd, wrote that "no one can ever have had a keener sense of the moral demand of Christianity than Dodd."⁵²⁸ Dodd discovered in the epistles and the gospels what he believed to be early catechetical instructions of Christian patterns of behaviour. He called this collection the "law of Christ."

The law of Christ, we conclude, is not a specialized code of regulations for a society with optional membership. It is based upon the revelation of the nature of the eternal God, and it affirms the principles upon which His world is built and which men ignore at their peril.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁸ F. W. Dillistone, C. H. Dodd. Interpreter of the NT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977), p. 173.

⁵²⁹ C. H. Dodd, Gospel and Law, p. 81.

Dodd did not feel that the introduction of legal conceptions was out of place in Christianity. Indeed, he perceived the Christian religion of the NT to be represented in terms of a "new covenant" with attendant obligations.⁵³⁰ Yet, these obligations were not, said Dodd, conceived as a clearly delineated catalogue of commands and ordinances. Rather, the demands are shown with the power of drama, poetry and imagination.

I suggest that we may regard each of these precepts as indicating, in a dramatic picture of some actual situation, the quality and direction of action which shall conform to the standard set by the divine agape.⁵³¹

For Dodd, Paul was one representative of the demand in the early Church to reject lawless libertinism and to encourage loyalty to the "law of God," expressed in Paul's phrase "law of Christ" (I Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2). In the contexts of both occurrences of the phrase "law of Christ," there are ethical admonitions (I Cor 7:10-11; 9:14; Gal 5:13-6:10) which indicate the expectations that arise out of a true understanding of and a correct response to the gospel message. Dodd explains the "law of Christ" in this way:

It connotes the intention to carry out -- in a different setting and in altered circumstances, it is true -- the precepts which Jesus Christ was believed to have given to his disciples, and which they handed down in the Church. This is to be

⁵³⁰ Ibid., p. 67. Dodd links this idea with the kerygma/didache distinction. The covenant is the kerygma; but there must be attendant demands, thus the didache is an inseparable aspect (Gospel and Law, p. 66).

⁵³¹ Ibid., p. 73

ennomos Christou.^{5 3 2}

To be "in-lawed to Christ," however, is possible only within a community which the Holy Spirit inhabits. This is a crucial aspect of Dodd's understanding of the "law of Christ."

Each member, by virtue of the koinonia tou pneumatos, is offered the guidance and help of the Spirit to understand the Law of Christ, to apply it, to discern its relevance to fresh situations, and finally to fulfil it. . . .^{5 3 3}

Dodd, in my opinion, made several new contributions to the study of the "law of Christ." Although he is more identified with his contributions to the debates on "realized eschatology," kerygma and didache, and the Fourth Gospel, Dodd also made a significant impact on scholarly understanding of Paul's perception of the law in Judaism and Christianity.

1) Dodd recognized that the way that much scholarship perceived the Greek term nomos obscured the prophetic, revelatory aspect of the Jewish religion and served to reinforce the legalistic aspect of Torah.^{5 3 4} Thus, nomos was not a helpful word in describing the depth of the term "Torah" in its Hebrew rendering.

2) Dodd perceived in the early church's ethical teaching and preaching, as exhibited in the epistles and the gospels, respect for the words and actions of Jesus. This respect

^{5 3 2} Dodd, " Ennomos Christou", p. 147.

^{5 3 3} Ibid.

^{5 3 4} C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), pp. 33-34.

was expressed by considering Jesus' words to be authoritative in illuminating ethical responsibility.⁵³⁵

3) Dodd accurately described the difference between an ethical halakah (a system of exact rules of behaviour) and the ethic of the early church.⁵³⁶ Yet, he insisted that Paul also reminded the Christian Church that there exists a New Covenant with consequential obligations which may be termed a "law." These duties are stated emphatically in the NT, though not always in detail. The principal, however, is clear:

It is for us to bear witness to what the Gospel declares about the eternal nature of God as revealed in Christ, out of which all moral obligations flows.⁵³⁷

4) Dodd recognized the role of eschatology in Christian ethics.⁵³⁸ He observed in Paul a sense of living at a "critical moment", where, though nothing may be considered permanent, there exists a motive for moral responsibility (i.e., Rom 13:11-12).

⁵³⁵ Dodd, Gospel and Law, p. 72.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., p. 75. He termed this ethic the "law of Christ." Dodd was careful to caution against a legalistic interpretation.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., pp. 82-83. Dodd continues, "The Christian ethic, in short, can as little make itself good in the world apart from the Gospel as the Gospel can be understood apart from its ethical implications."

⁵³⁸ Ibid., pp. 29-30. Dodd considered the ultimate ethical aim to consist in the admonition "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" (p. 31).

5) Dodd attempted to explain the relationship of the obligations in Christianity to those in the Mosaic Law. Perhaps, he said, the "ultimate law of God" may be discovered in the Torah; this discovery, however, may fully take place only when the Torah is interpreted by Christ.⁵³⁹ The Torah retains a certain amount of importance in Christian ethics.

Despite these positive contributions, Dodd has not remained unchallenged. His arguments have been called into question by several scholars. With regard to his understanding of the phrase "law of Christ" in particular, Dodd has frequently been criticized for his linkage on the one hand of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ" (Rom 8:2) with the admonition to "live by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25a), and on the other hand the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) with the demand to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25b).⁵⁴⁰ Victor Paul Furnish believes that Dodd's interpretation implied that the "law of Christ" related only to "walking in the Spirit," not to "living in the Spirit." This negated the very point Paul was trying to make, said Furnish -- that "living" and "walking" in the Spirit constitutes a unity.⁵⁴¹ According to Furnish, the controlling thought of Paul in the context of Gal 5:25-6:2 was the absolute indissolubility of indicative and

⁵³⁹ Dodd, " Ennomos Christou," pp. 138-139.

