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“FOCUSING” IN ST. PAUL A RESOLUTION OF DIFFICULTIES

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The following exegetical piece presents a new approach to understanding certain passages in St. Paul's epistles, passages which appear on the surface to be contradictory. This approach, called 'focusing', suggests that Paul sometimes spoke about the same situation in different ways depending on the point he wished to make and the precise nature of the problem at hand. Since Fr. William Most's argument is tightly reasoned and adheres closely to the texts in question, readers are advised to consider his case only with the Scriptures at hand, and in conjunction with a careful reading of the passages to which the author refers. In so doing, an additional benefit will emerge. The problem texts deal primarily with the Pauline understanding of the respective conditions of man under the Law and under Christ's grace, and so the discussion sheds much light on the relationship between the Old and New Covenants. Fr. Most thereby stimulates increased understanding of the mystery of salvation itself



COMPLEX CONCEPTS CAN BE PRESENTED IN MORE THAN ONE WAY. MEN OF THE WEST are very apt to work by synthesis, commonly involving abstractions and many distinctions. Semites are not so given to these means; they have a different way. For example, in Mt.6:6, we find: “Whenever you pray, go to your room, and close your door, and pray to your Father in private”, yet in Mt. 5:16: “Your light must shine before men, so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father.”

On hearing such seeming contradictions, some would probably just try to catch a spirit of each, confident that in some way they are compatible, and that both injunctions can be fulfilled, but not trying to see how. Others would probably use rabbinic method, more specifically the 13th midda of Rabbi Ishmael, which taught that if two verses are contradictory, one should find a third Scriptural passage to solve the contradiction.¹ Still others would be apt to focus their view on the aspect that dominated the mind of the speaker in each of the statements. Thus in Mt. 6:6 one might note a focus on avoidance of hypocrisy, while in 5:16 the stress would be on the glory of God. Both should be fostered: God's glory and man's freedom from hypocrisy. There is a certain tension, yet one can, by noting the focus, grasp the speaker's intention.

St. Paul was quite capable of working in all the ways just mentioned. He surely could make use of the third text to solve the two others. Schoeps specifically suggests Paul followed that 13th midda in Romans, for, he says:

Habbakuk 2:4: “He who through faith is righteous shall live” and Lev. 18:5: “He who does them shall live by them” are in contradiction. A further text.. .gives the solution: “Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”²

Paul could also expect his readers to pick out the point of focus in two apparently clashing texts. Paul himself seemed to revel in antithetic pairs, as Brunot points out.³ Two examples may be briefly taken. First, as soon as Paul thought of

the dead, the term living came to mind, as when he said, "...the dead in Christ will rise first; then we, the living ... will be snatched together with them..." (I Thes. 4:16-17). Second, he played extensively on the notions of folly and wisdom in the first four chapters of the First Letter to the Corinthians. But Paul's use of antitheses is not just a literary device, nor a mere psychological quirk. It goes far beyond that, and when combined with the tendency to focus on one aspect, as noted in the pair of texts cited earlier, his use of antitheses leads to some previously unsuspected conclusions.

It is well to fix clearly in mind at the outset what no one would deny, namely, that in exegesis we rarely can prove the meaning of a text with such conclusiveness that some reasonable person could not come forth with a different interpretation. Hence, the interpretations of Paul proposed here cannot claim more than varied degrees of probability. In every instance, different interpretations have been and still are offered. It is hoped, however, that some ways of following the thought of Paul will yield a better likelihood of truth, and will promote more coherent understanding.

To return, then, to the problem: Paul not only frequently indulged in antitheses, but he also wrote more than one set of statements which seem hopelessly contradictory. As a result, many would second the words of Minear: "It would be outright folly for me to try to match wits with the author of Romans. Attempts to cope with Paul's thought quickly force any reader beyond his depth."⁴

APPARENT OPPOSITIONS

We begin with the less clear, but easier, group of problem texts, consisting of two pairs of seeming oppositions found in I Corinthians. These seem to show a rhetorical approach on the part of Paul, in contrast to a more logical or theological one that is found in the other group to be considered later.⁵

In dealing with the problem of food sacrificed to idols, we note the contrast of I Cor. 8:10 with 10:21. The former reads: "But if someone sees you, who have knowledge, reclining in the temple of an idol: will not his conscience, being weak, be 'edified' to the point of eating the things sacrificed to idols?" On the other hand, in 10:21 we find: "You cannot share in the table of the Lord and the table of demons."

Quite a few commentators observe that the word *edify* is used ironically in 8:10. But most exegetes, if they see the problem of reconciling 8:10 with 10:21 at all, make no mention of it.⁶ (e.g., Ruef, Barrett, Hering, Lietzmann, O'Rourke, Kugelman). Yet there is a real difficulty, for 10:21 clearly forbids taking part in the sacrificial meals in the temples, but 8:10 does not even hint that it is wrong in itself to take part in such rites. It merely cautions against scandal. The inference could easily be drawn that as long as there is no scandal, the strong, knowledgeable Christians may join in the sacrificial meals. One exegete, Moffatt, tries to solve the problem by saying that in 8:10 there is no sacrificial feast; it is only a banquet held in a room in a temple, not a religious rite, while 10:21 does speak of a sacrificial meal.⁷

One can readily admit the inherent plausibility of Moffatt's suggestion, even though there is nothing in the text to suggest a distinction. However, it is also possible that we have here an example of Pauline focusing. By focusing is meant simply this: Paul could so fix his gaze on one aspect of a matter, as to ignore other aspects completely. It is as though one were looking through a tube, such as that of a telescope or microscope. Only the objects within the circle formed by the tube can be seen. Other objects which may be present and near, which de facto may be part of the total area, are not seen. Such a process has already been suggested in the seeming clash of Mt. 6:6 and 5:16. It is quite possible that Paul was using a similarly focused perspective in 8:10, and a full or de facto view in 10:21. This would mean that in 8:10 Paul, being intent on the question of scandal as a result of one's knowledge, gave the answer dictated within this category. He completely left out of the picture the fact that, knowledge or no knowledge, and even if there is no scandal, it is simply forbidden to take part in pagan rites. Another pair, I Cor. 11:5 and 14:34-35, has attracted more notice from commentators. In the former we hear Paul saying: "Every woman praying or prophesying with unveiled head disgraces her head." It would be quite easy to infer that as long as the woman wears a veil, it is permitted for her to pray or prophesy in the church. Yet in 14:34-35, Paul quite flatly bade women be silent in church, even to save their questions to be asked later, at home.

