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EPHESIANS 4:8-10: A REEXAMINATION

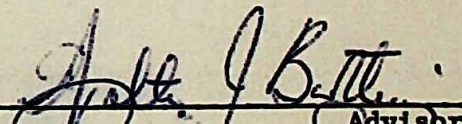
A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

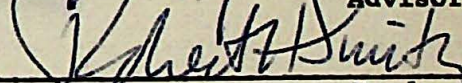
Colin M. Liske

May 1968


Approved by:



Advisor



Reader

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Need for an Examination

In an article entitled "La Signification Christologique D'Eph. IV. 7-10) in New Testament Studies, J. Cambier¹ describes the diversity of interpretations regarding this text, and he contends that all of them may have some validity. The multiplicity and inconclusiveness of various other studies on Eph. 4:8-10 have done little more to clarify its meaning. There are at least three basic traditional interpretations, and these are in themselves plagued with other difficulties in the text. Such inconclusiveness in itself demands a new investigation.

Besides specific exegesis of Eph. 4:8-10, recent studies in other areas also suggest new problems for this text. Works such as F. H. Borsch's The Son of Man in Myth and History,² Petr Pokorny's Der Epheserbrief und die Gnosis,³ and the 1967 colloquium on Gnosticism at Messina, Italy,⁴ have raised anew the problems and possibilities of a primal man or Gnostic background for Eph. 4:8-10.

¹J. Cambier, "La Signification Christologique D'Eph. IV.7-10," New Testament Studies, IX (1963), 262-75

²Frederick Houk Borsch, The Son of Man in Myth and History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 15-431.

³Petr Pokorny, Der Epheserbrief und die Gnosis (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), pp. 9-130.

⁴Ugo Bianchi, The Origins of Gnosticism: Colloquium of Messina in Studies in the History of Religions (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), XII, 1-746.

A new examination of Eph. 4:8-10 is also required by the importance of its theological implications, particularly for the doctrines of the church and eschatology. In his Theology of the Lutheran Confessions Edmund Schlunk⁵ has pointed out that the church should not prematurely be spoken of as the body of Christ, particularly when the sacraments are under discussion. Yet it is apparent that the church in Ephesians is defined precisely as the body of Christ. The doctrine of eschatology is important here because Ephesians does not know of an apocalyptic kind of last day. It speaks rather of an eschatology as growth of the body of Christ. It is these theological concerns which will be kept in mind as the study progresses.

The Problems

Among the many problems of Eph. 4:8-10, the following are some of the major questions which confront the interpreter:

1. What is the function of the quotation from Psalm 68? Why does the text of the quotation differ from that of Psalm 68 itself? Has the rabbinic Targum on Psalm 68 anything to do with these textual changes?
2. Exactly what is meant by the ascent and descent in verses 9 and 10?
3. What is the relation of the concepts of ascent and descent to the themes of fulness and gifts as they are used here?
4. What is the relation of verses 9 and 10 to the quotation from

⁵Edmund Schlunk, Theology of the Lutheran Confessions (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 162-63.

Psalm 68 in verse 8, and what is the relation of verse 8 to verse 7?

5. What is the function of verses 8-10 in relation to the immediate context and the whole parenetic context of Eph. 4-6?
6. Finally, what is the scopus of the text? What is its intention and goal? What is it ultimately trying to say? All of these questions are of a rather general nature, yet they already indicate the progression which this investigation will take.

Procedure

In order to set the problems of Eph. 4:8-10 in a clear perspective, Chapter II will analyze in detail the structure of this pericope, pointing out the difficulties as they arise. No attempt will be made here to solve them. Chapter III will present a general review of the major emphases in Psalm 68, as well as a more detailed delineation of verse 18 of that Psalm. In addition to the views of modern commentators, the Psalm's usage in the rabbinic Targum at the Jewish Harvest Festival, and its use in the Latin liturgy will also be dealt with. Chapter IV will outline and evaluate the three traditional interpretations of Eph. 4:8-10 in terms of the problem of the descent to the lower parts of the earth, giving special attention to G. B. Caird's Pentecost theory. Chapter V describes J. Cambier's interesting and unique view. His approach is rather unique even though his conclusions are not. Chapter VI is a review and evaluation of the various possible sources of the primal man motif and its probable implications for the interpretation of this text. Chapter VII is a survey of modern commentators' views regarding the

meaning of the fulness motif in verse 10, as well as a tracing of this motif through Old Testament, Johannine, and Qumran materials. The conclusions and implications of Chapters II through VII are then applied to the interpretation of Eph. 4:8-10 in Chapter VIII. Chapter IX presents a final summary of contents and conclusions, as well as directives for further research.

Preliminary Summary of Conclusions

This investigation will indicate that views which interpret the descent in verses 9 and 10 as a reference to Christ's descent to hell or as a reference to the descent of the Holy Spirit are to be rejected. The descent is rather to be taken as the descent of Christ to the earth, that is, in terms of his incarnation. Also to be rejected is J. Cambier's theory that Eph. 4:9-10 is to be interpreted in a functional sense, referring not to historical events, but rather to Christ's universal presence and action.

While no definite conclusions can be made regarding the source of the "primal man" motif, the available evidence indicates that this motif does, in one way or another, provide the background for the ascending and descending figure in verses 9 and 10. It cannot at present be determined whether the influence comes directly through a Gnostic "redeemer" myth, speculation on Genesis 1 and a logos creation-mediator theology, a reaction to the Gnostic redeemer myth and other early Gnostic concepts, or any combination of these. Eph. 4:8-10 could possibly be understandable in terms of posing Christ over against two heavenly "primal man" figures, but even here the genetic relationships cannot be demonstrated.

The enthronement, already evident in Psalm 68, is used in Eph. 4:8-10 to describe Christ's conquest of the heavenly powers between God and man. Christ's rule over the universe as Lord and over his church as its head is thereby ensured. Generally speaking, the "all" (pan or ta panta) in Ephesians and in Gnosticism is to be taken as reference to the universe. In some cases in Gnosticism the "all" refers to the heavenly powers situated between God and man through which men must pass in their journey to God, the Father of "all." Over against the Gnostic idea of "fulness" as that whole realm of heavenly powers and authorities who are situated between God and man and who fill the universe in a spiritual sense, Ephesians interprets the "fulness" as God's active presence is His active "steadfast love" in all of its ramifications brings unity to all things. This is the thought which the text of Eph. 4:9-10, in the context of exhortation to love and unity, intends to express.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS 4:8-10

The primary goal of this chapter is to present a basic outline of each verse in the pericope under consideration, to call attention to the specific problems involved in each verse, whether they are problems of a textural nature or of the meaning of a particular word or phrase, and to set forth the linguistic and conceptual relation of each verse to its context.