⁵⁴⁰ See explanation above in Chapter II, pp. 38-39.

⁵⁴¹ Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul, p. 62. See also the earlier discussion of Furnish in Chapter III, pp. 92-96.

imperative. So, for Furnish, Dodd's interpretation represents a dangerous attempt to impose a meaning onto Gal 6:2 that was not intended by Paul.⁵⁴²

We saw in Chapter III that E. Bammel⁵⁴³ and Kieth Arnold Gerberding⁵⁴⁴ also were sharply critical of Dodd's attempts to explain Paul's phrase "law of Christ." Other than these scholars, there has been little else in the way of critical analysis of Dodd's position regarding the "law of Christ." Richard Longenecker is the only other scholar who addressed Dodd's explanation of the "law of Christ," and his assessment is largely positive. In fact, Longenecker concludes his section on "the directing principles of the law of Christ" by echoing Dodd, whom he considers "true to Paul's thought."⁵⁴⁵

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.⁵⁴⁶

It is interesting to observe that C. H. Dodd's work on Gospel and Law has not been addressed in any detail since the dissertations of 1971. Dodd's work continues to be cited in bibliographies of books on Christian ethics⁵⁴⁷ (espe-

⁵⁴² Furnish, Theology and Ethics, p. 62.

⁵⁴³ See Above Chapter III, pp. 82-84.

⁵⁴⁴ See above Chapter III, pp. 113-116.

⁵⁴⁵ Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty, p. 193

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 194.

cially Catholic), and his unique contributions, cited above, may be traced throughout much of Pauline scholarship since 1950. That scholars have built on Dodd's thinking is unclear or at least often unacknowledged. Dodd's lasting "irritation" of scholarship is not, in the final analysis, in his work on the "law of Christ." Dodd's work in this area has been overshadowed by his larger and probably more deserving contributions to the discussions of the Johannine writings, "realized eschatology" and the kerygma/didache debate.

W. D. Davies' work, larger in detail and breadth, has received the greater amount of response and critique because he went farther⁵⁴⁸ than his teacher, Dodd, in several respects. Paul and Rabbinic Judaism has been cited as a "watershed" work,⁵⁴⁹ and remains an important step to coming to terms with Paul's theology. Davies' aim was to set Paul into the context of Rabbinic Judaism contemporary to him, and to show that Paul "baptized his Rabbinic heritage into Christ."⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁷ See, e.g., James Gaffney, Newness of Life. A Modern Introduction to Catholic Ethics (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 340; Bernard Haring, The Law of Christ. Moral Theology for Priests and Laity, pp. 54, 330.

⁵⁴⁸ Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul, pp. 62-63.

⁵⁴⁹ Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, p. 10.

⁵⁵⁰ Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. xvii.

Like Dodd, Davies believed that Paul considered the words of Jesus to be authoritative. Indeed, Paul

recognized in the words of Christ a nomos tou Christou which formed for him the basis for a kind of Christian Halakah. When he used the phrase nomos tou Christou he meant that the actual words of Jesus were for him a New Torah.⁵⁵¹

Davies held that Paul's understanding of the Christian life grew out of his perception of Judaism, especially the Exodus experience: "The experience of the Old Israel from Egypt was the prototype of the greater redemption from sin wrought by Christ for the New Israel."⁵⁵²

But, Davies' perception of the "law of Christ" went beyond the terms of Judaism and Exodus imagery. For Davies, Jesus Himself, in his life, death and resurrection, was a full revelation of God and of His will for humanity. The entities of his life and death were inextricably bound together to express the demand of Christianity and, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, were presented to Christians as the "law of Christ."

To be "in Christ" was for Paul to have died and risen with him in a New Exodus, and this in turn meant that he was to be ennomos Christou, that is, subject to the authority of the words and Person of Christ as a pattern.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., p. 144.

⁵⁵² Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 349.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., p. 363.

Davies' contribution to scholarly understanding of the "law of Christ" was unique in several ways.

1) Davies undertook the arduous and difficult task of studying the views held in Judaism about the status of the Torah in the messianic age.⁵⁵⁴ He concluded that the prevalent view in the OT, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Rabbinical sources was that "obedience to the Torah would be a dominating mark of the Messianic age."⁵⁵⁵ There was some indication, though, that certain modifications of the Torah could take place, that there would be a clearer understanding of the Law, and that the Gentiles might submit to the yoke of the Torah in the messianic age.⁵⁵⁶

2) Davies argued that Paul saw Jesus himself as the "New Torah."

In a real sense conformity to Christ, His teaching and His life, has taken the place for Paul of conformity to the Jewish Torah.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁴ Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age And/Or the Age to Come.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 84.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. See Robert Banks, "The Eschatological Role of the Law in Pre- and Post-Christian Thought," Reconciliation and Hope, ed. R. Banks (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 173-185, for a response to Davies' arguments.

⁵⁵⁷ Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 148. Davies observes that in Jewish messianic expectation, "there is no premonition of a Messiah becoming in Himself the Torah." (Torah in the Messianic Age . . ., p. 93). So, the Jewish messianic expectations of a New or revised Torah were not only fulfilled, but transcended (p. 94).