Some would solve the problem by pointing to the verb *lalein* in 14:34, so as to say that only chattering is forbidden, but prophesying and praying are permitted, as long as the woman wears a veil. However, Barrett points

out that it is not very convincing to argue that to speak.. .does not refer to such praying and prophesying, but to uninspired speech.. ..the verb does in Classical Greek bear the meaning “to chatter”...but in the New Testament and in Paul, the verb does not normally have this meaning, and is used throughout chapter xiv (verses 2, 3,4,5,6,9,11,13,18,19,21,23,27,28,29, 39) in the sense of inspired speech.⁸

Barrett himself suggests:

He cannot have disapproved on principle of contributions made by women to Christian worship and discussion or he would not have allowed xi:5 to stand in his epistle, but in the interests of peace and good order he could command the women to be silent, precisely as he could give orders for a male prophet to be silent if his continued speech was likely to prove unedifying.⁹

However, the parallel suggested by Barrett is not complete, for while Paul ordered silence on the part of the male prophet only in particular cases where harm would have come, he unconditionally ordered silence on the part of the women.

Moffatt and Hering seem to say that Paul objected to women taking part in discussion, but did not forbid their prophesying.¹⁰ This suggestion is not inherently impossible, though Moffatt and Hering do not provide any support in the text for the distinction they propose. Nor do the MSS give the needed backing for the hypothesis of others, e.g. Ruef¹¹, that 14:34-36 is an interpolation. Still others, such as Kugelman, have no comment at all on the problem. O'Rourke flatly states: “There does not seem to be an opposition between what is stated here and in 11:5 (contra Osty).”¹² Strack-Billerbeck observe that women were forbidden to speak in the synagogues.¹³ Allo makes a suggestion that is at least very close to the proposal of focusing. He says that the contradiction of the two passages is only apparent, for, actually, this is an example of a tactic used by Paul in controversy. When he wanted to remove an abuse, he would begin by examining it under only one aspect, which might be secondary, before attacking the chief substance.¹⁴ Allo argues that this same tactic is used in the case of the texts of 8:10 and 10:21 which has already been examined.

If the term focusing is used here, it may be said that in 11:5 Paul narrowed his perspective to the question of veils: women must wear veils, he insisted. He did not

notice, apparently, that someone could infer that if they do wear veils, they can speak in church. So, he was intent only on the one point in 11:5, and did not look at the rest of the picture. But in 14:34-35 Paul was speaking without the focus, and forbade women to speak in Church with or without the veil, just as in the case of the food sacrificed to idols, where he first gave the impression that one could eat such foods even in sacrificial meals in temples provided there would be no scandal, but later gave a flat prohibition of such participation in pagan rites. Of course, it would still have to be determined whether and to what extent Paul was simply repeating current social custom in 14:34-35, and to what extent he may have been speaking within a theological framework. But that is a task for a different study.¹⁵



THE LAW AND THE JEW

The most important group of texts in which there seem to be two sets of statements, focused and de facto, deals with the law and further ramifications of its problems. In general, Paul most commonly spoke of the law in a dismal way. Gal. 3:21 says the law could not give life. Gal. 3:10 asserts that those who depend on the regime of the law are “under a curse”, because the law curses those who do not keep it.¹⁶ The letters to the Corinthians add that the law is the “power of sin” (I Cor. 15:56), that it kills (II Cor. 3:6), and that it is really a “ministry of condemnation” (II Cor. 3:9).

At the same time Paul knew that the law is “holy and the command is holy and righteous and good” (Rom. 7:12), and that “the law is spiritual” (Rom. 7:14). In fact, the reception of the law was one of the special great privileges of the old people of God (Rom. 9:4). Strangely, commentators on the focal text of Rom. 9:4 make no mention of any problem. If we are willing to assume that Paul was using two ways of looking at the law, with and without focus, sense can be made of all these statements.

In his running fight with the Judaizers, Paul, a true Semite, gave no quarter to his adversaries. Instead of a nuanced view of the law, such as a modern writer would be apt to give, Paul made merely a sharp dichotomy. There are two ways of seeking righteousness and

eschatological salvation, he insisted: one is by the works of the law, the other by faith. To show that the quest is hopeless if attempted through the works of the law, he used two lines of approach. First, he said in a general way that such a thing is vain; second, he said that no one has ever succeeded by that route. The second aspect will be considered later.

To show that it is hopeless to try for righteousness by the law, Paul simply narrowed his field of vision. What does the law do? It makes demands (in Rom. 7:7,11 he added that it even provided enticement and an occasion of deception), but gives no strength to fulfill the demands. Lacking the strength, of course, a man must fall. Falling, he comes under the curse which the law pronounces on those who fail to keep it. Outside the focused circle of Paul's vision in the first series of statements lies an obvious fact: even before the coming of Christ, the Father did make his help, his grace available to men. With it, they could keep the law. With this help available, it was really a privilege to have the law of God, as Paul said in the second series of texts.

Was Paul unfair in this tactic? He was certainly not unfair in the context of his times and culture. Nor can we today really and strictly charge dishonesty. For it is not unreasonable to consider the law simply in itself, without adding the fact that divine help was available. For that help came not through or because of the law. It was something quite independent of the law, something that belonged to a different order, that of Christ, the order which Paul insisted is the only viable way to righteousness and eschatological salvation. Therefore, it was not at all unreasonable to leave out of the picture something that actually belongs to a different picture. Yet, when a different context suggested it, Paul could and did introduce that added element of divine help. He did that in the second series of texts, which spoke of the law as a privilege and a blessing.

This proposal of focusing is similar to what Allo suggested for I Cor. 14:34-35, but there is a difference. For in I Cor. 11:5, what Paul said is flatly true in itself, as it stands. It is only the inference which can be drawn from it (i.e., it is permitted to prophesy in church with veils) that Paul later rejected in 14:34-35. But here, in the two groups of statements on the law, it is not just an implication that is countered later. The entire *prima facie* meaning of his harsh words on the law clashes with the statements that the law was a privilege.

The second aspect of Paul's words on the law embodies the practical question: could or did anyone actually keep it? Again, we are faced with seemingly contradictory assertions, which have caused much trouble to commentators. For the sake of clarity and simplicity, we begin this time with the *de facto* series of statements. Paul told the Philippians that he himself "as to the justification that is in the law [was] without blame" (Phil. 3:6). And surely Paul knew the many Old Testament passages in which David is praised as perfect. And he perhaps knew that his travelling companion, Luke, intended to say that Zechariah and Elizabeth kept the law perfectly (Lk. 1:6). Indeed, in the unfocused perspective, that in which Paul took into account the *de facto* divine help, it was possible to keep the law. And he knew well that some, perhaps many, had done so. He himself had done it. But obviously, within the focused circle that leaves divine help out of the picture, Paul would have had to say that no one kept it, that no one could possible keep it.

