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Freedom in Christ—Gift and Demand

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“Freedom,” a word we often hear and a concept we highly prize, is surprisingly rare in the New Testament. A rapid survey of the words *eleutheria*, *eleutheroō*, and *eleutheros* in a concordance will show that in any sense other than the sociological (free man as opposed to slave) the term is practically confined to Paul.¹ He is the only one to use freedom consistently in a religious sense.

In Paul the concept freedom occurs in this religious sense in the four letters Romans, First and Second Corinthians, and Galatians. It is there used as a polemical summary of the Christian existence that is under attack from Judaizing Christians, Judaism, or libertine (gnosticizing?) Christians. Because it serves in these letters as a Pauline battle cry, the idea of freedom is a key to the nonnegotiable center of Pauline thought. It serves to describe that which the sons of God possess.² It is never predicated of God or Jesus Christ. Max Pohlenz describes Paul's teaching on liberty by saying, “Paul sings the high song of freedom.”³ This exalted language is not at all out of place, as an examination of the New Testament shows.

¹ See Appendix, “A Statistical Survey of the Vocabulary of Freedom in the New Testament.”

² Gulin, p. 459. Works referred to by author's name alone are given in the bibliography, appendix 2.

³ Pohlenz, p. 170.

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FREEDOM AS GIFT

The Pauline teaching on freedom can only be understood from the vantage point of Pauline eschatology. Liberty is present only because Christ has freed us (*eleutheroōsen*, aorist, Gal. 5:1). We have this liberty “in Christ” (Gal. 2:4). But Christ marks the end of one age and the beginning of a new age for those who are “in Him.” He came at the *plērōma tou chronou* (Gal. 4:4). He rescued us from this “present evil age” (Gal. 1:4) through His self-giving on our behalf. He accomplished what we could not do. At a given moment in history, a “life radically sacrificed for others”⁴ freed us. The basis for Christian freedom in Paul is not a carefully worked out philosophy of freedom, but the proclamation of what our Lord has done. Freedom is essentially a change of lordship (cf. Rom. 6:22).⁵ This change of lordship is accomplished for, not by, the man “in Christ.” It is gift to him, not achieved by him.

Paul emphasizes in many ways that the decisive event has taken place in Christ and that as a result the old is past. In Gal. 4:21-31 Paul uses the Jewish apocalyptic

⁴ Schlier, *TDNT*, p. 498. See also *vollkommenes Gesetz*, pp. 199—200, where Rom. 7:25 shows that God acted in and out of His freedom to deliver us from the body of this death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵ Müller, pp. 182—83, emphasizes this point: Paul is not concerned with philosophical problematics. He does not discuss freedom on the basis of reflection, but of revelation (see Gal. 1:15-16).

idea of the heavenly Jerusalem in connection with Hagar and Sarah to argue that the Christian is already a son of the free woman and a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem.⁶ He contrasts what we once were (Rom. 7:5) with what we now are (*nuni de*, Rom. 7:6; cf. 6:22).⁷ This present evil age (Gal. 1:4) expresses itself in suffering (Rom. 8:18), is under "rulers of this age" (1 Cor. 2:6), who are passing away (*katar-goumenôn*), is under "this world's God who blinds men's eyes" (2 Cor. 4:4), is under the elemental spirits of the cosmos (Gal. 4:3).⁸ The form of this world is passing away (1 Cor. 7:31); its Lord has been raised from the dead and all that remains is for the enemies to be set aside (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-28, especially v. 26).

On the other hand, Paul rarely speaks of the "new age."⁹ The future is present

⁶ See Phil. 3:20. Gulin, pp. 461—65, cites Is. 54:11 ff., Is. 62:12, *Mishnah* Baba Bathra 75b, and 4 Esdras 7:26 and 3:6 to show the Jewish concept. He then goes on to argue that this idea of the heavenly Jerusalem is the primary apocalyptic basis for Paul's teaching on freedom. He argues this primarily on the position it has in Galatians just before the statement in 5:1. But many of the other passages he cites to support this view have nothing to do with the heavenly city idea, for example 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5, and so forth.

⁷ "Die Freiheit wird also darzustellen sein, indem das 'Einst' und das 'Jetzt' konfrontiert wird, indem der Übergang oder die Versetzung aus der Knechtschaft in die Freiheit beschrieben wird, also der Vorgang der Gnade und Rechtfertigung, der Akt der Befreiung." (Conzelmann, p. 302)

⁸ Furnish, p. 116; Gulin, pp. 461—62. Furnish gives full evidence for the idea of "this age" on pp. 115—16.