Verse 8

The basic structure of verse 8 might be depicted in three concepts:

- a. anabas eis hypsos--exaltation or elevation
- b. ēchmalōteusen aichmalōsian--victory
- c. edōken domata tois anthrōpois--grace¹

There are three major textual difficulties in verse 8, but one of these is not a matter of a textual variant in Ephesians. It is rather the change from the use of the second person in Ps. 68:18 in the Old Testament itself to the use of the third person in Ephesians.

¹In an earlier exegetical study in preparation for this investigation, the possibility of seeing an ancient Egyptian three-part form of (1) Elevation, (2) Presentation or Proclamation, and (3) the Enthronement of the king, was explored. For the use of this form in the New Testament see Joachim Jeremias, Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus, in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1949), p. 21, and Jesus' Promise to the Nations (London: SCM Press, 1948), pp. 38-39. See also Eduard Schweizer, Lordship and Discipleship (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960), pp. 65-66. Although later chapters will acknowledge the motif of enthronement, the three-part form does not itself lie behind this quotation from Ps. 68:18.

Therefore, in order to present all three textual problems in their full perspective, it is necessary to set forth the text of Ps. 68:18 from both the MT and the LXX:

a. MT

'ālîṭ lamārôm sâbîṭ sebi lāqahtā matānot bā,ādām

b. LXX

anebēs eis hypsos, ēchmalōteusas aichmalōsian
elabes domata en anthrōpō

There is one minor variant in the text which is insignificant. This is the interpolation of kai before edōken, attested by B (Vaticanus), C (Ephraemi), K (the Koine tradition), and a number of other lesser manuscripts. These varying witnesses are in themselves significant, but the fact that this interpolation makes no difference in the meaning of the text indicates that little time should be spent in evaluating it.

The first major change from the Old Testament texts, which is at the same time the second and last textual variant in verse 8, is the substitution of the preposition en in G (Boernerianus) and a few other manuscripts of little importance, as well as in Origen and Eusebius, for the plural article tois in Nestle's text. According to J. Cambier, S (a manuscript in Athens) has the plural reading en anthrōpois without the article, while B has the singular collective en anthrōpo.² This singular collective reading follows the LXX accurately, and it is further likely that Nestle's variant reading in G and other lesser manuscripts has crept in from the LXX text.

²J. Cambier, "La Signification Christologique D'Eph. IV.7-10," New Testament Studies IX (1963), 265.

The major question here, of course, is how the major change to the plural with the article in the Ephesians text from the Old Testament MT and LXX singular readings came about.³ Cambier observes that the reading ba'adam in the MT is collective (man for mankind) and has the article.⁴ The LXX and B have translated this literally, but it appears that the change in the Pauline text is an attempt to spell out clearly the fact that the gifts are given to individuals rather than to mankind as a whole. The portrayal in verse 11 of the various offices which men hold probably underscore this proposition.

The second major change is not a textual variant, but it is the substitution of the third person in verbs of the Ephesians text for the second person verbs addressing Yahweh in the Old Testament texts. This is true of the verbs anabas, ēchmalōteusen, and edōken, and their respective verbs in the Old Testament texts.

The third major change is also in relation to both the MT and the LXX. Instead of the MT lāqahtā and the LXX elabes, the Ephesians text has edōken.

In relating verse 8 to verse 7, Cambier points out that the domata of verse 8 is a parallel to the dōreas tou christou of verse 7. He further emphasizes that the change of the verb lāqahtā and elabes in the Old Testament to the New Testament edōken is meant to refer back to the verb edothē in verse 7. Further, the appropriation of the gifts to

³Either Paul could have made this and the other major changes himself, or else he may have been using a rabbinic Targum. This specific problem will be discussed later in Chapter III. Infra, pp. 20-22.

⁴Ibid.

individual people, he says, are meant to be a parallel to the Eni de ekastō hēmōn of verse 7. Thus, Cambier concludes, verse 8 is meant to be a substantiation or proof of the "gifts to individuals" idea in verse 7.⁵

Verses 9 and 10

The basic structure of these two verses might be more clearly perceived if arranged in the following pattern:

- a. to de anebē
- b. ti estin ei mē hoti kai katebē eis ta katōtera tēs gēs;
- c. ho katabas
- d. autos estin kai ho anabas hyperanō pantōn tōn ouranōn,
- e. hina plērosē ta panta.

Obvious in this structure are the perfectly balanced dystichs ac/bd and the chiasm of the verbs anebe--katebe/katabas--anabas.⁶

There are two textual variants in verse 9 and none in verse 10. The omission of merē in P⁴⁶, D, G, and some other manuscripts bears little weight. It is, further, an insignificant variant in that its omission would not change the meaning of verse 9.

The other variant is the addition of prōton before eis ta katōtera in B and the great mass of late manuscripts. This variant is important

⁵Cambier, IX, 265.

⁶In an earlier attempt at explicating this difficult verse, the endeavor was made to view this ascent and descent motif in terms of John 1:51 and Genesis 28 where the picture of the ascending and descending angels is used to portray a revelatory event. This view was facilitated by the occurrence of the ascent before the descent in each case. In this perspective, the gifts would have been viewed as a revelation from God. For reasons delineated in Chapters VI, VII, and VIII, this view is no longer considered seriously in this study.

in that its inclusion in the text would make the descent prior to the ascent. This reading would eliminate the interpretation of this text as the descent of the Spirit because the Spirit could not descend before Christ ascended. The exclusion of this variant would allow interpreters who recognize a descent of the Spirit here to see the ascent prior to the descent, thus enlisting support for their view.⁷

G. B. Caird⁸ summarizes and evaluates the textual apparatus for this variant. His position is the one taken in this investigation. Caird says that the inclusion of prōton

is the reading of B and of the majority of Latin MSS, including the Vulgate; it was inserted into X by a corrector; and by the way of the Textus Receptus found its way into the English Authorized Version, Luther's translation (a), and the French version of Geneva (b):

- a) "Dasz er aber aufgefahren ist, was ist es, denn dasz er zuvor ist hinuntergefahren."
- b) "Or, que veut dire cela: au'il est monte, si ce n'est qu' auparavant il etait descendu."

There can, however, be no doubt that the word is a gloss: it is absent from p⁴⁶, the original hand of X, A, and the quotations in Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen. . . .