THE SINS OF MEN

Within another cluster of passages, we first notice Rom. 1:24-32, in which Paul gave a long, most dismal list of vices, including hideous unnatural vices. He seems to imply that all (presumably all pagans) are guilty of all of these. The very purpose Paul had in mind in the first three chapters of Romans seems to demand this understanding of his catalog. For Paul, as we know, wanted to show that all men are hopeless if they try to depend on the law, and can have hope only through faith in Christ. For such a position, he would not, of course, have had to charge every man with every sin. But he would have had to say that every man is hopelessly sinful. However, reasons will presently appear which suggest Paul meant to charge every man with every sin.

Some commentators have tried to soften this picture. Speaking of this passage, Fitzmyer asserts: "In this entire section.. .Paul does not affirm that every individual pagan before Christ's coming was a moral failure. Rather, he speaks collectively. Furthermore he describes a *de facto* situation and does not argue that paganism *de jure* was incapable of making men upright." But then, if not every pagan was a moral failure, Paul's thesis that all are hopelessly sunk and must have Christ cannot stand. Fitzmyer seems to leave some pagans morally good. We wonder too in what sense paganism *de jure* could make a man upright.

Leenhardt speaks similarly: “We should find the picture drawn by the apostle excessive and unfair if we supposed his intention had been to give a portrait of all men.... He wishes to describe an orientation of the human being, its inner tendencies.”¹⁸ But, mere inner tendencies or orientation alone would not make all men hopeless, in need of Christ. Leenhardt does say it would be unfair to make Paul’s words apply to all. But if they do not apply to all, then Paul’s thesis would collapse, for not all would need Christ.¹⁹

Dodd would have us correct this passage by another: “...we must correct the present description from what is said in ii, 14-15,”²⁰ and also, ‘...in concrete cases he [Paul] allows that in some measure at least the good pagan.. .can do the right thing.’²¹ However, if we correct one passage by another, we imply that one or both are not truthful, that Paul is contradicting himself. Others have attempted to say that the picture drawn is not historical but theological. Thus Lyonnet writes that Paul proposed not an historical but a theological description of the complete misery of men without Christ.²² Vicentini speaks similarly.²³

Lyonnet and Vicentini seem to have found a basic part of the truth. The picture given by Paul here is not a de facto picture. It is a picture intended to teach that man by his own powers, by trying to keep the law with his own strength, cannot save himself. The lacuna in their explanation, however, is this: they do not explain how Paul can be said to give a theological picture. For the form of speaking used by Paul certainly seems to be the simple factual or historical statement.

It is quite conceivable that what Lyonnet²⁴ and Vicentini were really searching for is found in the pattern of focusing. Paul used here his focused view of law—not now the Mosaic law, but the law in the hearts of gentiles, of which he would speak in 2:14-16. That law, like the Mosaic law, made demands, yet gave no strength, so a man had to fall. And, he had to fall into every sin, for the law gave no strength to avoid any sin, to satisfy any of its demands. Hence, there is no need of speaking of exceptions to Paul’s statements, nor to charge him with contradictions. In 1:24-32 he used the focused view. In 2:14-16, however, he used the de facto view of the same situation. He most usually used the focused view in Romans. It is dictated by his purpose of proving that all men are hopeless, the conclusion he thundered forth in 3:9-11: “All are under sin.... There is no just one, not even

one; there is no one who understands.. .who is a seeker of God. There is not one who does what is good, not one.” And Paul continued with grim details, charging each man with a throat that is an open grave, tongues full of guile, poison of vipers under their lips, curses, shedding blood, causing calamity, misery, having no fear of God. Yet he was merely bringing out the inevitable consequences of being under demands, but not having the strength to meet them: the situation of man, gentile and Jew, under the law. Nor can one insist on the poetic genre of these statements to discount them. Without any poetry, Paul repeated the same sweeping charge in 3:23: “All have sinned.”

That Paul knew he was focusing, not giving the de facto picture, is clear also from I Cor. 6:11, in which, after giving a much less dreadful and shorter list of grave sinners, he added: “certain ones of you [tines] were these” kinds of sinners. He obviously implies that by no means all of the Corinthians (hardly the prize group among the Pauline churches) were guilty of all sins, or even of any of them. The clash between I Cor. 6:11 and Rom. 1:24-32 would be inexplicable, it seems, without recourse to the focused as opposed to de facto picture explanations. I have found no commentator at all who adverts to the seeming conflict of these two passages.

After the grim catalog of chapter 1, Paul at once concluded: “For this reason [dio] you are inexcusable, O every man who judges. For in that in which you judge the other, you condemn yourself, for you who judge do the very same things [ta auta]” (Rom. 2:1). There are two problems in these lines. The first is that of the dio. It is surely an inferential particle pointing out a logical or causal connection with what went before. Yet, how can such a connection be made? The difficulty has seemed so great that many have given up. Thus, Fitzmyer wrote: “...here it is apparently a mere transitional particle”²⁵ Similarly Althaus calls it “only the transition to a related topic.”²⁶ Michel says dio has become “a simple transitional particle.”²⁷ Huby describes the case as “less the logical consequence of the matter immediately before (1,32) than the continuation of the development on the culpability of men who, having known the truth, did not follow it.”²⁸ Such a view is difficult to maintain. Arndt-Gingrich do not list such a meaning for dio.²⁹ Bultmann recognized this when he felt obliged to do away with the whole verse and call it a gloss.³⁰

The second difficulty, tightly bound up with the

the first, surrounds the question of how it can be said that every man who judges does the very same things (ta auta). It is hard to find any agreement among commentators on this problem, or even to find a satisfactory grouping of their remarks. Leenhardt says: "That man is without excuse who uses the vices of others, even the worst, as a screen for his own faults, even the least."³¹ But this simply does not face the problem of the ta auta. Althaus is a bit more ingenious. He suggests that even if a man does not commit outright idolatry and homosexuality, at least he does some of the things mentioned in 1:24ff and so he too stands in contradiction to God in his own way.³²

Minear has a somewhat similar position. He asks us to notice Paul's analysis of the root sin of the Gentiles.... They did not honour.. .him as God.... They did not give thanks to him.... They claimed to be wise.... It was this root sin which entitled Paul ...to apply the accusations against the Gentiles to the Jewish-Christian judges in 2:1-4.³³