⁹ "The coming age," the counterpart to "this evil age," appears only in Eph. 1:21. Paul does distinguish "things present" and "things to come" in Rom. 8:38. Col. 2:22 implies that the Christian is no longer "in the world (*en kosmô*)."

only "in Christ." If one is in Him, there is a *kainê ktisis*, a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; see Gal. 6:15). God's power is already effective in the Christian. The "old has passed away" — in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The new is a reality, but only for those who have died with Christ (Rom. 6:1-11), who walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), who via crucifixion with Christ no longer live themselves, but have Christ living in them (Gal. 2:19-20). The old has passed away, but the new is present *only in Christ*. It is a gift, an eschatological gift. With his freedom worked by Christ and participated in via baptism (Romans 6 *passim*),¹⁰ the Christian looks forward to salvation in hope.¹¹ He lives in the world, but as part of the new world whose full arrival will mean salvation. Meanwhile, in Christ, he can share in Christ's suffering (Rom. 8:35-36) and thereby also in His resurrection powers (2 Cor. 12:9).

THE RULERS OF THIS AGE

Freedom is the result of a change in lords. It is therefore a freedom from past slavery. There is a trilogy of rulers who keep man in subjection in the present age: sin, death, and the law. In 1 Cor. 15:56-57 Paul exults that God has given the victory over all three: "Now the goad of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gave us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ." We have

¹⁰ De Fraine, 493; Cambier, p. 326.

¹¹ Note that Paul does not say that we were raised to life in Romans 6, but that "we shall live" (v. 8). *Sôteria* also usually has a future aspect to it in Paul. See the tenses of the verb in Rom. 5:9-10. See also 1 Cor. 3:15, 5:5, and Rom. 13:11. Eph. 2:6 and 8 is almost unique in the Pauline corpus in its perfect *sesôsmenoi*. See Werner Foerster, "σώζω, etc.," *TWNT*, VII, 982—94.

been freed from "the law of sin and death" by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ" (Rom. 8:2). These three lords work together in the old age, when man is under their domination. "But sin, taking a starting point through the commandment, produced every lust in me. For without the law, sin is dead."¹² Paul treats these three in Romans 5 (death), 6 (sin), and 7 (law) as a way of preparing for the joyous shout of Romans 8.

1. Sin, says Paul, "ruled" before Christ (Rom. 5:12-21). We were its slaves (*douloi*, Rom. 6:17), sold *under* sin (Rom. 7:14)!¹³ The term *sin* occurs in Paul primarily in the singular because it is thought of as a power or force (it occurs 43 times in Romans 5—8, always in the singular). It is not primarily an accumulation of individual evil or lawless acts (Paul's term for this is *paraptōma*). The verbs Paul uses of sin all imply dominion, action, almost personal character.¹⁴

¹² Gulin, p. 465, adds the *sarx* to this trilogy. However, while *sarx* is certainly involved in sin and death, it is not conceived of as an exterior power that dominates man in Paul, but rather as the "self-reliant attitude of the man who puts his trust in his own strength and in that which is controllable by him." See Bultmann, I, 240. That *sarx* can dominate man is clear from Rom. 7:14. But this is not its major characteristic.

¹³ This *under* illustrates the lordship motif. What made us liable to such slavery was the *sarx*. Rom. 7:14 shows that bondage to sin demonstrates that I am *sarkinos*. On this whole section see Niederwimmer, pp. 113—17.

¹⁴ In addition to the verb "rule" of Rom. 5:21, see the verbs *anezēsen* (Rom. 7:9), *exēpatēsen* (Rom. 7:11), *apekteinen* (Rom. 7:11), *enoikōusa* (Rom. 7:17). Bultmann, I, 245; Eduard Schweizer, "Two New Testament Creeds Compared," *Neotestamentica* (Zürich/Stuttgart: Zwingli Verlag, 1963), p. 122, n. 1, points to the fact that the plural *hamartiai* almost always appears in Paul in an Old Testament quotation

Moreover, the idea of the forgiveness of sins is surprisingly infrequent in these letters. *Hamartia* is not an accumulation of deeds that needs forgiveness in Paul; it is a demonic power from whose dominion man must be delivered.¹⁵ Nor is it some kind of naturally ruling destiny¹⁶ that man must escape by some kind of knowledge or act of will, as in contemporary *gnōsis*. Man needs freedom from a master greater than he, not knowledge of some interior power he had not known he had, and not a covering for his feeling of culpability. Such a deliverance man could not achieve himself.¹⁷

But man has been delivered. The *dikaio-synē theou* has been revealed (*apokalyptetai*, Rom. 1:17; *pephanerōtai*, 3:21). This revelation is prior to both man's will and

or in citations of pre-Pauline creedal formulations, for example, 1 Cor. 15:3-5, Rom. 4:7. On the singular see also Bultmann, I, 287; Joachim Jeremias, *Die Abendmahls Worte Jesu*, 2d ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), p. 96.

¹⁵ Frame points out that the idea of repentance is also rather infrequent in Paul. You cannot repent of an evil lord. He claims that the idea of forgiveness does not appear on the surface of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, Philipians, or Philemon. It shows up in Old Testament quotations (Rom. 4:7, 11:27), in 2 Cor. 5:19 (of *paraptōmata*), in Col. 2:13 (of *paraptōmata*), in Col. 3:13 = Eph. 4:32 with the verb *charizomai* used absolutely. See also *pareisis* in Rom. 3:25 (probably a quotation of an earlier Christian creedal statement) and *aphesis* in Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7 (*hamartia* in the first, *paraptōmata* in the second). Frame, p. 7.