Aside from textual problems, there is a problem of interpretation regarding the katōtera merē tēs gēs in verse 9. This phrase can either be taken as a partitive genitive and refer to hadēs underneath the earth, or as a genitive of apposition, referring to the earth itself.⁹

⁷For this full discussion, see Chapter IV, pp. 32-33.

⁸G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4,7-11," Studia Evangelica in Texte und Untersuchungen, LXXXVII (1961), 538.

⁹For the full discussion of this problem, see Chapter IV, pp. 26-31.

Another problem of interpretation arises in verse 10 in the terms plērōsē and ta panta. The motif of filling occurs again in verse 13 in the substantive, tou plērōmatos tou christou, as well as in Eph. 1:10,23:3:19; and 5:18. The concept of ta panta occurs again in 4:15 (possibly a substantive here), 1:10,21,22; 3:19 and 4:6.¹⁰

In conclusion to this preliminary analysis of verses 9 and 10, it might be added that these verses have been viewed by a number of authors as a midrash, with varying importance for the structure of the whole pericope. F. W. Beare¹¹ calls verses 9 and 10 a midrash and then explains that it has

no bearing on the immediate theme; it is introduced as a polemic "aside" to combat the accepted rabbinical interpretation of the psalm by showing that the words apply accurately only to Christ. . .

Thus, in Beare's interpretation, verses 9 and 10 are not integrally related to verse 8.

Cambier also contends that verses 9 and 10 are a midrash, but he further holds that they are also integrally related to the pericope as a whole. This essential unity is shown by such things as the verb anabainō at the beginning of both verses 8 and 9, as well as by the possible relation of the "giving of gifts" in verse 8 to "filling all things" in verse 10.¹²

¹⁰For the complete discussion of these concepts, see Chapter VII.

¹¹F. W. Beare, The Epistle to the Ephesians, in The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), X, 688.

¹²Cambier, IX, 265, 267, and 275.

Verses 8 to 10 in the Context of Verses 7 and 11

The "ascent and descent" do not occur in the immediate context of this pericope, as do the "fulness" and "all things." The "grace" and "gifts" occur throughout the pericope and the immediate context, with the exception of verses 9 and 10. It is possible that "grace" and "gifts" also occur here in verses 9 and 10 in the sense of "filling all things." Otherwise, the idea of gifts, in either the singular or plural, in the noun or the verb form, appears in verse 7, 8, and again in 11. It should be noted that either the entire section of verses 8 to 10, or just verses 9 and 10, could have been eliminated, and then either verse 7 or verse 8 could flow smoothly into the ideas of verse 11. In fact, verses 8 to 10 or even just 9 and 10 could possibly be viewed as only complicating the matter. As the given text stands, however, it appears that the quotation from Ps. 68:18 in verse 8 is adduced in support of verse 7, and verses 9 and 10 are added in support of the ascension in verse 8. Thus verses 9 and 10 also support verse 7 through their support of verse 8.

CHAPTER III

PSALM 68: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

Chapter Thesis

Psalm 68 is one of the most difficult and has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Apart from its use during the Jewish Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) and the Christian Festival of Ascension, as well as its interpretation as a collection of lyrical fragments or as an eschatological hymn, its most important themes are theophany and enthronement.

Introduction

The difficulties of the present investigation are not only detected in the Ephesians text under consideration, but they are compounded by the problems of Psalm 68. The very fact that Eph. 4:8 quotes Ps. 68:18 makes it imperative that an interpreter be fully acquainted with the Psalm itself. Acknowledging the possibility that Paul could have been quoting directly from the Psalm, an understanding of its problems and theology may prove to be invaluable for the exegesis of Eph. 4:8-10. It is with this possibility in mind that various views of Psalm 68 are presented in this chapter. After reviewing these analyses by a number of contemporary scholars, its use in a rabbinic Targum and in early liturgies will be discussed. Thus, this chapter is largely a laying of foundations for later use in interpreting Eph. 4:8-10.

Artur Weiser¹ has adequately summarized the issues and problems of Psalm 68:

¹Artur Weiser, The Psalms (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), p. 481.

In no other psalm are the various attempts at interpretation so diverse as in Psalm 68. It is not only that the severely corrupted text and the wilful and often disconnected style offer great difficulties to the exposition of the psalm. The style in particular moves to and fro alternating between the forms of speech and those of narration, between description, prayer, and hymnic portions, and between the various verbal tenses. It has therefore been possible to advocate and dispute with equal emphasis both the "historical" interpretation of the psalm as a song of victory and the "eschatological" interpretation which seeks to understand the whole psalm as a document expressing man's hopes for the future when the end of time will have come. These difficulties are moreover increased by lack of a coherent and progressive train of thought and by a series of brief illusions, mostly couched in general terms, to incidents which evade any attempt on our part to relate them accurately to historical facts known to us, and finally by reminiscences of other Old Testament traditions (above all Num. 10.35f.; Judg. 5; Deut. 33; Hab. 3).

The Eschatological Perspective

One of the first important explications of this Psalm by the method of form-criticism was Hermann Gunkel's² portrayal of it as an "eschatological hymn" localized in Jerusalem.³ Dating the Psalm generally as post-exilic at the time of Alexander the Great, Gunkel saw it as eschatological in the sense that the Endzeit was to be equal to the Urzeit, and in the sense that all of the old traditions of Israel looked forward to seeing an end-time recapitulation of the great saving acts of God. The Psalm looked forward to a new Exodus, a period when Yahweh would again take Israel out of an alien land.

²Hermann Gunkel, Die Psalmen, in Handkommentar zum Alten Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1926), p. 283.

³Hans-Joachim Kraus, Psalmen (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), I, 469.

In regard to verse 18 in particular, Gunkel saw it as portraying the imagery of a song of victory in war, as in the case of a victorious king who returns to his capital with his enemies in his train. Similarly, the Psalmist depicts Yahweh as riding to heaven on a fiery chariot, with the fiery chariots of the heavenly host following him (compare 2 Kings 2:11; 6:17; Is. 66:15; Deut. 33:2). His captives are also in his train, as in Ps. 149:8; they give gifts to him, as in Ps. 76:11. Thus the Psalm is a "hymn to Yahweh."⁴

A Collection of Lyrical Fragments

William F. Albright⁵ has taken a completely different approach than Gunkel in that he emphasizes the corruption of the text and the disjointed and loose style. Albright is the first to work with a number of Ugaritic texts which Gunkel did not know, thus dating the various portions of the Psalm very early. To Albright, as also to Aubrey Johnson,⁶ Psalm 68 is an anthology of ancient quotations or an old collection of songs or opening lines of songs. They were in fact a parallel to old Canaanite poems of the thirteenth to the tenth century B.C.⁷

⁴Gunkel, p. 285.