But clearly a common basis is one thing; to commit the very same sins is another. Barth simply ignores the ta auta when he observes: "There are no saints in the midst of a company of sinners."³⁴ Dodd writes: "In what sense Paul made such a charge we must learn from verses 17 sqq."³⁵ But again, that list of vices in 17ff hardly justifies saying ta auta in all cases. Kuss approaches more nearly our explanation when he says that Paul, considering the case from the standpoint of salvation won through Christ, wanted to describe the hopeless status of mankind before and without Christ.³⁶

We could solve both parts of the problem by seeing the entire stretch from 1:24 through 2:2 (and beyond) as written with a focused perspective. In 1:24-32 Paul could charge all pagans with all the vices he enumerated by focusing strictly on what the law (in the heart or on Mosaic tablets) did: it made demands, gave no strength, so men had to fall, and fall into everything the law prohibited. Since this applied to all men, then any man who judges-gentile or Jew-does the very same things (ta auta). For the law-whichever one a man has-gives no strength to fulfill any of its demands. Hence too the *ta auta* need not be strained: as a result of the fact that all fall into all these sins, anyone at all who condemns is guilty of the very same things.

Was Paul addressing gentiles or Jews in 2:1-2?

Our view will not resolve the question. It merely points out that in the focused perspective, all men alike, Jews and gentiles, commit all sins. As a result, all, gentiles and Jews, must not judge, for all commit all sins (ta auta). Moreover, looking ahead, this will provide an explanation for the otherwise puzzling charges made against Jews in 2:21ff.

HOPELESSNESS WITHOUT CHRIST

As we have already seen in passing, Romans 2:14-16 is another problem passage. Barrett notes the difficulty: "to suggest that the Gentiles kept the moral law would make nonsense of Paul's thought as a whole"³⁷ The reason is clear. Paul had been striving with all his might to prove that no one keeps it. Barrett then tries to escape the difficulty by a massive reinterpretation: "What the law requires is.. .believing obedience or obedient faith.... When man recognizes and accepts this relationship he may be said to do what the law requires 'by nature'"³⁸ But this seems a bit like eisegesis, or reading something into the text. Paul really spoke of doing the things of the law. The importance of the plural and the context-especially the fact that in 2:6 Paul spoke of God as going to "repay each man according to his works"-cannot be overlooked. There is no mention of a man's faith. And immediately before this passage, in 2:13, Paul said that "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law will be declared just." Hearing and doing is not an apt contrast to use in speaking of mere faith.³⁹

Huby, interestingly, speaks of a phenomenon of polarity which he says has been too little noted: Paul concentrated on one point, on God justly rewarding and punishing with no respect of persons.⁴⁰ It is good to see Huby recognizing something like a focus, but here Paul was not focusing. What Huby suggests would not explain how gentiles can be so hopelessly guilty as charged in 1:24ff yet in 2:14-16 be better so that some are saved. Nor does it explain how the emphasis on works does not contradict the thesis of salvation by faith.

Dodd puts 2:14-16 after 2:13 and parenthetically notes that "the possible exceptions of ii,10,14-15,26 are left out of sight."⁴¹ Kuss thinks that 2:14-16 clashes with 5:13 and asserts that the fact that many pagans did the things of the law was evidence for Paul that they had the law within them.⁴² This thought, he says, clashes with 5:13, but Paul was there entirely preoccupied with arguing the problem at hand, not with systematic theology.

Still, this is no explanation for the alleged contradiction. Lyonnet⁴³ adds a puzzling pair of assertions: when Paul said that the doers of the law are justified, he did not suppose they are justified by the very keeping of the law; yet, one cannot deny that there is question here of a true justification, especially considering verses 26 and 29.⁴⁴

There are, it is clear, two difficult questions: 1) does 2:14-16 clash with the assertions that all men are hopeless without Christ; and, 2) was Paul going back on his basic thesis that salvation comes only by faith.

The first question is the more easily treated. If it is said that Paul was focusing in order to prove that all men, gentiles and Jews, are hopeless and cannot keep the law, it can still be said that in the present passage of 2:14-16 Paul dropped the focus and spoke in the de facto way. That is, he admitted here that the gentiles de facto had the help of God or the grace of Christ offered to them in anticipation of Christ. The focused picture leaves no possibility of salvation; the de facto picture readily does leave the possibility open. Nor is it presented as a mere unrealizable hypothesis.

Paul made this shift from focus to de facto here because the theme of works, as we saw in 2:6-12, had been on his mind, and, more to the point, because he was about to strike at the Jews to destroy their boast. To that end he wanted a contrast: Jews even with the law do not live rightly, though the gentiles without such an advantage do rather well.

The second question, however, must still be asked: was Paul going back on his principle of justification by faith rather than by works of the law? To try to solve the problem we first note that in the earlier part of chapter 2, Paul had works and reward of works much to the fore in his thought. In 2:6 he had said, quoting, that "God will repay each man according to his works." Verses 7 to 13 seem to elaborate on this theme, so, if there is a contradiction, Paul himself put it there. But he did not really contradict his thesis of salvation by faith, as is obvious from two closely intertwined reasons. First, works are the proof and fruit of faith. Paul could say this without rejecting his position, without saying that works earn salvation. Chapter 8 says many times over that the Christian must follow the Spirit of Christ. If he does so, he belongs to Christ; if not, he does not belong to Christ. Now he who follows the Spirit puts to death the deeds of the flesh, and so, de facto, he does not violate the law

(note the negative). Hence Paul had given two check-lists to the Galatians, who seem to have thought that freedom from the law meant they could indulge in all vices. They could know, Paul told them, if they really were following the Spirit or the flesh by means of these lists:

Walk by the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the desire of the flesh.... If you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. For the works of the flesh are obvious, which are: fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, black magic, enmities, strife, rivalry, anger, seeking for honors, discord, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies of drink, and things like these-as to which I predict to you, as I have predicted, that they who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is: love, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, fidelity, mildness, chastity-against such there is no law (Gal. 5:15-23).⁴⁵

Obviously, a person who produces these fruits, and avoids the works of the flesh just listed, will not be violating the moral law.