For Davies, this meant more than that Paul's life was now ruled by Christ rather than by the Torah. Davies showed that Paul ascribed attributes to Christ that Judaism ascribed to the Torah. Judaism identified Torah with the Wisdom of God, giving it the qualities of pre-existence and participation in creation as well as a role in the moral discipline or redemption of humanity. Davies perceived that Paul also gave Jesus these attributes (Col 1:15-20).⁵⁵⁸

3) Davies located the centre of Paul's theology not in his doctrine of justification by faith (cf. Schweitzer, etc.), but in the significance of Jesus the Messiah.⁵⁵⁹ All of the aspects of the Christian life, including justification, faith, obedience and "law", are to be informed by the life "in Christ."⁵⁶⁰

4) Davies also recognized the eschatological aspect of Christian ethics. The church stands in a "living tension":

It [the Church] recognizes the need for patient application of moral rules and duties to the ongoing life of the Church and the world in which the Parousia has not taken place, and also the need to stand always under the absolute demands of the New Sinai. In short, it allows for patience and impatience, the inevitability of gradualness and the inevitability of radical change.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ See Chapter II, pp. 48-53, for discussion of this matter.

⁵⁵⁹ Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 323.

⁵⁶⁰ Davies, "Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation," p. 4.

⁵⁶¹ Davies, "The Relevance of the Moral Teaching of the Early Church," p. 42.

Paul, says Davies, had to partake in the "reconstruction" of eschatology which was demanded when Christ's imminent return was not realized.⁵⁶²

5) Davies perceived of Christianity as "a kind of Christian Halakah."

In fact, the kerygma was one aspect of the life of primitive Christianity embedded in and accompanied by a rich communal life -- a "way." . . . Christianity too is a halakah.⁵⁶³

Davies was, however, fully aware of the danger that lurks in such an assertion. He credited Reinhold Niebuhr with reminding him of the powerful criticism of the Law effected in Paul and the gospels.⁵⁶⁴ Yet, Davies continued to hold that Christianity possessed a halakah. He clarified the meaning of this statement, though.⁵⁶⁵ Halakah in Christianity is not to be understood as the means to salvation, but the accompaniment to salvation.⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, it must never be forgotten that in Judaism, Law was an expression of grace, as well as a means to grace.

⁵⁶² Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 286. Elsewhere, Davies wrote, "Christian morality is rooted in a "lively hope", even as it is informed by the earthly Jesus. It is governed by a memory and an anticipation" ("The Moral Teaching of the Early Church," p. 322).

⁵⁶³ Davies, "Torah and Dogma: A Comment," Harvard Theological Review 61 (1968), p. 94. Also Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 144.

⁵⁶⁴ Davies, "Torah and Dogma," p. 95, f.n..

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 94-95, f.n..

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. Davies added, "Christianity must always be anti-legalistic even though it must never be antinomian."

6) Davies addressed the role of love in relation to the "law of Christ" in a way that was different than much of previous scholarship (see Ch. I above) which had insisted that the whole expression of the "law of Christ" was the "law of love" (Gal 5:14). Davies believed that the moral/ethical precepts of Paul were concrete expressions of agape. The precepts were not negated by the love command.

It follows that, along with a tradition of both parainetic [sic] and absolute moral prescriptions, the Early Church presented to the world the challenge of a way of life governed by the Cross, the sign of agape, the ultimate demand of God. Under this Cross all human activity is finally to be judged.^{5 6 7}

7) Davies addressed the role of the Holy Spirit in ethical activity. Paul, said Davies, considered the Holy Spirit to be a part of and active in the carrying out of the "law of Christ."

In virtue of His twofold nature as Torah and Spirit Christ was for Paul both the goal and the means towards that goal. The obedience of the Christian man is loyalty to the promptings of the Spirit, but since this Spirit derives His character from a person, and is rooted in the words, life, death and resurrection of Christ, it is also for Paul a kind of Torah.^{5 6 8}

W. D. Davies, though a thorough and masterful scholar, has not gone unchallenged. As a scholar whose work has affected and stimulated Christian and Jewish academics alike, Davies' longtime attention to the relationship between Gos-

^{5 6 7} Davies, "The Relevance of the Moral Teaching of the Early Church," p. 43 .

^{5 6 8} Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 226.

pel and Law has been pondered and criticized. In his attempt to restore Paul's Jewish background, Davies has been accused in Jewish academic circles of employing a "shotgun methodology."⁵⁶⁹ Samuel Sandmel was particularly disturbed by Davies' assertions:

He [Davies] is unwilling to believe us Jews when we state that Paul's views and those of the rabbis on the Torah are antithetical, and as a result of his previous assumption he manages to find evidence which satisfies him (but no rabbinist) that Paul "baptized his rabbinic heritage into Christ."⁵⁷⁰

Victor Paul Furnish also provided a critique of Davies arguments. Furnish was critical of Davies' assertion that Paul was immersed in Rabbinic Judaism and brought it into Christianity. There are, acknowledged Furnish, elements of rabbinism in Paul's ethical teaching.

But it is going too far to say that Paul is a self-conscious and consistent bearer and interpreter of that tradition, and that his ethical instruction is best described as a continuation, albeit in a Christian context, of it.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁹ Lou H. Silberman, "Torah and Gospel," Judaism 13 (1964), p. 507. Silberman explains, "The fundamental objection is that the author [Davies] seems to think that, while each single detail may in and of itself actually be less than conclusive and in some instances appear not to be relevant, in sum total there will be enough convergent conclusions and relevancies to prove the case" (pp. 506-507).