¹⁶ "naturhaft herrschendes Verhängnis," Fuchs, col. 1103.

¹⁷ This does not mean that there is no such thing as a feeling of guilt connected to sin. It does mean that Paul's primary concern is not that of later ages. See Krister Stendahl, "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Harvard Theological Review*, LVI (1963), 199 to 215.

act (Rom. 5:8); it is a force greater than that with which sin held man in sway. Because of that power (cf. Rom. 1:16) man is removed from slavery to sin to slavery to righteousness (*edoulôthête tō dikaiosynē*, Rom. 6:18) and to God (Rom. 6:22).¹⁸ He is freed from the compulsion to sin, since he has died to it (Rom. 6:2) in his baptism into Christ Jesus and His death. As he waits for life (Rom. 6:8, 22-23), he can respond to the imperative to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), to bear fruit unto sanctification (Rom. 6:22). He has a new Lord who has given him the possibility of serving God.¹⁹

2. The second of the three powers of the present age, the law, called forth some of Paul's strongest statements on freedom. Paul understood the law to be the greatest opponent of freedom in Christ for the law is "sin's agent."²⁰ In a sense sin without the law was powerless; it was in the world but was not reckoned up (Rom. 5:13). But with the presence of the law, sin's power was made clear.

There are three major passages on the law in Paul. Rom. 5:12-21 makes it clear that the law both tabulates (*ellogēitai*, v. 13) and multiplies sin (*pleonasei*, v. 20). Rom. 7:7-25 shows that the law was powerless in a positive way, though it is holy as an expression of God's will (v. 12).

¹⁸ On the dynamic character of *dikaïosynē theou* in Romans see Ernst Käsemann, "The Righteousness of God in Paul," *Journal of Church and Theology*, I (1965), 100-5; Karl Kertelge, "Rechtfertigung" bei Paulus (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1967), p. 267. He stresses that *dikaïosynē* in Rom. 6:13 must be understood dynamically, since *hamartia* clearly is *kyrienei*.

¹⁹ Blunck, p. 365.

²⁰ Furnish, p. 138.

Rather, by bringing the knowledge of sin (vv. 7-8) it gave a starting point to sin that enabled sin to bring every lust into Paul's existence. Sin "sprang to life" by way of the law (Rom. 7:8-9). Thus, though Paul knows that the law is good (7:16), he still calls it the "law of sin" that takes him captive (7:23). Paul prior to Christ was *hypo nomon* (Rom. 6:14), under it as under a slave-master. It is this note that Galatians also sounds. Gal. 3:19-4:11 describes the role of the law in God's division of the ages. The law is not supplementary to promise, for it cannot make alive. Rather it was simply to hold man in protective custody (*ephrourometha*, Gal. 3:23); it was the slave who kept the schoolboys in order (*paidagōgos*, v. 24) on their way to school. We were under the law (Gal. 4:5), under a curse (Gal. 3:13).

Paul nowhere says that the law is being misused in these functions. He sees the law's proper function in God's plan as taking place in that age before Christ (see the *eis Christon*, Gal. 3:24, a temporal expression). The law led man to an autonomous existence, to a development of self-confidence and boasting (*pepoitbēsis* and *kauchēsis*; see Rom. 3:27, Phil. 3:3-4). But Paul insists that the law in doing this is therefore a part of the old age. For "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." This buying back implies that the law is a hostile force. The law belongs only to the past.

By buying man back Christ gives man freedom and sonship.²¹ Now faith has come (Gal. 3:23), faith which is the con-

²¹ Werner Elert, "Redemptio ab hostibus," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, XII (1947), 165 ff.

tradictory of law. Life as a result of Christ's action in becoming man is lived under an *ouketi*, a "no longer." We are no longer slaves of the law, but sons (Gal. 4:7). Christ is the end of the law (*telos nomou*, Rom. 10:4). Man is delivered from seeking his own *dikaïosynê* (Rom. 10:3) by living in the liberty of sons. As baptism was the act of incorporation into Christ's death that freed the individual man from sin (Rom. 6:2), so baptism into Christ is also participation in the new life of sonship in which one is free from the law (Gal. 3:26-29).²² By virtue of Christ's existence under the law, we have become sons via adoption. We can now cry, "Abba, Father," the childlike cry of trust, possible only in the absence of fear.²³

To attempt to add the law to this freedom, to return (*epistrephein*, Gal. 4:9) to the law, is to return again to the old age. It is once again (*palin*, v. 9) to be in slavery.²⁴ Paul's great appeal in Gal. 5:1 must be understood against this radical alternative of promise and law.²⁵ The two are

²² On this paragraph see Gulin, pp. 467 to 468; Conzelmann, pp. 302—3; Longenecker, pp. 172—73; Schlier, *TDNT*, p. 497.

²³ Käsemann, p. 96.