Second, it is one thing to say that one keeps the law de facto, and another thing to say that this keeping of the law earns salvation. These fruits of the Spirit are the result, not the cause, of being saved. (The word saved is here used in the broad Scriptural perspective in which a man is saved by faith when he becomes a member of Christ, even though full eschatological salvation has not yet been attained, but surely will follow if he continues to "be in line with the Spirit" as Paul urged the Galatians (5:25)). God will give salvation as a free unearned gift,⁴⁶ if we do not disqualify ourselves by following not the Spirit but the flesh.⁴⁷

Paul's contention that all men are hopeless without Christ obviously required that he produce a set of charges against the Jews, parallel to those against the gentiles. He did that in 2:17-24. Again commentators have had difficulties, and have tried to soften the charges. Converting statements to questions is obviously one tactic. Barrett admits what is obvious, that the Jews were not, as a whole, guilty of theft, adultery and sacrilege, but, "When theft, adultery and sacrilege are strictly and radi-

cally understood, there is no man who is not guilty of all three."⁴⁸ He then explains that they steal the honor due to God, they commit adultery in the sense of Hos. 1-11, and they are guilty of sacrilege when they exalt themselves as judges and lords over fellow creatures and render this devotion, due to God alone, to themselves. But, this is almost recourse to the ancient device of allegory to solve a problem. Fitzmyer faces the problem squarely, but merely asks questions, attempting no real solution:

Why does Paul introduce this strange accusation [temple robbing]? Were Jews open to the charge of temple robbing...? Josephus is apparently at pains to answer the charge that the Greek name of Jerusalem Hierosolyma was derived from the vb. hierosylein, "rob a temple". If Paul has something like this in mind, his taunt would be all the more telling.⁴⁹

Obviously, the Jews in general were not open to such charges: in the de facto picture the charges are mostly false. But in a focused picture, the charges can be made against the Jews, just as a much worse catalog could be hurled at the gentiles.

Why, we may ask ourselves, did not Paul simply use an ideal conditional structure? Greek does have such a structure. He could have said, for example: "All men, if they did not have Christ, would not be able to avoid falling into every conceivable sin." This would have sustained his thesis too.

We can only guess at why Paul did not write that way. First, such a statement would carry far less psychological impact than the flat statements actually used by Paul. Second, Paul was apt to be influenced by the style of the Hebrew Scriptures. Hebrew, of course, lacks the hypothetical conditional forms that Greek possesses. As a result, although the New American Bible translates Ps. 27:10 as "Though my father and mother forsake me, yet will the Lord receive me", the literal Hebrew has "My father and my mother forsook me, but the Lord will take me up." Similarly, for Is. 63:16, NAB has: "Were Abraham not to know us, nor Israel to acknowledge us, you, Lord, are our father..." But the literal translation would be: "Abraham did not know us, and Israel will not acknowledge us: you, Lord, are our father..."⁵⁰ Therefore, although Paul surely knew the Greek structure, to give his statements greater force, he chose the flatter assertions, and his familiarity with Hebrew Scripture would have made him feel more at ease in doing so.⁵¹

In Romans 7:7-25, Paul discussed the relationship of law, sin, death, Christ and life. In this passage he spoke in the first person singular. What he meant by that "I" is much debated, and the various opinions are often so nuanced and hesitant that it is not easy to classify them. Davies says this is "a description of Paul's struggle with his Evil Impulse",⁵² referring to the rabbinic notion of the two Yetzers, good and evil. But Paul, who had claimed to have kept the law perfectly before meeting Christ (Phil. 3:6), could not have said after knowing Christ that "I am weak flesh" (Rom. 7:14), and still have told the Christians that they "are not in the flesh" (8:9) and, by implication, that they can do what the flesh cannot do (8:8), i.e., please God. Paul obviously could do what other Christians could do.

Dodd makes the passage autobiographical, but in a typical way: "We may take it, then, that this passage does describe Paul's own experience ...and therefore may describe the condition of any Christian."⁵³ Baules thinks the time when "I" lived without the law can only mean the age before the age of reason, infancy.⁵⁴

Benoit says that since *nomos* stands for the Mosaic law, *ego* must represent the man who is under that law, the Jew.⁵⁵ He adds that insufficient attention has been paid to the fact that Paul was not reflecting on the moral evolution of individuals, but on the principal stages in the history of humanity. Further, he thinks the "I" stands for man as such, seen in his specific character of an autonomous and responsible person.⁵⁶ He thinks also that men could keep the law, that Paul did not admit that the law was an impossible yoke. He says that such a concept does not do justice to God, and fails to recognize the sanctity that was produced during the Old Testament.⁵⁷ He observes that Paul himself declared in Phil. 3:6 that he was once irreproachable according to the law. Lyonnet interprets the passage in a way that is quite similar to what we would call a focused view, without using that term, or seeming to know that such a thought pattern really is found elsewhere in Paul. He says that the description of chapter 7 carefully avoids all mention of the Spirit, and evokes the law of reason, an undoubted sign that Paul meant to describe the experience of a sinful man, a man not yet in possession of the Spirit.⁵⁸ He even says that Paul "prescinds" from all influence of Christ.⁵⁹ (To prescind, of course, is to leave out, by a sort of focusing, the divine help a man had available de facto). Lyonnet

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Some commentators speak of the “I” as man in general, e.g., Cerfaux: “The ‘I’ who is presumed to be the subject of the experience is in fact abstract humanity, man as such under the law.” Fitzmyer says that Paul is “dramatizing. . .the experience common to all who were faced with the Mosaic Law and who relied on their own resources to meet its obligations.”⁶² It is difficult to be sure precisely how some of these interpretations are meant, whether or not they approach the focusing idea, as Lyonnet’s does. For although the citation from Cerfaux just given might at first sight seem to be similar, yet when we read other comments of his in the same work, we see he hardly could have had anything like the focus notion in mind. For he says:

We see that Paul never admitted that a Christian might not attain salvation.... But when the first flush of faith began to wane, what happened? The phrase in Phil 2:12 “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” is far from absolute assurance.... What should we conclude...? For a long time the Apostle continued to affirm the certainty of salvation.... He thought that all Christians would be saved⁶³

But later, apparently, he changed. Cerfaux seems to have read what we shall soon see as the focused statements in Rom. 8 as if they were absolute, non-focused.⁶⁴ Hence he proposes, not that Paul was looking at the same thing in two different ways, but that Paul changed his mind over a period of time.

FOCUSING AGAIN A SOLUTION

If the passage is studied as an instance of focusing, there will emerge in general what a fair number of commentators have said: the “I” is a man under the law,

without the help of divine grace. Such a man, of course, cannot do other than fall. However, it must be noticed that there are really two phases within the “I” passage, the one from Adam to the law, the other from the law to Christ.