⁵⁷⁰ Samuel Sandmel, review of The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, Theology Today 23 (1966-67), p. 292.

⁵⁷¹ Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul, p. 42.

Furnish asserted that Davies' discovery of twenty-five allusions to Jesus teaching was "not convincing"⁵⁷² and that some of the allusions "hardly" qualify as evidence.⁵⁷³ Furnish also insisted, contra Davies, that the reference to "law of Christ" in Gal 6:2 should not be "used as evidence that Paul himself is referring to a body of teaching derived from Jesus."⁵⁷⁴

E. P. Sanders, who published Paul and Palestinian Judaism in 1977, wrote about Paul's theology in light of three scholarly positions: Rudolf Bultmann and the Bultmannian school, Albert Schweitzer, and W. D. Davies.⁵⁷⁵ Sanders admitted that Davies (his teacher) had made several important and lasting contributions to Pauline studies. He was, however, unsatisfied with Davies' conclusion that Paul was a Rabbinic Jew who was different from Rabbinic Judaism only in the fact that he perceived Jesus as the Messiah. Such an understanding, said Sanders, does not take into adequate consideration the negative statements made by Paul about Judaism.⁵⁷⁶ So, Sanders' entire book was written as an attempt

⁵⁷² Ibid., p. 56.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., p. 58. David Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul, presents an excellent analysis of two "words of the Lord" (I Cor 7:10f; 9:14), and also provides a brief critique of Davies' and Furnish's views.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 63. Davies responded to these criticisms in a footnote to Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 146, and in his article, "The Moral Teaching of the Early Church," pp. 314,328.

⁵⁷⁵ E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, p. xiii.

to address both sides of the arguments about Christianity and Judaism; at many points in the discussion, then, he was obligated to enter into debate with Davies' arguments.⁵⁷⁷

As we saw in Chapter III above, W. D. Davies was also criticized by E. Bammel⁵⁷⁸ and K. Gerberding.⁵⁷⁹ On the whole, however, the recognition of Davies' work and importance has been widespread. Patrick Henry recognizes Davies' contribution with a wise and honest perception:

W. D. Davies showed, thirty years ago, that it is inaccurate to draw a sharp line between Pharisaism and apocalypticism; the rabbinic texts themselves show a positive appropriation of several key apocalyptic motifs. But it takes a long time for this kind of a fresh insight to weave its way into the texture of scholarship.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 11-12. Sanders believes that there needs to be a comparison of a whole religion (Christianity) with a whole religion (Judaism), not a comparison of motifs or "one-line essences" (p. 12).

⁵⁷⁷ For example, Sanders argues in Paul and Palestinian Judaism, pp. 496-497, against Davies, saying that there is no body of Jewish literature that indicates an expectation of the abolition of the Law with the advent of the Messiah. For Paul, the Law is dethroned, said Sanders, because of his understanding of the salvation of the Gentiles and of the role of Christ in fulfilling the requirements of the Law. Sanders also criticizes Davies' statement that Paul heralds a "New Exodus" and a new covenant (see Sanders, pp. 512-515). Sanders concludes his argument saying, "But the primary reason for which it is inadequate to depict Paul's religion as a new covenantal nomism is that the term does not take account of his participationist transfer terms, which are the most significant terms for understanding his soteriology" (p. 514).

⁵⁷⁸ See above, Chapter III, pp. 82-85.

Have the ideas of Dodd and Davies woven their way into scholarly discussion of the "law of Christ" in the three and a half decades that have passed since they were published? As we saw in Chapter III, many of the unique contributions of Dodd and Davies were cited or built upon. In order to show this clearly, we will address briefly the three major aspects of Dodd's and Davies' thinking on the "law of Christ" and summarize how these ideas have been handled in subsequent scholarship.

As we saw at the end of Chapter II, Dodd and Davies provided an interpretation of Paul's conception of the "law of Christ" which differed considerably from the explanations of previous scholars. 1) They asserted that the "law of Christ" implied the existence of some kind of a standard for Christian ethical activity. This standard was perceived by Paul as embodied in more than simply pneumatic guidance or in love. 2) Dodd and Davies insisted that Paul possessed a Christ-tradition, made up of precepts and sayings of the earthly Jesus, which was considered authoritative for ethical behaviour. Paul, said Dodd and Davies, had this Christ-tradition in mind when he used the term "law of Christ." 3) Dodd and Davies showed that Paul conceived of the "law of Christ" as in some way similar to the OT Law in that it embodied the revelation of God and expressed his

⁵⁷⁹ See above, Chapter III, pp. 113-118.

⁵⁸⁰ Patrick Henry, New Directions in NT Study, p. 83 (emphasis mine).

election and grace.

What, then, has been the response to these ideas in subsequent scholarship? As we saw in Chapter III, many scholars who addressed the issue of Paul and the Law did not explain Paul's use of the phrase "law of Christ." Among those who did address Paul's phrase "law of Christ," though, the first assertion (that the "law of Christ" implied the existence of some kind of standard) has not been overwhelmingly approved; in fact, it has generally been watered down or weakened in scholarship subsequent to Dodd and Davies. Several scholars (e.g., Furnish,⁵⁸¹ Fitzmyer,⁵⁸² Beker,⁵⁸³ and Betz⁵⁸⁴) have simply linked the "law of Christ" with the "law of love" and have found no greater depth in the phrase. E. Bammel⁵⁸⁵ and D. A. Stoike⁵⁸⁶ perceived that the "law of Christ" carried no intention of legal precepts, except to show that Christianity must not be perceived as antinomian libertinism. It is significant, however, that several major Pauline scholars have repeated the assertion that the "law of Christ" was understood by Paul as meaning some kind of

⁵⁸¹ See above, Chapter III, p. 96 (the following page numbers all refer to Chapter III).