⁵William F. Albright, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXIII, (1950/51), 3.

⁶Aubrey R. Johnson, Sacred Kingship in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), pp. 68-69.

⁷Albright, XXIII, 9.

An Enthronement Theme

Sigmund Mowinckel objects seriously to Albright's view and claims that Psalm 68,⁸ as a unity of various traditions, applies as a whole to the enthronement of Yahweh at the Harvest or New Year's festival.⁹ He indicates that Psalm 68 may originally have been an old North Israelite psalm later adapted for the epiphany festival in Jerusalem,¹⁰ and he follows Hans Schmidt in referring this cultic epiphany to the autumn festival where the ark was carried along in a procession.¹¹ In any case, for Mowinckel enthronement is the primary setting-in-life for Psalm 68. Even when he describes the Psalm as one of victory in war, "Ps. 68 gehört wohl zu einem Siegesfest, das aber nach dem Aufzug des Thronbesteigungsfestes stilisiert ist," the emphasis is on the enthronement motif.¹²

For purposes of interpreting later emphases in the Ephesians pericope, it is important to consider here by way of anticipation three further aspects of Psalm 68 drawn for us by Mowinckel. The first is that

⁸Sigmund Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 162.

⁹For the essential unity between the harvest Festival and the New Year's Festival in the autumn season see Sigmund Mowinckel, Psalmstudien II: Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwe's und der Ursprung der Eschatologie (Amsterdam: Verlag P. Schippers, 1961), I, 83-89.

¹⁰Sigmund Mowinckel, Der achtundsechzigste Psalm in Avhandlingar utgitt av det Norske Videnskaps--Akademi i Oslo, II. Hist.--Filos. Klasse, No. 1 (Oslo: I Kommisjon Dybdad, 1953). See also Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, p. 152.

¹¹Weiser, p. 482. Weiser himself objects here that there are no concrete allusions to this procession in the Psalm itself.

¹²Mowinckel, Psalmstudien II, I, 332.

of the "gifts" motif. Eph. 4:8 changes the verb "received" in Psalm 68 to "gave," and Mowinckel himself clearly makes the point that even in Psalm 68 gifts are not only received, but given by God when he says:

when Yahweh shall become king and again establish his "kingdom," his "kingship," he shall come with rich gifts. Even the earthly kings used to distribute gifts on their festal days (cf. 2 Sam. 6:19), but in the case of the coming of the deity this was something involved in the nature of things. For in the first instance the festival meant a re-awakening to new riches and blessings, and "salvation" for land and cattle and men; the coming of Yahweh meant the coming of the rainy season, when streams of blessing would again pour over the earth, so that the fields would flow with cream and honey, an expression which is found in the ancient Phoenician cult songs referring to the resurrection and enthronement of Baal.

At Yahweh's festival of enthronement all this receives a more personal touch. The almighty creator is coming to his people, renewing the covenant and securing to them all the "blessings" which belongs to "life" and "peace" and "salvation." All the gifts of the "kingdom of God" may indeed be summed up in these words. In fact, to secure all this was the real intention of the festal cult. When Yahweh comes again to the feast from his primeval home in the far south he brings "abundant rain" with him, and thus restores his suffering people (Ps. 68. 8-11). . . .¹³

The second further aspect that needs to be considered is that the enemies spoken of in Psalm 68 can be considered as cosmic powers of evil, apparently similar to those heavenly evil powers in Ephesians (2:2; 3:10; 6:11-12). In one instance in reference to Psalm 68 Mowinckel describes them as the powers of chaos.¹⁴ In another case in reference to Psalm 48 (which is similar to Psalm 68), Mowinckel says, "Behind the idea of Yahweh's coming as a victory over the historical enemies of the people,

¹³Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, p. 162. If the gifts are understood in the sense that Mowinckel presents them here, a case could be made for the view that Paul, in writing Ephesians, made use of the ideas in the Psalm itself rather than referring to other rabbinic interpretations of it. For further discussion of this point, see pp. 92-93.

we find the idea of his coming as a victory over the evil cosmic powers, the dragon of the primeval ocean, the powers of chaos and of death. . . ."¹⁵

Finally, the third aspect to be considered here is that in Psalm 68 the worshipper calls Yahweh in his enthronement "his king and his god."¹⁶

A Theophany

Like Mowinckel, Artur Weiser rejects Albright's view that Psalm 68 is a collation of song fragments, and he points to a unity among the fragments in the motif of theophany. These fragments of old traditions (as in Num. 10:35-36; Judges 5; Deuteronomy 33; Hebrews 3) originated in and now represent a partial liturgical score centered around a common, ancient cultic tradition, the Covenant Festival of Yahweh, celebrated in autumn at the central sanctuary in Jerusalem. This is the main festival of the whole covenant community, centered around a theophany or revelation of God who draws near to them with his salvation. At the point of theophany, the whole Heilsgeschichte tradition of the past becomes for them God's present saving action. They thus experience God's salvation and pray that it will continue in the future. Weiser concludes:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 182. If the enemies of Psalm 68 can be understood in this manner as cosmic powers, further weight is adduced for the view that Paul could have meant to quote the Psalm directly when he opposes similar cosmic powers of evil in Eph. 4:8-10, and other portions of the epistle.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 125. Since this is the case, application of Psalm 68 to Christ in Ephesians by Paul could possibly mean that Paul is trying to underscore the deity of Christ. According to remarks made on a recent study on this issue in a graduate course at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., this is the position of Martin H. Franzmann.