²⁴ Bornkamm, p. 134, shows that Paul views the return to the law as a kind of reverse conversion. The phraseology of Gal. 4:9 is thus another example of Paul's grim irony in dealing with the Galatians. See also the pun in 5:12. To attempt to insure the promise by the addition of the law is to lose the promise.

²⁵ Paul is consistent. He rarely uses the commandments of the Old Testament to motivate conduct. He reserves the word *hypakouein* (to obey) to describe the Christian reaction to the gospel, not the law. See Rom. 1:5, 16:26. For Paul *hypakoê* means acceptance of the gospel (Rom. 10:11), the kerygma of Rom. 10:9. To obey is to place one's self under the *Kyrios Iêsous Christos*. Obedience in Rom. 10:16 is the proper Christian reaction to the gospel, not

mutually exclusive. Gal. 1:6-9 makes this absolutely clear. Gospel plus law equals another gospel, which is no gospel at all.

3. "For Paul . . . it is axiomatic that sin draws death after it."²⁶ Death, the third great power of the old age, entered into the world with sin (Rom. 5:12) and prior to the coming of the law was the ruler (from Adam to Moses, Rom. 5:14). Sin rules in death (Rom. 5:21), lives in and for death (Rom. 6:23). Thus death is the payment or result of life under sin (Rom. 6:21). Sin promotes its life by death (Rom. 7:7). Therefore the law also leads to death, since it promotes and increases sin (Rom. 7:10, 23-24). Even the creation is subject to this *phthora*, from which it longs for deliverance (Rom. 8:21). Man's *sôma* is a body of death. He even finds that the letter of the law kills (2 Cor. 3:6). Thus death is the final demonstration that sin and the law are hostile forces.

It is indeed the last enemy (1 Cor. 15:26), but it is being destroyed.²⁷ Christ is the *aparcbê*, the firstfruits from the dead (1 Cor. 15:23). The Christian must die, but he knows that the sting of death is gone (1 Cor. 15:55-57). The change of the ages has come.²⁸ Set free from sin, man is a slave of God and has fruit "for sanctification, and ultimately for eternal life" (Rom. 6:22), life that is a "gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom.

to the law. Kertelge, 174—75. This might also explain Paul's phrase, to be judged "according to my gospel" in Rom. 2:16. Such striking phraseology usually signals a point of central importance in Pauline theology.

²⁶ Bultmann, I, 246.

²⁷ Blunck, pp. 365—66; Gulin, p. 466; de Fraigne, col. 493.

²⁸ Gulin, p. 466; see also Niederwimmer, pp. 213—20.

6:23). Man has a hope beyond death, since he has in baptism already experienced the full hostility of death in Christ's death. He has been freed "from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2); therefore Paul can include death among all those things that cannot separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39). No, we live and die to the Lord. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's (Rom. 14:7-8).

This hope extends far beyond the realm of men. All the universe is ultimately drawn into the freedom that has come in Christ. It too had been made subject to futility (Rom. 8:20)²⁹ as man had been (Rom. 1:21). The sonship of man rouses the eager expectation of the creation, for the time will come when it too will be freed from the slavery of destruction into the glorious freedom of the sons of God (Rom. 8:21). Luther understood this to mean the continuity of creation in a glorious form. Freedom ultimately is for the whole of the universe.³⁰

²⁹ Futility is defined as *phthora* by v. 21. The creation is also subject to death by way of man's sin. On this term see H. Hommel, "Das Harren der Kreatur," *Schöpfer und Erhalter* (Berlin: Lettner Verlag, 1956), pp. 13—14. See also Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), p. 202; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer*, 3d ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1928), p. 85. Ernst Käsemann, "Der gottesdienstliche Schrei nach der Freiheit," *Apophoreta* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1964), p. 151.

³⁰ Martin Luther, *Die Vorlesung über den Römerbrief*, *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, LVI (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1938), 373—74. Some scholars have seen in 1 Cor. 15:25-28 a hint of this same cosmic liberation. See Hans-Alwin Wilcke, *Das Problem eines messianischen Zwischenreiches bei Paulus* (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1967), pp. 100—8.

FREEDOM AS DEMAND

Freedom, then, is living under a new Lord in a de-demonized world. In Christ the new age is present, and they who are in Christ share the life of that new age. They live in the power of that new age; put in Pauline terms, this means they live *en pneumati*, in the Spirit. The Spirit is, as Furnish has put it, "a power representative of the coming age which is already operative in the present."³¹ The resurrection of Jesus has sent this power into the world, for "the last Adam became a life-giving" *pneuma* (1 Cor. 15:45). "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17).³² As the power of the new age the Spirit is called the *arrabôn*, the "down payment," the first installment of the new age (2 Cor. 1:22 and 5:5). In Gal. 3:1-5 Paul pleads the reception of the Spirit by the Galatians as proof that his preaching of the crucified Christ, not works of the law, was effective among them and had brought them into the new age.