⁵⁸² See above, p. 139.

⁵⁸³ See above, p. 140.

⁵⁸⁴ See above, p. 141-142.

⁵⁸⁵ See above, pp.84-85. This position is also held by Furnish, see p. 96, above.

⁵⁸⁶ See above, pp. 110-111.

code or standard for Christian ethical responsibility. Richard Longenecker,⁵⁸⁷ Herman Ridderbos,⁵⁸⁸ J. Christiaan Beker,⁵⁸⁹ and E. P. Sanders⁵⁹⁰ may all be identified with this position. Only Longenecker gives a clear indication that he is responsible to Dodd and Davies for this insight. Nevertheless, it is of interest to us to have several scholars come out in clear favour of this view.

The second assertion, that Paul had in mind some kind of authoritative tradition of the words of Jesus when he used the phrase "law of Christ," has also been affirmed by some influential scholars. Birger Gerhardsoon wrote a major work on the existence of a Jesus-tradition, and he felt that this tradition was implied in the phrase "law of Christ."⁵⁹¹ Longenecker,⁵⁹² Ridderbos,⁵⁹³ and F. F. Bruce⁵⁹⁴ also identified with this assertion.

⁵⁸⁷ See above, pp. 104-105.

⁵⁸⁸ See above, pp. 127-129.

⁵⁸⁹ See above, p. 140. Beker says that Paul operates with both a theological principle and a situation ethic.

⁵⁹⁰ above, pp. 142-144.

⁵⁹¹ See above, Chapter III, p. 101.

⁵⁹² See above, p. 104. Longenecker perceived the "law of Christ" to consist of both the teachings and example of Christ.

⁵⁹³ See above, pp. 127-129.

⁵⁹⁴ See above, p.136. For Paul, said Bruce, the Mosaic Law gave way to a new tradition stemming from Jesus. Bruce does not clearly link this tradition with the "law of Christ" but he does assert the existence of such a tradition.

And finally, the belief that the "law of Christ" was in some way related to the OT Law was affirmed and carried further by G. E. Ladd,⁵⁹⁵ G. Knight,⁵⁹⁶ C. K. Barrett,⁵⁹⁷ Beda Rigaux,⁵⁹⁸ Longenecker,⁵⁹⁹ Ridderbos,⁶⁰⁰ and E. P. Sanders.⁶⁰¹ We saw that, at its very least, this connection was expressed by the argument that Paul denied the efficacy of the Law; but,

Having done that, Paul is quite willing, even insistent, to maintain that one who is in the Spirit or who is justified should fulfil the "law of Christ," which turns out to be the equivalent to the "just requirement" of the Jewish law, that is, its moral aspects.⁶⁰²

At the other end of the spectrum of continuity lies the argument that both the law of Moses and the "law of Christ" embody the "law of God."⁶⁰³ Between these two poles are the views that the OT law is radicalized or brought to completion in the actions of Christ and through the Holy Spir-

⁵⁹⁵ See above, pp. 69-70. The Law remains the expression of the will of God but is now to be interpreted through Christ.

⁵⁹⁶ See above, p. 71.

⁵⁹⁷ See above, pp. 72-73.

⁵⁹⁸ See above, pp. 76-77.

⁵⁹⁹ See above, p. 102.

⁶⁰⁰ See above, pp. 127-129. Christ, said Ridderbos, "suo modo represents the law of God and thus the Law of Moses."

⁶⁰¹ See above, pp. 142-144.

⁶⁰² E. P. Sanders, "On the Question. . .," p. 25.

⁶⁰³ G. Sloyan, see above, Chapter III, pp. 120-121.

it.⁶⁰⁴

In conclusion, then, we have seen that C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies determined a direction for subsequent scholarship to follow, in order to gain a more accurate and insightful understanding of Paul's phrase, "law of Christ," and they demanded that certain issues and questions be addressed.

We also have seen, however, that many of the scholars who studied the relation of the OT Law to Paul's view of Christianity did not address the issue of the meaning of the "law of Christ."⁶⁰⁵ Nevertheless, scholarly conception of the "law of Christ" is not likely to revert back to the highly pneumatic interpretation that was common prior to 1950. The impact of Dodd and Davies has been too great. The thesis being defended here, then, is that Dodd and Davies were correct in asserting that the "law of Christ" must be seen as a phrase carrying significant depth of meaning. For Paul, "law" had a broad range of meaning. Paul possessed an ethical tradition, made up of words and memories of Jesus' actions, that he considered to be authoritative. Furthermore,

⁶⁰⁴ Clyde Thomas Rhyne and J. A. Sanders also offered very helpful arguments regarding the role of the OT Law in Christianity, especially in Paul (see above, Chapter III, pp. 121-127).

⁶⁰⁵ Of the 39 scholars reviewed in Chapter III, 18 did not deal with the meaning of "law of Christ" in Paul's theology. This observation provides a needed cautionary note: it is not Paul's intent, nor mine, to place the "law of Christ" at or near the centre of Paul's theology. But Paul does, at two points in his writings, link "law" with Christ in a positive formulation, and this must be seen as an indication of his perception of Christian ethical responsibility.