At any rate, it is at least possible to maintain that the psalm is the response of the cult community to the revelation of God who during the cultic ceremony has drawn near to them with his salvation. The advent of God in the light of the history of his redemptive work as concentrated in the cultic act is the proper theme of the psalm and sets the limits for its true understanding.¹⁷

In discussing verses 17 and 18 in particular, Weiser contends that verse 17 is a testimony to theophany in hymnic form. The barriers of space and time are removed so that Mount Sinai is thought to be present in the temple at Jerusalem, and thus God appears in the temple, rising in the sky and surrounded by his heavenly hosts. Then there is a change to the form of prayer in verse 18 where God is given homage as he returns home from war and occupies his throne.¹⁸

Hans-Joachim Kraus takes much the same position as Weiser in holding to a basic theophany or revelation (Erscheinungsfest) by which Yahweh's great saving acts in history are made contemporary. He differs in some minor ways. First, he adds considerable evidence for identifying various ancient fragments in the Psalm, and he indicates more strongly that certain elements of old Canaanite myth have been incorporated into the Psalm. Later, however, he seriously questions the validity of an enthronement of Yahweh for verse 18 because the theophany here is really based on great historical acts of salvation rather than on mythical acts as in the

¹⁷Weiser, pp. 481-83.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 488. Weiser speaks of God sitting on his throne here, but he in no way alludes to this passage as functioning in terms of enthronement.

old Canaanite literature. Yahweh comes from Sinai, not from the underworld as does the continually, newly enthroned Baal.¹⁹

The Rabbinic Targum

A late rabbinic Targum on Ps. 68:18 changes the text in a number of ways. G. B. Caird²⁰ renders a good English translation:

Thou hast ascended to heaven, that is Moses, the prophet;
thou hast taken captivity captive, thou hast learnt the words of
the Torah;
thou hast given it as gifts to men,
and also with the rebellious, if they turn in repentance,
the Shekhina of the glory of the Lord dwells.

Contrary to his usual custom of quoting the Septuagint,²¹ Paul's use of Ps. 68:18 in Ephesians compares better with the reading of the Targum. The change of the verb from "received" to "gave" is obvious, as is the change from the collective singular en anthrōpō to the plural "to men." The use of the second person is retained in the Targum, as in the Psalm itself, but it is now used to address Moses rather than Yahweh.²²

In a discussion of God's covenant with Israel and his covenant with

¹⁹Kraus, I, 468-72, 474. The fact that Yahweh comes to Jerusalem from Mount Sinai and not from the underworld may be significant for the interpretation of the difficult phrase, the "lower parts of the earth," in Eph. 4:9. Infra, p. 30.

²⁰G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11," Studia Evangelica in Texte und Untersuchungen, LXXXVII (1964), 535-45.

²¹E. Earle Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1947), p. 12.

²²Supra, pp. 7-8.

David, Martin H. Scharlemann²³ takes up one of these textual changes and maintains that Psalm 68 was in the original a portrayal of Israel's king receiving tribute from other nations as they in defeat acknowledged the royal claims of David's God. Since the Davidic kingdom had come to an end, rabbinic tradition then changed the reading of the text of Ps. 68:18 from "received" to "gave" and applied it to Moses ascending Mount Sinai, there to receive the law and, in turn, to give it to Israel (compare Exodus 19).

According to Paul Billerbeck²⁴ and William G. Braude,²⁵ there is yet another later rabbinic tradition which may be translated:

Thou hast gone up on high,
thou hast led captivity captive;
thou hast received gifts for men.

According to Billerbeck, the combination of "received . . . for" here means simply to give the gifts to the people. Understood in this way, the same idea of giving is retained, as is a close following of the MT bā'ādam, where the prefix can easily be rendered "for." Nevertheless, this is a later tradition quoted in only two places, and Billerbeck says that for the most part rabbis have preferred the older tradition and have proceeded to explicate it.²⁶

²³Martin H. Scharlemann, Stephen: A Singular Saint, in Analecta Biblica (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968), p. 126.

²⁴Paul Billerbeck, Die Briefe Des Neuen Testaments Und Die Offenbarung Johannis in Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965), II, 596.

²⁵William G. Braude, The Midrash on Psalms (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), I, 545.

²⁶Billerbeck, II, 596.

In most of these traditions, the gifts that are given in the Targum are the Torah, and sometimes Moses is seen as taking the Torah itself captive before he gives it to men. In still others the angels dispute Moses' right to receive the Torah, but God then causes Moses' face to appear like that of Abraham. God then tells the angels that they should be ashamed of their objections since they had dined in Abraham's house (Genesis 18). Thus the angels finally become Moses' friends.²⁷

The Jewish Pentecost

During the inter-testamental period Psalm 68 became associated with the Jewish Pentecost in the synagogue calendar and lectionary. It also became associated with the celebration of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.²⁸ In a lengthy discussion over general objections to dating the association of Psalm 68 with the Jewish Pentecost prior to Christ (such as the fact that this association is unknown to Philo or Josephus), Caird writes:

²⁷Ibid., II, 596-97. It is significant for the interpretation of the gifts in Ephesians to note here exactly what the gift of the Torah came to mean for Israel. Billerbeck notes that rabbinic literature in general sees the Torah as pre-existent and eternally by the side of God, it is godly in that it is the daughter of God, it is the master-builder as well as the plan and mediator of creation, and it is the very light and life of Israel. See Paul Billerbeck, Das Evangelium nach Markus, Lukas und Johannes und die Apostelgeschichte in Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965), II, 353-57. It is interesting to note that the gifts offered by the gift of the Torah are relatively similar to those offered by God in Psalm 68 itself, according to Mowinckel's view. Supra., pp. 16-17.

²⁸A number of commentators take this view, including Caird, p. 540; F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Pickering and Inglis Ltd., 1961), p. 82; Francis Foulkes, The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians,

Because this commemorative character of Pentecost is not mentioned by Philo or Josephus, some have doubted whether the tradition could be regarded as pre-Christian. These doubts may be dismissed for the following reasons. 1. The process of giving historical associations to the old agricultural festivals was already begun in the Priestly Code, where Tabernacle as well as Passover has become a commemoration (Lev. 23, 42-43). 2. The Rabbis fixed the date of the giving of the Ten commandments as Sivan 6 by reckoning from the date given in Exod. 19,1; and this method of computation is so widely attested in the Rabbinic writings that it is likely to be ancient (see G. F. Moore, *Judaism II*, Cambridge, Mass., and London 1927, p. 48)--it may even have been intended by the priestly writer who introduced the date into the biblical account. 3. As soon as a triennial lectionary system was established Exod. 19 would be the reading appointed for Pentecost in the second year of the cycle. 4. Thackeray (*The Septuagint and Jewish Worship*, London 1921, pp. 47-48.) has made it probable that Habakkuk 3 was already one of the haphtaroth appointed for Pentecost before the LXX version of the Twelve was made, and it must have been chosen because its storm theophany formed a commentary on Exod. 19 (the harvest theme of vv. 17-18 would have been more appropriate to Tabernacles). 5. The association of Pentecost with the Torah seems to be implied in Acts 2 (see A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship*, Oxford 1960, p. 181).²⁹

The Latin Liturgy and the Ascension

Another liturgical use of Ps. 68:18 which has been significant for its interpretation is its use in the Latin liturgy at the Christian

in Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, May 1963), p. 144; and F. W. Beare, The Epistle to the Ephesians, in The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), X, 689. The Jewish Pentecost is perhaps better termed the "Feast of Weeks" which occurred during the wheat Harvest Festival in June. See H. St. John Thackeray, The Septuagint and Jewish Worship (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), pp. 58-59. Ralph Klein, professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., adds that the association of Psalm 68 with both the Jewish Pentecost and the giving of the Torah resulted from the fact that on Pentecost, sections from both the "Law" and the "Writings" were read.