Paul uses the term "Spirit" twice more to show that freedom means deliverance by the Spirit into the status of sons. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). It is the sending of the *pneuma* of His Son (Gal. 4:6), or the reception of the *pneuma* of adoption as

³¹ Furnish, p. 129.

³² It is not the purpose of the author of this essay to discuss the relation of the risen Christ to the *pneuma* in terms of the later Trinitarian formulations of the doctrine of God. It is important to point out that the Spirit is tied to the concept of power, 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:4. He is the powerful presence of God or/and of Christ. See Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; etc.

sons (Rom. 8:15), that enables us to cry, "Abba! Father!"

The Spirit is the standard of the new life (we walk *kata pneuma*, Rom. 8:4)³³ and the power to achieve it. The *pneuma* in us (Rom. 8:9) releases us from the world and our flesh and produces the fruits of the Spirit.³⁴ The call to freedom (Gal. 5:13) is fulfilled by the life that walks by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and is led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:18).

The freedom we have in the Spirit is a freedom to which we have been *called* (Gal. 5:13). At the same time we are also admonished to "stand" (*stēkete*, Gal. 5:1) in this freedom. The freedom Christ has achieved (Gal. 5:1) comes to us on the one hand as a word, as a call (cf. Gal. 1:6) via the gospel. "Where a human being is concerned . . . freedom in Christ achieves form only in a situation where he opens himself to the present appeal of the gospel (2 Cor. 5:20), only where the proclamation of the gospel creates faith and leads to a permanent attachment to Christ and to His Word."³⁵ The Pauline letters

³³ Furnish, p. 89, points out that this *kata pneuma* fulfills functionally in Pauline theology the role that *kata physin* fulfills in Stoic theory (see Epictetus IV.5.6). This contrast is highly significant, for the *physis* concept in Stoicism is essentially static. Ethics means to bring one's will into conformity with the eternal nature of the universe, the *koinos logos* or *koinos nomos*. By contrast, the *pneuma* as standard of Pauline ethics is a dynamic concept. Christian freedom is much more open to change and surprise. See Festugière, pp. 66—68.

³⁴ Gal. 5:22-25. See de Fraine, cols. 493 to 494; Gulin, p. 470. Note that the "Spirit dwelling in you" of Rom. 8:9 is identified with the "Spirit of Christ"; Rom. 8:10 then simply speaks of "Christ in you." Christ and the Spirit are closely tied together.

³⁵ Blunck, p. 366. Cf. Bornkamm, p. 132, who speaks of the "Aufruf, die Freiheit zu

never appeal to their readers to achieve freedom, but only to stand firm in and not desert the freedom that they have. Freedom and the gospel are clearly tied together in Galatians. The gospel is the means by which freedom is mediated and by which the Spirit works. This act of God, proclaimed in the gospel, is the basis of the Spirit's work.³⁶

On the other hand there is a demand given to realize our freedom. The imperative *stēkete* is founded on the prior *klēsis*. But the demand is highly important. The imperative *stēkete* occurs in Paul when a note of danger is in the air.³⁷ In the face of danger one learns that the *pneuma* is not opposed to all commandments and all directives.³⁸ Freedom from the law does not mean absolute lawlessness.

In this respect the definition of freedom in Christ as a change of lordship is of great importance. Rom. 6:18 describes freedom from sin as being "enslaved to *dikaïosynē*"; verse 22 says we are enslaved to God. Christian freedom is thus not the absence of restraints but rather life under a new Lord. Freedom is not the ability and opportunity to determine one's life for oneself. To be the servant of God means to have given up fully every righteousness

ergreifen" that is grounded alone in the *Zuruf* and *Zuspruch* of freedom. See also Grässer, p. 335.

³⁶ Gulin, p. 476, is thus in a sense right when he says that we are also under *charis* (cf. Rom. 5:2) and *pistis* (see Gal. 3:2; 5:6) as new powers. However, they do not occupy the same place in Pauline thought that the *pneuma* does.

³⁷ See 1 Cor. 16:13; Phil. 1:27; 4:1; Bornkamm, p. 134.

³⁸ 1 Cor. 14:37-38 shows that *pneuma* (*pneumatikos*) is not antithetic to *entolē kyriou*. Cf. Dodd, *Gospel and Law*, p. 66.

won by self,³⁹ to give God all glory (Rom. 4:20, 1 Cor. 1:29-31). Paradoxically stated, the Christian is free precisely because he no longer belongs to himself, but is "in Christ." This gift of freedom ties man to the giver. Bultmann⁴⁰ calls attention to the "mightiest expression of freedom" in Paul, 1 Cor. 3:21-23:

So then, let no one brag because of men.
For all things belong to you,
whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas,
whether the cosmos or life or death,
whether present things or things in the
future,
all are yours —
but you are Christ's,
and Christ is God's.

Man in freedom is not man his own master but man in servitude to righteousness and to God. He belongs to Christ. Man is not autonomous when he is free but is placed under responsibility. Indeed, when man receives the *pneuma*, the *pneuma* is the Spirit of Christ only to the degree that he makes man responsible to his Lord and to other men.⁴¹ Freedom is not seen in Paul in terms of an independently acting subject but in terms of relationship.