Paul did not conceive of the "law of Christ" as a set of precepts to be fulfilled by the individual alone; rather, the "law of Christ" was to be fulfilled in the community of believers, and with the help of the Holy Spirit.

We acknowledge that several important Pauline scholars have not held to the position of Dodd and Davies (e.g., Furnish, Beker, Käsemann, Schoeps). Yet, on the basis of the exegetical analysis provided above, it seems apparent that Dodd and Davies were correct in pointing to the existence of an ethical standard in Paul's view of Christian responsibility. We hold that this Christian ethical responsibility was denoted in the phrase "law of Christ." Scholars such as Longenecker, Ridderbos, Toews, and J. A. Sanders have come to similar conclusions, but our work represents a new attempt to delineate the obedience motif that recurs throughout Paul's writings.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS OF PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE "LAW OF CHRIST"

Both Dodd and Davies were not hesitant to address some of the implications of their conclusions regarding the "law of Christ" in Paul's theology. Dodd wrote,

Thus, the church has a double duty in relation to the law of Christ. It is bound to take seriously the work of establishing a specific discipline for its own members, which shall bring the fundamental principles of the Gospel and the law of Christ to bear upon actual situations, in the world as it is. . . . But, secondly, the Church is also bound to pronounce in Christ's name moral judgments upon human conduct beyond the limits of its own member-

ship.⁶⁰⁶

W. D. Davies made similar observations regarding the role of the church.⁶⁰⁷ Both Davies and Dodd addressed the prevalent insistence on the separation of Gospel and law or law and grace.⁶⁰⁸ Furthermore, Davies provided several indications of the relevance of his understanding of Paul's phrase "law of Christ" for better Jewish-Christian dialogue and relations.⁶⁰⁹

Following the examples of Dodd and Davies, then, I intend here to make some brief and tentative statements about the implications of our understanding of the "law of Christ." It seems to me that the implications lie in three major areas, already alluded to by Dodd and Davies. First, the understanding of the "law of Christ" outlined in Chapter IV has something to say to that theology which perceives a dichotomy between law and grace. This position is especially

⁶⁰⁶ Dodd, Gospel and Law pp. 80-81.

⁶⁰⁷ Davies, "The Relevance of the Moral Teaching of the Early Church," p. 42. He writes, "It [the Church] recognizes the need for patient application of moral rules and duties to the ongoing life of the Church and the world in which the Parousia has not taken place, and also the need to stand always under the absolute demands of the New Sinai."

⁶⁰⁸ Dodd, Gospel and Law, p. 65; Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. x; further, Davies, "Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation," pp. 5-6.

⁶⁰⁹ Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," New Testament Studies 24 (1977-78), pp. 37-38; also, "Torah and Dogma: A Comment," p. 95 (f.n.); Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 145.

evident in churches of the Reformation. Second, and in connection with the first, Paul's phrase "law of Christ" has implications for the acting out of Christian ethics and responsibility. And finally, it has become clear that a proper understanding of the "law of Christ" has implications for a correct understanding of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.

5.2.1 The Law/Grace Discussion

The most powerful and most influential expression of the dichotomy between law and grace can be traced back to Martin Luther. His conception of the relation of grace to law is most clearly shown in his Commentary on Galatians. He writes:

Nullifying the grace of God is, therefore, a very great and very common sin, and one that all the self-righteous commit; for as long as they seek to be justified through the merit of congruity or through their own works and afflictions or through the Law, they nullify the grace of God and Christ, as we have said.⁶¹⁰

Such a view of the relationship of grace and law does not recognize the unity of the two. Reinhold Niebuhr says, "There is a constantly increasing sense of social obligation which is an integral part of the life of grace."⁶¹¹ The kind of view of the Law indicated by Luther also does grave in-

⁶¹⁰ Martin Luther, Luther's Works, Vol. 26. Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1-4, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), p. 182.

⁶¹¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol II, p. 190 (emphasis mine).

justice to the roles of grace and Law in the OT, as well as in Paul's thinking. John A. Toews⁶¹² and Morna Hooker,⁶¹³ among others, point out the relationship between grace and Law in the election of Israel. Toews makes several noteworthy assertions.⁶¹⁴ The covenant, he says, was the soteriological category in Judaism, not doing the Law. Rather, the Law was God's great gift to Israel, given as a sign of His grace. So, then, obedience of the Law was not a means of earning God's grace, but a condition for remaining in the covenant. So, too, in the NT, asserts Toews, the "law language" is maintenance language, not entrance language.

It concerns the shape and quality of life in the disciple community, not entrance into the disciple community. Salvation is always by grace through faith (the faith of Jesus and the faith of the believer) never by law observance. The latter is a

⁶¹² Toews, "Some Theses Toward a Theology of Law. . .," pp. 44, 46.

⁶¹³ Morna Hooker, "Paul and 'Covenantal Nomism'," p. 50. Hooker says that Israel's religious experience (God's election and salvation of Israel [grace] > Israel's response to the covenant at Sinai > life within the covenant, in obedience to the Law > final judgment > reward and punishment) is "remarkably close" to Paul's pattern of religious experience (God's gracious act in Christ > response to this act through baptism > life in Christ, in accordance with the Spirit > final judgment > reward and punishment). She concludes, "Although 'nomism' may not be the appropriate term for Paul's 'pattern of religion', therefore, it is clear that his understanding of how salvation 'works' is not so far from that of Judaism as his rejection of the Law might suggest. Indeed, one might well sum up his approach in the words of Leviticus: 'Be holy, for I am holy'." [Lev 11:22f.]