²⁹Caird, LXXXVII, 540.

Feast of the Ascension. According to J. Cambier,³⁰ however, this liturgy inserts the name of Christ to express clearly the fact of the ascension. It reads as follows:

Ascendens Christus in altum, alleluia, captivam duxit
captivitatem, alleluia!

Summary and Conclusions

In the above discussions, it has been noted that besides the use of Ps. 68:18 at the Jewish Pentecost in synagogue lectionaries, at the Christian Feast of the Ascension in the Latin liturgy, and in the rabbinic Targum in relation to Moses, some modern commentators see here indications of an eschatological hymn, lyrical fragments, enthronement, and theophany. These are the views of Hermann Gunkel, W. F. Albright, Sigmund Mowinckel, and Arthur Weiser and Hans-Joachim Krause, respectively. Along with enthronement, Mowinckel takes note of Yahweh giving his gifts, of cosmic evil powers, and of the acclamation of God as divine. Weiser and Kraus point out that the theophany is not mythical, but historical in the sense that Yahweh's great saving acts in history are made contemporary in present revelation.

At this point it can be concluded that the liturgical uses of Ps. 68:18 are of little value as primary criteria for its interpretation. This is not to say that one or the other liturgical interpretations of Psalm 68 cannot support a particular interpretation of the Psalm in Ephesians 4, but the fact of the matter remains that two totally

³⁰J. Cambier, "La Signification Christologique D'Eph. 7-10," New Testament Studies, IX (1963) 262.

different liturgical uses eliminate the possibility of using liturgy as a basic standard of interpretation. Further, since Mowinckel, Weiser, and Kraus seem to be the most widely recognized scholars in the study of the psalms today, the earlier notions of Psalm 68 as only an eschatological hymn (Gunkel) or as only a collection of lyrical fragments (Albright) can be rejected. To be sure, both of these interpretations are partially involved in contemporary explication of the Psalm, but both have also been superceded by the three scholars mentioned above.

The remaining important issue, then, is whether or not Psalm 68 emphasizes enthronement or "historical" theophany, or whether it contains elements of both. The implications of this question will arise again in Chapter VIII. It will be seen there that both the motifs of enthronement and theophany may be valuable for interpreting Ephesians 4. Chapter VIII will also revive the issues in this chapter dealing with the giving or receiving of gifts, the cosmic evil powers, and the acclamation of the ascending Lord as divine, as well as the many issues dealt with here in footnotes.

CHAPTER IV

THREE BASIC TRADITIONS OF INTERPRETATION

Chapter Thesis

Recognizing the descent as a major problem, traditional interpretations of Eph. 4:8-10 have mainly been divided into three camps. The first sees Hades as the object of descent, the second speaks of a descent to earth, and the third points to the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. The majority of modern scholars tend to follow the second view.

Introduction

If there is any one portion of the pericope under consideration which has been the central thrust of controversy, it is the phrase ta katōtera merē tēs gēs in verse 9. These "lower parts of the earth" are the destination of the descending figure. The question, of course, arises as to the precise nature of that destination. Is the reference a genitive of apposition pointing to the earth itself, or is it a partitive genitive referring to the underworld beneath the surface of the earth? Or is there even some other answer to the problem? Coupled with this is the problem of the identification of the descending figure himself.

With some variation on the major themes, there are three major emphases in the history of interpretation of this passage. While the oldest tradition thinks of a descent to hades, later interpretations have pointed to a descent to earth in terms of the incarnation. Both traditions have generally identified the descending figure with Christ, who later ascends to heaven. Another variant on the descent to earth

idea, however, warrants a third and separate classification since it thinks of a descent to earth, not of Christ, but of the Holy Spirit.

The Descent to Hades

The descent to hades is the oldest interpretation, first set forth by Irenaeus and later adopted by Tertullian, Jerome, Pelagius, and Ambrosiaster. It was later revived by Erasmus and Bengel, and has since been supported by a host of other scholars.¹ Included among these are B. F. Westcott,² J. Armitage Robinson,³ C. J. Ellicott,⁴ and G. Stoeckhardt.⁵ Among more recent scholars adopting this position are E. G. Selwyn⁶ and John A. Allan.⁷ There are still other recent scholars who hold to this same position, with some variation. F. W. Beare,⁸ for

¹G. B. Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4:7-11," Studia Evangelica II, in Texte und Untersuchungen (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), LXXXVII, 536.

²Brooke Foss Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), p. 61.

³J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: MacMillan, 1909), p. 21.

⁴Charles J. Ellicott, A Commentary, Critical and Grammatical, on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1862), pp. 91-92.

⁵Georg Stoeckhardt, Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 178.

⁶E. G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of Peter (London: MacMillan and Company, Ltd., 1946), p. 321.

⁷John A. Allen, The Epistle to the Ephesians (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1959), p. 106.

⁸F. W. Beare, The Epistle to the Ephesians, in The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), X, 689.

example, contends that leading a "host of captives" as verse 8 indicates also implies the descent to and "harrowing of hell" in verse 9. Besides pointing to the descent to hades, F. F. Bruce⁹ suggests that the ta katōtera tēs gēs may refer to the sepulchre in which Jesus' body was laid, or to the earth itself. But of the three possibilities he outlines, Bruce chose the descent to hades. G. H. P. Thompson¹⁰ interestingly points to another variation on the theme of the regions beneath the earth. He maintains that speaking of Christ's descent to the regions beneath the earth is only a way of depicting his physical death.

This view of the descent of Christ to hades is a grammatically valid interpretation of the phrase and is well attested by examples of similar phrasing in contexts where it is obvious that the meaning is that of hades. This is clearly the case in Ps. 63:9 (62:10) where the psalmist claims that those who seek to destroy his soul will go to the lower parts of the earth, ta katōtata tēs gēs.¹¹ There are similar examples in Ezek. 26:20; 32:18,24 where in each case those who go to the lower parts of the earth, eis bathē tēs gēs, eis to bathos tēs gēs, and eis gēs bathos, respectively, are described also as those who go down to the pit.¹²

⁹F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Pickering and Inglis, Ltd., 1961), pp. 83-84.