Phase one is the period before the Mosaic law. In that phase Paul says: “I lived without the law” (7:9). How shall one take the word lived? Benoit says that man lived not with a full life, like that of grace, but with a relative life, in the sense that he was not in open rebellion against God, and especially that he was not under the yoke of death, imposed solely by formal sin.⁶⁵

But Paul said nothing to indicate that the life was only a relative life. He said without qualification “I lived.” How could Paul say this? He did it by focusing on sin in the strictest sense, that of parabasis, the violation of a formally and explicitly revealed command of God “in the likeness of the transgression of Adam” (5:14). Paul knew perfectly well that lesser sins, even formal sins,⁶⁶ were committed during that period. He himself insisted strongly on that point in 5:14: “Death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the transgression of Adam.” However, Paul can ignore even formal sins that are not parabasis, by means of his focus, and thus can say flatly in 7:9: “I lived.”

Why did Paul choose to change his stance in this description of phase one, as compared to what he had said in 5:14? It was part of his intense desire to paint the case of the man under the law as being utterly hopeless. By contrast, he said that men before the law were alive, so deadly was the law. Yet he was not entirely unfair, for in spite of this determined push, he said early in chapter 7: “Is the law sin? Banish the thought!” And also: “The law is holy, and the command is holy and righteous and good” (7:12) and in 7:14, “the law is spiritual.”

To sum up, in phase one Paul spoke of man as living, inasmuch as he was focusing on parabasis, the really full-blown sin which defies an explicitly revealed command of God “in the likeness of the transgression of Adam.” Such a sin was not to be had in phase one. In 5:14 Paul had described the same period as a time of the reign of death, by taking sin in the broader sense, which included violations of the law written in hearts, without an explicit externally revealed command. In 7, by a focus, he left out the sins he had spoken of in 5:14.

Phase two is the time of the Mosaic law, the time of death: “When the command came, sin came to life” (7:9)⁶⁷ and so “I died” (7:10). In this passage we find the by now familiar focused pattern: the law made demands and gave no strength, so fall was inevitable. But here Paul added two amplifications. The commands were not only too much for man’s strength, they were even an enticement: “I did not know desire if the law did not say: You shall not desire” (7:7). They were also an occasion of deception: “Sin, taking occasion through the command, deceived me, and through it, killed me” (7:11).⁶⁸

Obviously, Paul achieved his purpose. He showed that relying on the law is hopelessly ruinous: only Christ can rescue me, man. Therefore, at the end of chapter 7, he cried out: “I am a wretched man. Who will deliver me from the body of this death” (7:24).⁶⁹ The answer was to be

Christ. His way would be brilliantly painted in chapter 8, a new phase—phase three.

Just as in speaking of the law Paul focused in order to see only what the law of itself could produce, so in chapter 8 Paul could and did focus on what the regime of Christ in itself can produce. His focused view—which he followed often, but not always, in this chapter—leaves out of sight the fact that a man might not follow the Spirit, might even resist, and so fall. This focused view is especially prominent in the great predestination pericope of 8:29-30:

For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, so that he might be the first born among many brothers. Those whom he predestined, these he also called, and those whom he called, these he also justified, but those whom he justified, these he also glorified.

In other words, the machinery, as it were, which the Father has set up in Christ cannot do other than bring men to glorification—hence the confident aorist tense of the verb *edoxasen* (glorified) in 8:30.⁷⁰ Similarly, the exultant hymn of 8:31-39 says that nothing can separate us from Christ. Of course, Paul knew man’s own infidelity can do it. But here he was focusing on what the Christian regime in and of itself can do. In itself it can produce nothing but salvation, just as the regime of the flesh (8:8) can produce nothing but sin: “Those in the flesh cannot [ou dunantail please God.”

Yet in chapter 8, Paul sometimes broke his focused view and took in the possibility of human resistance (the *de facto* picture). It was obviously his concern for his people that led him to do that. To tell them they could not possibly fail to gain salvation could easily lead to sluggishness, to commission of the things against which he warned the Galatians (5:19-21) and the Corinthians (I Cor. 6:9-11). Thus in Rom. 8:9, he said, “You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit—if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Again, in 8:13: “If you live according to the flesh, you are going to die.” And in 8:17, he said that we are “heirs of God, fellow-heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him, so we may also be glorified with him.”

As we contemplate this shifting of Pauline perspective from a focused to a *de facto* view and back again, as it suited the needs of the context, we should not be hard on Paul. This tactic would not be used today. But Paul, for all his greatness and inspiration, was a man of his day. Controversialists then asked no quarter and gave none. Paul flew at his opponents with all his might. Outraged at the distortion by which the Judaizers ruled out, at least by implication, the need of Christ, Paul refused to concede to them that there was any good in the law. His zeal for Christ and for souls made him eager to take the strong measures which were needed. By focusing, he could accomplish his end in a perfectly truthful manner. Yet, in a different setting, he could and did praise the law.

Paul, as we saw earlier, was led rather naturally into his focusing by features in his culture. Nor was he alone in focusing. Mt. 13:44-46 tells of the man who found the treasure in the field and sold all he had to get that field. One aspect is obvious: just as such a man was prudent, and gave everything, so too the follower of Christ should gladly part with all to follow Christ. But what of the fact that the man finding the treasure is a bit dishonest, to put it mildly? Seemingly, he did not tell the owner of the field there was treasure in it, and so could dishonestly buy the field at far less than its real worth. But the Gospel focus leaves those aspects out of view, concentrating tightly on the one lesson to be learned, and nothing else. It is possible to look at Lk. 6:8 in the same way. There the unjust steward is praised for his cleverness. All other elements are left out of the focused field of vision.

Paul may have been using his focusing tactic also in I Cor. 15:29. He could have been focusing on the fact

baptism for the dead would make no sense if one did not believe in the resurrection. He left out of his field the fact that, at least probably, he did not approve of baptism for the dead at all. Finally, long after Paul's departure, the first Epistle of St. John uses the same technique. I Jn. 3:9 asserts that: "No one begotten of God acts sinfully, because he remains of God's stock: he cannot [oudunatat] sin, because he is begotten of God." The focus is on what the status of being a son of God, as such, can produce. It cannot produce sin, only good. John also spoke of the same matter in an unfocused way in 1:8: "If we say 'we are free of the guilt of sin', we deceive ourselves; the truth is not to be found in us."⁷¹

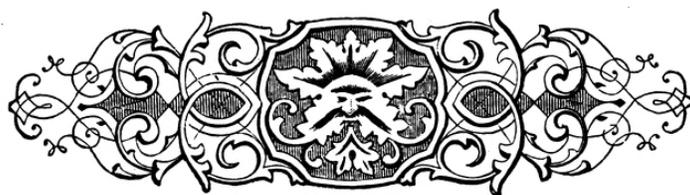
And indeed, there may still be some focusing today. Often salvation history is so taught and preached as to make it seem that the entire race was hopeless before Christ came. It is true, of course, that many were saved in that period. Yet a focused view, one that depicts what that status as such can produce, will yield the kind of picture commonly presented.