⁶¹⁴ Toews, "Some Theses. . .," p. 46. See also Abraham Heschel, The Insecurity of Freedom (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1966), p. 174. He writes, "The sharp contract drawn between the Torah

function of salvation, of maintaining the life of faith, of living out the life of faith.⁶¹⁵

This understanding of the relationship between grace and law must be applied, then, to Paul's phrase "law of Christ." Paul certainly does not perceive the demand of obedience to be central in Christianity. Rather, for Paul, the person and saving activity of Jesus Christ is the central feature of divine grace. So, when Paul speaks about the "obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5 and 16:26), the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:2), and the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2; cf. I Cor 9:21), he is clearly thinking about the response of humans to God's grace. The gracious act of God in Christ demands that the Christian adhere in his or her life to the divine will of God. John Henley writes, "the indicative of grace includes the imperative of obedience."⁶¹⁶

Such an understanding of the relationship between grace and Law provides us with a more accurate perception of Paul's theology and ethics. W. D. Davies wrote,

(teaching, law) and grace, between works and faith, represents a major divergence from the Hebrew way of thinking."

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44. W. D. Davies holds a similar position. See "Paul and the Law: Some Pitfalls in Interpretation," pp. 5-6.

⁶¹⁶ John A. Henley, "Eschatology and Community in the Ethics of Paul," *Australian Biblical Review* 27 (Oct. 1979), p. 26. In this article, Henley undertakes to provide a summary and critique of the positions of Furnish and Murphy-O'Connor regarding Pauline ethics.

To interpret the faith of the New Testament only, or even mainly, in terms of a rigid understanding of the Pauline antithesis of Grace and Law is to ignore not only the tumultuous, tortuous nature of Paul himself (a fact which alone should make us chary of making his experience in any way normative), and not only the exaggerations engendered by the historical controversy out of which the antithesis arose, but, even more, much evidence pointing to a 'law' which remains in the new covenant of grace, and, indeed, especially there, and which is rooted in the words of Jesus Christ himself.⁶¹⁷

We must, however, be wary of any attempt to make Paul's conception of the "law of Christ" into something that it is not. It is absolutely imperative that we not make the "law of Christ" into an entity separate from the words, actions, death and resurrection of Jesus. Further, we also must not invent a "law" which is isolated from the loving community of believers or the aid of the Holy Spirit. Herman Ridderbos correctly observes that, for Paul, "Christ, the law, the Spirit, and love constitute a unity."⁶¹⁸ It is this unity, in the final analysis, that answers the question of a dichotomy between Law and grace. And it is also this unity of Christ, Law, Spirit and love that has implications for Christian ethical activity in the present age.

⁶¹⁷ Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 440.

⁶¹⁸ Herman Ridderbos, Paul, p. 286.

5.2.2 Christian Moral Theology

The place of the "law of Christ" in Catholic and Protestant ethics must, of necessity, be addressed only very briefly and tentatively.⁶¹⁹ But, the place of this concept in Christian ethical responsibility is important. James Gustafson has observed that

the halakhic tradition in Judaism has significant similarities to the development of moral theology and canon law in Catholicism. . . . Rabbinic rationality and logic are parallel in function to the rationality of canon lawyers and moral theologians. Law, on the whole, has not had a similar centrality in Protestant history.⁶²⁰

As a consequence of this view, ethics in the Protestant Church have been "more pedagogical than juridical," continues Gustafson. A further broad generalization that may be made is that Protestant ethics are based more upon the principle sola scriptura, while Catholic ethics rely on the legacy of the natural law tradition of Catholicism.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁹ As this was not intended as a focus of my thesis, but only as a sideways glance, my remarks will be brief and my bibliographical knowledge limited.

⁶²⁰ James M. Gustafson, Protestant and Roman Catholic Ethics (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 2-3.

⁶²¹ Ibid., p. 25. Further, see James Gaffney, Newness of Life. A Modern Introduction to Catholic Ethics. This book, written as a discussion guide, includes for class use a set of questions at the end of each chapter. One question at the end of Chapter I asks, "Why cannot Catholic ethics be simply identified with biblical ethics?" (p. 6).

What, then, does Paul's conception of the "law of Christ" have to say to moral theologians and Christian ethicists today? First of all, on the basis of the exegetical analysis carried out in Chapter IV, we have seen that Paul makes it clear that Christian ethical responsibility must be given more substance than undefined love or pneumatic activity. There is an element of moral demand inherent in Christianity. For Paul, the "law of Christ" is embodied in flesh and blood: the actions and teachings of Jesus are the Torah for Christians. This assertion makes it clear, then, that in order to understand Jesus' teachings and actions, the Christian must engage in active historical and theological study of the biblical texts. Jesus' actions and teachings must be understood in their own context before they can be applied.⁶²² Furthermore, Paul's understanding of Jesus as a "Torah" has implications for understanding Christ's cosmic role (i.e., Christ as Wisdom).