On the one hand man is set free from men. "You were bought for a price; don't become *douloi antbrôpôn*" (1 Cor. 7:23). The obligations to the world of men are gone. Liberty is not an *aphormê tês sarkos*, a starting point for self-expression (Gal. 5:13). Christian freedom is an actualization of the *bôs mê* of eschatological ex-

³⁹ See Rom. 10:3; 3:27; Phil. 3:9. Gulin, pp. 469—70; de Fraigne, col. 493.

⁴⁰ Bultmann, I, 331, also calls attention to Rom. 14:7-8. See also Blunck 364—65.

⁴¹ Käsemann, p. 95.

istence. The time is close, the *schêma* of this world is passing away (1 Cor. 7:29-31). The slave is a freedman of the Lord's; the free man is Christ's slave (1 Cor. 7:22).⁴²

Yet man, free from all men, is also slave of all men. "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?" (1 Cor. 9:1). Paul possessed the characteristic qualities of Greek freedom: *exousia* (authority, 1 Cor. 9:18), *parrhêsia* (freedom of speech, 2 Cor. 3:12-18, where it is tied to *eleutheria*), and *autarkeia* (Phil. 4:11).⁴³ The Corinthians maintained that freedom gave them authority over their own actions: *panta moi exestin* (1 Cor. 6:12 and 10:23). Paul opposes such individualistic autonomy with the argument that authority finds its limits in the weak brother. He will not use his authority (1 Cor. 6:12). Even when authority is *en tô euaggeliô* and he is a free man, yet he will enslave himself (*emauton edoulôsa*, 1 Cor. 9:18-19) to all. This slavery of self is also on account of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:23); Paul does not place his freedom under another's conscience (cf. 1 Cor. 10:29),⁴⁴ yet enslaves himself.

⁴² Conzelmann, p. 307.

⁴³ This paragraph is based on the very good discussion of these three qualities in Grässer, pp. 339—42.

⁴⁴ Paul could boast of his *exousia* and *freedom*, 2 Cor. 11:16-17, 21, but regards it as foolishness. Weakness rather than strength is the mark of an apostle. Similarly, Paul's *autarkeia* is not the virtue of the Stoic free man who recognizes his true nature and so his lack of need for things. Rather his strength lies in One who makes him strong (Phil. 4:11-13). Paul has freedom of speech over against God and man (cf. Rom. 5:2, 2 Cor. 7:4), but even that is founded in Christ's humiliation, which he shares "in chains" (Phil. 1:20; cf. 1 Thess. 2:2). Cambier, pp. 330—31. Grässer points out, p. 341, that this free speech is also founded in the gift

With that we come to the "highpoint" in the New Testament view of freedom: ⁴⁵ freedom as the voluntary slavery of love. Freedom is not some future hope for the Christian; rather the deliverance from the dominion of sin, law, and death means that our life *on earth* in its slavery of love proclaims and realizes Christ's lordship.⁴⁶ Eschatological freedom in Christ is not a utopian unrealizable ideal. It is service "*eis hagiastmon*, that is ultimately for eternal life" (Rom. 6:22), but service served now and here. Paul is *doulos christou* (Rom. 1:1) now, in a service that is "in goodness, in the Holy Spirit, in love that is not put on" (2 Cor. 6:6). Freedom is realized in slavery to one another in love (Gal. 5:13). This *agapē* is the fulfillment of the Torah, the law. Gal. 5:14 and Rom. 13:8-10, both based on Lev. 19:18, insist that the law is fulfilled only when all self-service is gone, when no attempt to achieve one's own righteousness is any longer present.⁴⁷ This demand for love cannot be met by one's own power. Faith as response to Christ's action in freeing us (Gal. 5:1) must precede (we are sons of God by faith, Gal. 3:26). It is only as *kainē krisis* (Gal. 6:15) that we can be so freed from self-

of the *pneuma* and so is an eschatological possession, 2 Cor. 3:17.

⁴⁵ de Fraine, p. 494.

⁴⁶ Käsemann, p. 93.

⁴⁷ This "fulfilling" is not equal to "obedience," *hypakoē*. Paul does not use the latter term of the Christian's relation to the law (see note 25 above). The law demands fulfillment (Rom. 8:4) and gets it. But the law is not a standard of specific action here in Rom. 8:4, since *kata pneuma* shows that the standard is the Spirit. Cf. Bornkamm, p. 135. The law is indeed set upright on its feet (Rom. 3:31) and thereby also put into its proper place in Pauline theology.

service that we can bear one another's burdens, can do what love demands, and can fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2).⁴⁸