CONCLUSION

The arguments of the preceding pages have dealt with a series of seeming contradictions in Paul, especially in connection with the law. Solutions proposed previously did not seem fully satisfactory. Not a few commentators fail to face the issue squarely. These problems can be solved by supposing that Paul, in common with other writers of the New Testament, used two kinds of pic-

tures, focused and defacto, and that he could use first one and then another as the matter on hand required. Moreover, there have been -a number of suggestions by good commentators that approach this notion of focusing, though in all cases, these suggestions were neither followed up nor completed. Allo, following a lead from Sickenberger, makes a comment on I Cor. 14:34-5 that Paul sometimes began by examining an abuse under only one aspect, which may be secondary, before attacking the chief substance. This suggestion will solve the problems in I Cor., but will not resolve other difficulties in which it is not a mere implication that is later countered, but an explicit prima facie forceful statement. Huby, commenting on Rom. 2:14-16, suggests that Paul employed polarite, which seems to be a focus, in several places. But Huby does not follow up, nor is 2:14-16 really a focused text: Huby's proposal would not solve the seeming contradiction with 1:24ff. Lyonnet, on the "I" in Rom. 7:7-25, suggests that Paul was describing a sinner as such, "prescinding" from all influence of Christ. We agree with that (as to phase two) and wish Lyonnet had followed up further. Several others, as Lyonnet notes, agree with him.

There are, finally, three supports for the proposal of focusing: a) nothing else has solved the problems; b) many good commentators have already seen parts of the solution, but have not followed through; and, c) the same patterns seem to appear elsewhere in the New Testament, and the problems they present can be resolved in precisely the same way.



NOTES

1 Cf. J. Bonsirven, *Exegese rabbinique et exegese Paulinienne* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1939) 205-6.

2 H.J. Schoeps, Paul, *The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (trans. H. Knight, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 177. Schoeps observes that Paul strains the sense of Hab.

3 A. Brunot, *La genie litteraire de Saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1955) 28-41. 4 Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith* in SBT, 2nd ser. 19, ix.

5 This interpretation was propounded by Prof. Lapointe in a personal letter.

6 For the former group, see Jean Hering, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (trans. from 2nd ed. by Heathcote and Allcock, London: Epworth Press, 1962) 73; cf. H. Lietzmann, An die Korinther in HNT p.39. The latter group: e.g. Hering, Lietzmann, Ruef, Barrett, O'Rourke.

7 J. Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper -no date) 139.

8 C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1968) 332.

9 Ibid.

10 Moffatt, 231; Hering, 154.

- 11 John Ruef, *Paul's First Letter to Corinth* in *Pelican New Testament Commentaries* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971) 154-55.
- 12 John O'Rourke, *1 Corinthians* in NCCHS 1969, p. 1158.
- 13 H. Strack & P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: Beck, 1926) III, 467-8.
- 14 E.-B. Allo, *Saint Paul: Premiere Epitre aux Corinthiens* (2nd ed., Paris: Gabalda, 1956) 373. Also, J. Sickenberger, *Die Briefe des Heiligen Paulus an die Korinther und Romer* in BB(Bonn, 1932) 70-1, makes clear he has in mind only a psychological approach of not making the full frontal attack at once, but instead, of starting with just one point.
- 15 It is hard to suppose there was no theological framework at all in view of I Cor. 11:3 (cf. 15:24-8) and the appeal to the law in 14:34.
- 16 Dt 27:26: "Cursed be he who fails to fulfill any of the provision of this law!"
- 17 J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Letter to the Romans* in JBC II, 297.
- 18 F. J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans, a Commentary* (trans. H. Knight, Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1961) 72.
- 19 S. Lyonnet, *Exegesis Epistulae ad Romanos*, Cap. I ad IV (ed. 3a, Romae: Pont. Inst. Bib., 1963) 148. Cf. R. Baules, *L'Evangile, puissance de Dieu, Comm. de l'epitre aux Romains* in LD, 49, p.78.
- 20 C.H. Dodd, *The Ep. of Paul to the Romans* (N.Y.: Harper, 1932) 26.
- 21 Ibid., 37.
- 22 Lyonnet, *Exegesis*, 149.
- 23 J.L. Vicentini, *Carta a los Romanos in La sagrada Escritura*, NT (2a ed. Madrid: Biblioteca de autores cristianos, 1965) II, 187, n. 30.
- 24 We shall see later that Lyonnet comes close to the concept of focusing in his comments on Rom. 7:7.
- 25 Fitzmyer, in JBC II, 297.
- 26 P. Althaus, *Der Brief an die Romer* in NTD, 1966, 22: "lediglich den ubergang zu einem verwandten Gegenstande."
- 27 O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Romer* (Gottingen, 1963) 73: "einfachen ubergangs-Partikel."
- 28 J. Huby, *Saint Paul, Epitre aux Romains* in VS, 1957, 108, n.2: "moins la consequence logique de l'antecedent immediate (1,32) que la suite du developpement sur la culpabilite des hommes, qui, ayant connu la verite, ne l'ont pas suivie."
- 29 W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans. Arndt and Gingrich, Chicago: Chicago U. Pr., 1968) 197.
- 30 R. Bultmann, *Glossen im Romerbrief* in TLZ (1947) 200.
- 31 Leenhardt, 74.
- 32 Althaus, 22.
- 33 Minear, 49.
- 34 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. from 6th ed. by Hoskyns, London: Oxford University Press, 1965) 57.
- 35 Dodd, 32.
- 36 O. Kuss, *Der Romerbrief* (2d ed. Regensburg: Pustet) I, 61.
- 37 C.K. Barrett, *A Comm. on the Epistle to the Romans* in BNTC, 1957, 51.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Somewhat similarly Baules, 78, speaks of an unrealized hypothesis and adds: "Pour que l'hypothese se realise il faut qu'intervienne dans la vie de l'homme autre chose que la loi"-that is, faith. Leenhardt says, 80: "Still more must we avoid supposing that the apostle wished to show 'how the Gentiles can be saved in spite of their not having received the law' (Lagrange). This remark is against the whole argument which tends to establish the responsibility and culpability of all mankind."
- 40 Huby, 122-4.
- 41 Dodd, 48.
- 42 Kuss, 1, 69.
- 43 Cf. Minear, 51: "'Look,' he said to his Jewish-Christian brothers, lit is not only that your sin in condemning

the strong in faith puts you on the same level with the Gentiles whom you detest; it is also that the faith-based righteousness of your Gentile-Christian brothers puts them on the same level with you.' This, I believe, is the function of 2:12-16, 25-29 in the argument. Gentile believers, although they did not possess the Law, were doing by nature what the Law requires."