There is, though, a second thing that must be said to moral theologians regarding the "law of Christ": there is no place for legalism in Christian ethics. Several scholars (e.g., Cranfield, Moule, Ladd) have alluded to the fact that Paul spoke of the "law of Christ" in a way that did not al-

⁶²² B. Häring, Free and Faithful in Christ. Moral Theology for Clergy and Laity, Vol One (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), p. 333. He writes, "Therefore, it is not correct to quote discrete biblical texts as proof texts, unless proper care is taken to discern the dynamics of historical development of ethical knowledge and the very diversity within the books of the Bible. . . ."

low for legalism. Indeed, in Paul's powerful polemic against Law, observes Moule,⁶²³ Paul was asserting that the human use of the Law as a regime or safety net is wrong and can only be described as "legalism." According to Paul, the only way to fulfill the demands of the "law" is to recognize the reality that God's grace is active and provides the only means to fulfillment.⁶²⁴ The depth of meaning that we have recognized in the Hebrew and Greek terms for "law" provides a further basis for this assertion. It may well be that it was this concern for reversion into legalism that held Paul from using the phrase "law of Christ" more frequently.

So, the phrase "law of Christ" is not to be seen as one of the anomalies in the writings of Paul, impossible to understand or follow. Rather, the "law of Christ" has depth and meaning. C. H. Dodd expresses this insight well:

It appears therefore that to "fulfil the law of Christ" means a good deal more than simply to act "in a Christian spirit" (as we say). It connotes the intention to carry out -- in a different setting and in altered circumstances, it is true -- the precepts which Jesus was believed to have given to his disciples, and which they handed down in the Church. This is to be ennomos Christou.⁶²⁵

⁶²³ See above, Chapter III, p. 67.

⁶²⁴ See above, Chapter III, pp. 66-68.

⁶²⁵ Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 147.

5.2.3 The Jewish-Christian Dialogue

Finally, the "law of Christ" also has something to say regarding the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Markus Barth, in an article entitled "St. Paul-- a Good Jew," indicates the predominant thinking about Paul and his connection with Judaism.

A good Jew? It is a sign of human weakness but nevertheless very common in church circles to assume that a Christian is superior to everything Jewish. We tend to prove Christian orthodoxy and virtue by condemning Judaism.⁶²⁶

John A. Toews has observed that much of Biblical scholarship has been governed by the paradigm that in Christianity, the Law was abolished or simply emptied into the demand to love, while in Judaism, salvation comes by adherence to a ritualistic, legalistic regime.⁶²⁷ This paradigm, says Toews, is erroneous and must be done away with. A more correct paradigm is:

New Testament ethics is an ethics of law, an ethics of moral structure. . . . An important component of New Testament law ethics is the Old Testament Torah as transmitted and interpreted by Jesus.⁶²⁸

In Chapter I, we saw that Lloyd Gaston believes that any attempt to find in Christianity a positive view of Judaism

⁶²⁶ Markus Barth, "St. Paul -- A Good Jew," Horizons in Biblical Theology 1 (1979), p. 7.

⁶²⁷ John Toews, "Some Theses. . .," pp. 43-44.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., p. 59. Torah ethics, explains Toews, is the ethics of story and stipulation, instruction and law, salvation and discipleship (p. 60).

must begin by reconsidering Paul's attitude to the Law,⁶² for it is in Paul that much anti-Semitism has found its ammunition. In our analysis of the meaning of "law of Christ" in Pauline theology, however, we have discovered that Paul held a positive view and a deep respect for the Law. The element of absolute freedom from Torah, from demands of any kind, finds no place in Paul's thought. As indicated most clearly in the phrase "law of Christ," but alluded to throughout his writings, Paul does not abrogate or annul the aspect of obedience in response to God's grace. In this sense, at least, there is a genuine continuity between the Jewish religion and the Christian one. Recognition of this continuity of the Law (albeit perhaps a radicalized Law) has positive possibilities for a more congenial relationship between Christianity and Judaism.

Implied in the above assertions is the fact that Paul has been misinterpreted throughout much of the history of the Christian Church. I am cognizant of Franz Overbeck's cautious statement that no person could ever understand Paul, and if one claimed to, then it was clear that the person did not.⁶³ Yet, it seems to me that in light of the discussion in the previous pages, the view of W. D. Davies in this regard must be upheld

⁶² Above, Chapter I, p. 29.

⁶³ Quoted in Markus Barth, Justification. Pauline Texts Interpreted in the Light of the Old and New Testament, tr. A. M. Woodruff (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 11.

Before the exclusive rigidities of Jamnia had set in, Paul wrestled with and, in terms of the eschatological mystery, provided ground in his day for mutual tolerance and respect between Jew and Gentile Christian. It is part of the bitter irony of history that this colossus of a man, who had he been heeded might have created a climate of mutual respect and even affection between Jews and Christians, was misinterpreted by both and his theology often used as part of the very scheme of salvation to justify the infliction of suffering on Jews, so that until very recently Paul has been regarded as unspeakable among his own people.⁶³¹

As we have seen, Paul's phrase "law of Christ" is not an isolated anomaly in his thinking. Rather, it indicates a motif of obedience in Christianity and the existence of a standard for Christian ethical responsibility. In our reconsideration of C. H. Dodd and W. D. Davies, it has become clear that their ideas have demanded that certain questions and issues be discussed in Pauline scholarship. Though their conclusions have not been deemed acceptable by many subsequent scholars, evidence amassed since 1950 by scholars such as L. M. Pasinya, J. A. Sanders, Harald Riesenfeld, Birger Gerhardsson and many others, has served to reinforce and affirm the ideas of Dodd and Davies.

⁶³¹ Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," New Testament Studies 24 (1977-78), pp. 37-38.

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