This love is not a mere sentiment, and it is not formless. It is rather the working out of what faith in Christ implies. The Spirit, the antithesis of law (Gal. 5:4-5), impels faith to activity in love (Gal. 5:6). The Spirit's freedom opens one up to all men, indeed makes one vulnerable to all (1 Cor. 9:19-23). Just as the gift of freedom means the removal of all fear of demonic forces (Rom. 8:31-39), so the openness to all men removes the Christian from slavery to all human conventions in serving. Paul's *persistasis* catalogs in 2 Cor. 6:3-10 and 11:22-33 show how little human standards meant to him.⁴⁹ He was a free man to be all things to all men (1 Cor. 9:22). How his "irony" comes out in 2 Cor. 6:3 when he says he "gave no cause for stumbling" to any man and then goes on to list the very things that gave the Corinthians a stumbling block. (See 2 Cor. 6:11-13; 11:5-6; 13:3-4)

Are there standards for this freedom in a slavery of love? Furnish points to Paul's "concrete ethical injunctions and admonitions" as one standard.⁵⁰ Yet even Paul in Galatians regards his advice in 6:3-10 as exemplifications of a more general principle stated in verse 2. In rejecting the Corinthian form of antinomianism Paul points to the fact that not all things are useful and that not all things build up

⁴⁸ Thus freedom cannot be realized in isolation but only in community; the "fruits of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22) are social in nature. See Schlier, *TDNT*, pp. 500—1.

⁴⁹ Conzelmann, p. 306.

⁵⁰ Furnish, pp. 227—41.

(1 Cor. 6:16 and 10:23). He does posit the advantage or benefit of the other man as one standard of free action (1 Cor. 10:24; cf. Rom. 13:8-10). When Paul speaks of the new way of life in Rom. 6, he appeals to Christ and not the law. In some sense Paul too affirms that all things are lawful; at least he never expressly asserts that the Corinthian principle is wrong.

But Paul affirms this *Panta moi exestin* because he has earlier enunciated a standard of life and judgment that appeared so all-embracing as to remove the need of all others. In 1 Cor. 2:6-16 it is the *pneuma* who is the exegete of God's plans for the world, who alone makes clear what things God has freely given us (1 Cor. 2:12). It is only the *pneumatikos* man who can understand God's mind. The Spirit is the one who finally examines all things, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.⁵¹ "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). The Spirit is thus the rule and interpreter of the will of God for men. This becomes so central to Pauline thought that on two occasions he even opposes the Spirit to the letter. In Rom. 7:6 the Spirit is the one in whose newness men serve, after they have died to the law by which they were held in. The letter is characterized by *palaiotés*.

This insight is raised by Paul in 2 Cor. 3 to a methodological principle for the understanding of Moses. Paul's ministry is that of the Spirit, not the letter (2 Cor. 3:6). The Spirit gives life, but the letter kills. For that reason Paul has *parrhêsia* in his hope. For he has the key to Moses, and that key is the *kyrios* who is the

⁵¹ Cambier, p. 339.

pneuma (2 Cor. 3:17); where He is there is freedom.

Paul regards this Spirit as liberating precisely because He puts him into the servanthood of Jesus. His liberty is expressed in his sufferings — as was his Lord's. Thus looking at Christ's *eikôn* we are metamorphosed from glory to glory. What that glory is Paul makes clear in 2 Cor. 4:4-5: "The God of this age has blinded their understanding so that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine forth. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as lord (*kyrios*), and ourselves as your slaves because of Jesus." Our freedom, like Paul's, is to carry Christ's cross (Phil. 3:10) in proclaiming His gospel. Freedom begins and ends in Christ as powerfully witnessed by His Spirit.

Appendix 1

A Statistical Survey of the Vocabulary of Freedom in the New Testament

The noun *eleutheria* occurs only 11 times in the entire New Testament; seven of these occurrences are Pauline (Rom. 8:21; 1 Cor. 10:29; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 2:4, 5:1, and 5:13 [bis]). This term never occurs in a profane sense, but always has a religious connotation.⁵²

⁵² Of the other four occurrences, two are in James (1:25 and 2:12); both refer to the (perfect) law of liberty. On this phrase in context see Rolf Walker, "Allein aus Werken. Zur Auslegung von Jakobus 2, 14-26," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, LXI (1964), 155 to 192, especially 161—63.

Eleutheria also occurs in 1 Peter 2:16 and 2 Peter 2:19. In both cases the term has a bit of a taint. In 2 Peter *eleutheria tês pithorás* is a promise made by the gnosticizing false teachers under attack. See Ernst Käsemann, "An Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology," *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London:

The verb *eleutheroō* (to set free) is found seven times in the New Testament, twice in John⁵³ and five times in Paul. The verb is always used in a religious, never in a political or social sense. Its content twice consists of freedom from sin (Rom. 6:18 and 22); elsewhere in Romans it describes freedom from the law of sin (8:2). The term also occurs in Rom. 8:22 and Gal. 5:1.