44 Lyonnet, *Exegesis*, I-IV, 174: "quando Paulus asserit 'legis iustificari' (13 b), non supponit eos iustificari ex ipsa legis observatione...attamen negari nequit agi de vera iustificatione...a fortiore consideratis vv.26 et praes.v.29."

45 Cf. the similar treatment of I Cor. 6:9-10.

46 These considerations solve the problem of reconciling Paul's treatment of the law with the statement of Christ that he had come not to destroy but to fulfill.

47 Covenant theology (cf. W. Most, *A Biblical Theology of Redemption in a Covenant Framework* in CBQ 29 (1967) 1-19 (esp. 8 & 13) would say there are two levels. On the most basic level, we do not earn salvation, but on the secondary level, that is, after becoming members of Christ and conformed to him, we by that very fact share in Christ's claim to grace and salvation. In this sense we may be said to earn or merit after that, gratuitous start (cf. II Tm. 4:8). God can be said to observe the covenant bond, in that he keeps his pledge in the covenant when he rewards; a man who obeys his voice and keeps his covenant (Ps.62:12 and Ex. 19:5) So the fact that Paul was here citing Ps 62:12 which speaks on the covenant level, the secondary level, could indicate he meant his comments or repayment for works on that secondary level. That Paul was aware of these matters is shown in the article cited above in CBQ, 10-14.

48 Barrett, 56-7.

49 Fitzmyer, in JBC, II, 299. Cf. Lyonnet, *Exegesis* I-IV, 180: "...et revere Iudaei accusabantur furto in templis, de quibus Flavius Ioseph defendit eos...attamen veteres plerique intellexerunt verbum sensu lato, de quovis sacrilegio." But this would weaken Paul's point. He needs to say as Jews do this. Really, Lyonnet indicates that the charge he makes is false, or at most, true only in a broad sense of some. Huby, 131, says: "Bien que, severement puni par le droit grec, romain et egyptien, c'etait la un crim frequent dans les periodes de guerres ou de troubles civils: les Juifs et etaient soupconnes et l'on voit l'historien Flavius Joseph se mettre en peine d'ecarter l'accusation. A ces vols les Juifs devaient s'associer surtout comme receleurs." But, Paul spoke more generally, and in the present tense

50 Cf. also I Sm. 23:7-12. Compare also the real instead of ideal conditional form in I Cor.15:31: "If I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus..."

51 If it be objected that Paul seems to have read the LXX more than the Hebrew, we note that the LXX for Ps.27:10 and Is.63:16 use *n*, hypothetical or even conditional forms.

52 W. D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism* (Westminster, 1962) 155. Cf. his statements in *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, SPCK, 1962) 26-i

53 Dodd, 107. Cf. A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. Rasmusson Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 289. Also, Althaus, 75.

54 Bailes, 191.

55 P. Benoit, *La loi et la croix d'apres Saint Paul in Exegese et theologie* (Par Cerf, 1961-formerly published in RB 1938, 481-509) II, 12.

56 Ibid., 13.

57 Ibid., 33.

58 Lyonnet, *L'hist. de salut sel. chap. VII de l'ep. aux Rom. in Bib.* 43, p.119.

59 Ibid., 150.

60 Ibid., 150, n.4 cites Cornely, Kuss, Huby, Viard. Cf. A. Feuillet, *Loi de morale chretienne d'apres s. Paul in NRT* 92, p.802: "Comme toute loi positive...la Loi mosaïque prise toute seule [focused?] se content de formuler des ordres sans procurer l'energie requise pour les observer, et elle ne peut qu'ensuite faire tomber sa sentence de mort sur les coupables." Kuss II, 482: "...der Apostel zuerst und zunachst den Zustand des Menschen vor Christus und ohne Christus beschreiben will," and on 483: "...für den Glaubenden und Getauften ist der hoffnungslose Zustand, von welchem in dem Abschnitt Rom 7, 7-25 Rede ist, 'grundsatzlich uberbunden'". A. Viard, *Epitre aux Romains* (PSB 11 /2, 1948) 91 says that Paul not only considers man "anterieurement au regne de la grace chretienne" but also "ne tient pas compte des graces qui pouvaient etre accordees meme alors aux individus et qui leur permettaient de resister a l'exclavage du peche." Huby, 255-6: "Sous la forme dramatique d'une mise en scene personnelle, l'Apotre entend decrire la situation de l'homme tombe et non regene par la grace, en face des obligations morales de la Loi mosaïque."

61 L. Cerfaux, *The Christian in the Theology of St. Paul* (trans. Soiron, New York: Herder & Herder, 1967) 436-7. Cf. Schoeps, 184.

62 Fitzmyer in JBC II, 312; Cf. Leenhardt, 196.

63 Cerfaux, 216. He fails to note that the expression “fear and trembling” is stereotyped and much weakened. Although Paul uses it in Phil.2:12, yet later in the same letter (3:1 and 4:4) he tells them to “rejoice in the Lord.” In Ps.2:11, we find the two ideas joined in one verse: “Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice before him; with trembling pay homage to him.” In II Cor.7:15, Paul says that the Corinthians received Titus with “fear and trembling” and Eph.6:5 urges “Slaves obey your human masters with fear and trembling” even though in 6:9 Paul tells masters to omit threats. NAB translates 6:5 “with the reverence, awe and sincerity you owe to Christ.” Such a wording is compatible with a strong promise of grace for perseverance, i. e. salvation.

64 Paul makes statements that could be taken as absolute assurance of salvation: Phil. 1:6, I Thes.5:23-4, I Cor.1:5-8, and, in addition, the focused passages of Rom.8. We note the time spread of these statements, which makes it difficult to suppose Paul shifted opinion on the point in question.

65 Benoit, 16.

66 Since both parabasis and hamartia can be formal, the distinction of Benoit is inadequate.

67 We could trans. equally well “came to life again” since the parabasis which was once “alive” in Adam reappeared more explicitly under the Law.

68 Lyonnet, *Ex. epist. ad Rom., Cap. Vad VII* (Rome: Pont. Inst. Bib. 1966) 96, notes that Paul’s expressions are colored by the imagery of Gen.3:13.

69 Rom.7:14-24 is a fine psychological treatment of man’s state in phase 2.

70 Edoxasen can also be taken as a generalizing tense: God has glorified, and will bring to full glory. We would take glory in the OT sense first, of God’s presence to help. The completion and terminus would be the arrival at the glory of the vision of God face to face.

71 Cf. also I Jn.2:19.