¹⁰G. H. P. Thompson, The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Philemon (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 67. It is interesting to note that George W. E. Nickelsburg, Jr., visiting professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, during summer school of 1968, also holds this view.

¹¹Alfred Rahlfs, Septuaginta (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1962), II, 64.

¹²Ibid., II, 817, 828.

The Descent to Earth

The interpretation of the ta katōtera tēs gēs as the descent to the earth has been held at least since the time of John Calvin,¹³ and after him by Charles Hodge.¹⁴ It also seems that Hodge was the first to draw attention to the similarities between the ascending and descending motifs in Ephesians 4 with those in John 3:13; 6:38; 8:14; and 16:28. Francis Foulkes,¹⁵ a more recent writer, substantiates the position of a descent to earth by referring to apparently similar references in Is. 44:23; Ps. 69:15; Phil. 2:8; and Rom. 10:7. Two others who emphasize a descent to earth rather than to the underworld are Martin Dibelius¹⁶ and Hans Conzelmann.¹⁷ Heinrich Schlier¹⁸ and Petr Pokorny¹⁹ also hold to this

¹³John Calvin, Translated from the original Latin by William Pringle, Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians in Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1948), XV, 275.

¹⁴Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1857), p. 220.

¹⁵Francis Foulkes, The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, in The Tyndale Series (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1963), p. 116.

¹⁶Martin Dibelius, An Die Kolosser, Epheser, An Philemon, in Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953), pp. 80-81.

¹⁷Hans Conzelmann, Der Brief an die Epheser, in Die Kleineren Briefe des Apostels Paulus, in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1965), p. 57.

¹⁸Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Epheser (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), p. 192.

¹⁹Petr Pokorny, Der Epheserbrief und die Gnosis (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), p. 77.

view, but their positions are more complicated and will be discussed in Chapter VI.

Just as in the view regarding a descent to hades, there is ample evidence to support this case. Linguistic analogies are located in Ps. 139:15, en tois katotatois tēs gēs, where the psalmist claims that he was conceived and born in the lowest parts of the earth,²⁰ and again in Is. 44:23, themelia tēs gēs, where the lower parts of the earth are opposed to the heavens.²¹

Further evidence for the interpretation of Eph. 4:9 as a descent to earth is given by the broader context of Ephesians itself. First of all, the evil powers are viewed, not as residing in the underworld but in the heavenly spheres (1:10; 3:10; 6:10). Furthermore, the view of a descent to earth would comply with the general heaven and earth dichotomy in the theology of Ephesians.²² This also points to a third argument, that there are no other allusions to an underworld in Ephesians.

Assuming that Eph. 4:9 supports the quotation from Ps. 68:18 in Eph. 4:8, it is also possible that the background of Ps. 68:18 could be used as support for an interpretation of a descent to the earth. According to Kraus, Yahweh comes to the central sanctuary from his home at Sinai, not from the underworld, as is the case in older Canaanite mythologies. Thus it could possibly be argued that there is no reference to the underworld in Eph. 4:9.²³

²¹Ibid., p. 671.

²²Caird, LXXXVII, 539.

²³Hans-Joachim Kraus, Psalmen (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), I, 474-75. See also Supra, pp. 19-20.

Evaluation of Both Traditions

In the case of either interpretation described above, there is sufficient grammatical and Old Testament evidence to support the view. The interpretation of a descent to hades, however, does not go beyond this kind of evidence to a theological argument, as does the above case for a descent to earth. In other words, there is no compelling reason at all given for a descent to hades, while theological arguments of dichotomy and heavenly evil powers are given above for a descent to earth. The case for a descent to earth will be even further developed in reference to Pokorny and Schlier in Chapter VI. In view of these facts, it is concluded here that Eph. 4:9 refers to a descent to earth, not a descent to the underworld.

C. B. Caird: Descent of the Spirit

G. B. Caird²⁴ has recently revived the view of Eph. 4:9 as a descent of the Spirit, an interpretation originally set forth by H. von Soden²⁵ and later accepted by T. K. Abbott.²⁶ The primary difference in interpreting the text for these men is due to the fact that they see the event

²⁴Caird, LXXXVII, 535-45.

²⁵Hermann von Soden Die Briefe an die Kolosser, Epheser, Philemon: die Pastoralbriefe in Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament (Frieberg I. B. und Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1893), III, 136.

²⁶T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1956), XXXVI, 116.

of descent in this passage occurring after the ascent. It is also important to note initially here that von Soden and Abbott have not used the rabbinic Targum in their interpretations except to explain the mere divergence of the quotation in Ephesians from the MT and the LXX.²⁷

Caird begins his study by arguing that neither of the two views delineated earlier in this chapter meets the requirements of the Ephesians text. Neither view can be deduced from the Psalmist's statement, "He ascended into the heights," and it is difficult to understand why the author of Ephesians would have felt it necessary in the context of chapter four to assert the identity of the descender and ascender had he held to either of the above views.²⁸

On the basis of these two rejections of the interpretations of a descent of Christ to the underworld and a descent of Christ to the earth, Caird asserts, as do von Soden and Abbott, that it is reasonable for the author to assume that a descent must have followed the ascent in order for the gifts to have been given. This descent is then the descent of the Spirit who is identical to the Christ who ascended. For further New Testament parallels for his point, Caird notes the identification of Christ and the Spirit in Acts 2:33; John 14:15-18; Rom. 8:9-10; 1 Cor. 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:45; and Eph. 4:17. Caird's full thesis read as follows:

To every member of the church Christ has made his own particular gift of grace. These are the gifts referred to in Psalm 68, which declares that Christ ascended to heaven, leading the captive powers of evil in his triumphal train, and then gave gifts to men. We can assume that

²⁷Caird, LXXXVII, 537.

²⁸Ibid., LXXXVII, 536.

his ascent was followed by a descent back to earth, and that the life-giving Spirit who descended is identical with the incarnate Lord who ascended. It is he who has given to the church all the varied gifts needed for the building up of its corporate life.²⁹

Caird divides the evidence he sets forth for this thesis into three parts: textual, grammatical, and liturgical. His primary contention in the textual section is that the interpolation of prōton is invalid, and that therefore the descent can be taken as following upon the ascent.³⁰ Regarding grammatical evidence for the phrase ta katōtera tēs gēs, it has already been noted above that Caird presents valid evidence for rejection of the descent to the underworld view.³¹ His major emphasis, then, is on the liturgical evidence.