The adjective *eleutheros*, in contrast to noun and verb, is normally used in a political-social sense as the antonym to *doulos*. Sixteen of the twenty-three occurrences are in Paul. Elsewhere the term appears in John 8, three times in the Apocalypse, and once each in Matthew and First Peter. Paul alone uses the term in a religious sense in the New Testament (five times in Gal. 4:22-31 and, perhaps, also in 1 Cor. 9:1 and 19). Paul is a "free man in Christ"; he can thus also be a *doulos Christou*. (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1)⁵⁴

This relative infrequency of the terminology of freedom in New Testament thought is surprising when one recalls the role which freedom played in Greek history and philosophy; by the time of the New Testament it was a standard *topos*

SCM Press, 1964), p. 171. Political freedom thus plays no role in the term as used in the entire New Testament. Even Israel's freedom is not mentioned. The term in Paul rather describes the freedom of God's sons (Rom. 8:21), which is present where the *pneuma kyriou* is (2 Cor. 3:17). See Blunck, p. 364.

⁵³ John 8:32 and 36, i. e., in only one passage. Conzelmann, p. 305, is therefore correct in remarking that "freedom" is not a characteristic Johannine term like *zōē* or *agapē*; the content of freedom appears in John under the idea of the new commandment and in the contrast of old and new.

⁵⁴ Blunck, p. 364.

in Stoic philosophy.⁵⁵ But the New Testament writers take no notice of the discussion in the Greek world. Paul does not mention the *pathē* (the emotions) or free will. When he discusses "the good that he wills but cannot do" in Romans 7, he does not speak of *ta eph' hēmōn* or of the *logos* that has the ability to grant its *synkatathesis*. Paul does not argue freedom from the idea of *physis* (nature) in relation to life or freedom. The Stoic terms that do occur, for example, *autarkeia* (Phil. 4:11), have a different sense. Paul does not enter into the theoretical discussion of freedom.⁵⁶

The distribution of the vocabulary for freedom suggests that Paul alone in the New Testament might have a specific teaching on freedom. The terms are almost confined to four passages in his corpus: 1 Cor. 9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 6:15—8:30; Gal. 4:21—6:17.⁵⁷ Two striking prelim-

⁵⁵ See Schlier, *TDNT*, pp. 487—96; for more extended treatments consult also Festugière, Nestle, and above all, Pohlenz. A glance at *eleutheria* and related terms in the indexes for Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics will show that freedom played a much larger role, at least statistically, in their thought than in the New Testament. See F. Ast, *Lexicon Platonicum* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1833, reprinted Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1956); H. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* editio secunda (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1959); *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* IV: Indices, by M. Adler (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1964); *Epicteti Dissertationes*, ed. H. Schenkl (ed. maior, Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1916).

⁵⁶ Pohlenz, pp. 172—73, makes most of the above points. He points to 2 Cor. 6:10 and SVF III, 590 ff., 596, to argue Paul did know the Greek thinkers but did not use them.

⁵⁷ The passages in Paul thus all date from a relatively brief period of time. The arrangement above is chronological, Galatians being regarded as the latest of these four letters. See Werner Foerster, "Abfassungszeit und Ziel des

inary conclusions can be drawn from a rapid survey of these four passages. (1) Freedom is a polemical concept for Paul. He uses it in Romans and Galatians especially in antithesis to law, or the Jewish religion, in Corinthians to attack the individualism that was a mark of libertine gnosis.⁵⁸ Pauline vocabulary clusters around certain ideas. *Euaggelion*, for example, does not normally occur in close conjunction with *dikaiosynē*, but with *charis*; *dikaiosynē* does not often appear with *charis*, but does with *pistis*.⁵⁹ While *eleutheria* appears in the context of *dikaio-synē* in Galatians and Romans, it is found in the context of *euaggelion* in 1 Corinthians. Paul apparently finds the concept useful on more than one front. (2) *Eleutheria* is a concept that Paul uses especially in polemical contexts to describe the positive state of the Christian which is under attack. In spite of its statistical infrequency, free-

Galaterbriefes," *Apophoreta*, pp. 135—41. Romans and Galatians, which contain the most extensive use of the vocabulary of freedom, are on this theory very close to one another in time of origin.

⁵⁸ See Niederwimmer, p. 84. On Corinthian gnosis see Julius Schniewind, "Die Leugner der Auferstehung in Korinth," *Nachgelassene Reden und Aufsätze* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1952), pp. 113—18; C. K. Barrett, "Christianity at Corinth," *Bulletin of John Rylands Library*, XLVI (1963—64), 269—86. The latter points out that freedom was one of their watchwords, p. 285.

⁵⁹ This clustering of certain terms can easily be checked out. In Galatians *euaggelion* occurs seven times in 1:1—2:14; *charis* occurs four times, *pistis* not at all. In Gal. 2:15—6:17 *euaggelion* does not occur; *charis* appears twice, *pistis* 21 times. *Dikaiosynē* appears four times in this section, not at all in the former. *Nomos* appears with *dikaiosynē* and *pistis*, but not with *euaggelion*. A similar though not identical clustering can be found in Romans. There *charis* appears more often with *dikaiosynē*.

dom is a key concept for understanding the nature of Christian existence.

Appendix 2

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