Caird begins this argument by noting that the Jewish Feast of Pentecost with which Psalm 68 was associated, besides being the Harvest Festival, had come to be known also as the celebration of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Thus the rabbinic Targum on Ps. 68:18 described in Chapter III had also come to be associated with this feast.³² In view of this rabbinic background, then, the argument of the author of Eph. 4:7-11, says Caird, is clearly this:

Psalm 68 is no longer to be regarded as a Jewish Pentecostal psalm, commemorating the ascent to Mount Sinai by Moses and his subsequent descent to bestow the Torah upon Israel; it is a Christian Pentecostal psalm, celebrating the ascension of Christ and his subsequent descent at Pentecost to bestow spiritual gifts upon the church.³³

³⁰Supra, pp. 9-10.

³¹Supra, pp. 30-31.

³²Caird, LXXXVII, 540.

³³Ibid., LXXXVII, 541.

And again:

The author of Ephesians, by Christianizing the Rabbinic exegesis of the Pentecostal psalm, has made both the ascent and the descent to which that psalm refers events proper to the Christian celebration of Pentecost.³⁴

Caird maintains that there is textual basis for this view in that both the quote in Ephesians and the rabbinic Targum vary from the MT and the LXX in exactly the same way.³⁵ The Ephesians and the rabbinic texts substitute the verb "gave" for the MT and the LX "received," and both the Ephesians and the rabbinic text speak of giving the gifts "to men" in the plural and therefore refer it to individuals, whereas the MT and the LXX text use the collective singular. This is to be explained by the fact that the rabbinic Targum, even though it is late, preserves an ancient tradition of exegesis which antedates Ephesians and was known to its author. Caird thinks it simply impossible that the rabbinic Targum could have been influenced by Ephesians, that both authors might have produced the same variation from the Old Testament texts, and that both writers could have been working on the basis of a variant Hebrew text, for the Hebrew text had already attained its final authoritative form.³⁶

Caird's second basis for his liturgical evidence is the argument of a parallel rabbinic exegesis in a Targum behind 1 Cor. 10:4. 1 Cor. 10:4 reads, "they all drank from the supernatural rock that accompanied their travels--and that rock was Christ." (RSV)

³⁴Ibid., LXXXVII, 543.

³⁵Ibid., LXXXVII, 541.

³⁶Ibid.

This, he contends, is an echo of rabbinic legend on Num. 21:17-18 which reads:

Spring up, O well --sing to it!
The well which the princes dug,
Which the nobles of the people delved,
With the sceptre and with their staves.

Caird then contends that according to the midrash of Bemidhbar Rabbah on Num. 1:1, this well became a rock which rolled after Israel during the time of her wandering in the wilderness. A difference in an earlier stage in this tradition is shown by a variation in the Targum of Onqelos which reads as follows:

Spring up, O well --sing to it! --
The well which the princes dug,
Which the heads of the people, the scribes,
Delved with their staves;
And the gift followed them.

The point to be noted here is the gloss of the "scribes" who are described as the ones who did the digging. Figuratively speaking, the well of the scribes was the Torah, and thus the Torah was seen as the gift which followed Israel in the wilderness. Then, in the Christian exegesis of 1 Cor. 10:4, the Torah as seen here is taken as a reference to Christ. This example, then, is an exact parallel of Eph. 4:8-10 where the gift of the Torah in the rabbinic Targum on Ps. 68:18 is applied to Christ's descent in the Spirit.³⁷

Caird's third piece of liturgical evidence is a second parallel argument. He contends that the Pentecost theme in Eph. 4:8-10 probably

³⁷Ibid., LXXXVII, 541-43. On p. 543 Caird, in a footnote, sees another Christological adaptation of rabbinic exegesis behind Col. 1:15-18.

represents an early stage in the theological tradition from Sinai to Jerusalem which ultimately produced the Pentecost story of Acts 2. Behind the Pentecost accounts in both Ephesians and Acts lies the rabbinic exegesis of Ps. 68:11. Caird holds that there is a parallel between the Law given on Sinai fifty days after the exodus from Egypt and the Spirit given fifty days after the "exodus" of Jesus from Jerusalem. Similarly, there is a parallel between the word of Yahweh at Sinai being split into seventy tongues (languages) in order that the seventy Gentile nations might hear it and the Spirit coming in tongues of fire in Acts 2 in order that every nation under heaven could hear the apostles speaking their particular language. The basis of the Acts 2 account seems to have been the Christian adaptation of the rabbinic exegesis of Ps. 68:11 where Rabbi Jonathan claims, "What is meant by this verse, 'The Lord gives the word; they that publish the glad tidings are a great host?' Every single word that went forth from the Omnipotent was split up into seventy tongues" (b Shab. 88^b). In other words, even though different verses of Psalm 68 are apparently behind Ephesians 4 and Acts 2, Caird sees Acts and Ephesians as falling into one common tradition, based on rabbinic exegesis of Psalm 68.³⁸

Caird's final argument for a descent of the Spirit in Ephesians 4 are the other New Testament accounts of Ascension and Pentecost. Because John 20, for example, does not distinguish between these two events, Caird maintains an ascent and descent of the Christ-Spirit. To this he adds

³⁸Ibid., LXXXVII, 543-44.

the fact that, outside of Luke-Acts dealt with above, no other writer makes a point of indicating dates for these two events.³⁹

Evaluation of Caird's Position

It has been previously indicated that Caird is correct in rejecting a view of Eph. 4:9 as a descent to the underworld.⁴⁰ However, while it is true that a previous descent cannot necessarily be deduced from the ascent, it is incorrect for Caird to hold that it is therefore impossible for a descent to precede the ascent. It is also invalid to hold, as he does, that there can be no other likely identification for the ascent and descent than that of the ascent and descent of the Christ-Spirit.⁴¹ Finally, in view of the fact that Caird rejects any "deduction" of a prior descent from the ascent, it is difficult to understand why he assumes that a descent after the ascent must be posited if the gifts of the ascended Christ are to be given to men. He seems merely to be deducing a descent from the ascent.⁴²

Caird's textual basis for his liturgical argument is good. While the rabbinic Targum on Ps. 68:18 is late, yet the similarity of the texts and

³⁹Ibid., LXXXVII, 543.

⁴⁰Supra, pp. 27-28.

⁴¹Note Supra, p. 29, especially the possibility of understanding this identification in terms of Christ's complete work over against the incomplete work of two Gnostic "savior" figures described by Carsten Colpe, pp. 173-74, or as a contrast between Moses and Christ. See p. 35.

⁴²Supra, p. 29.

their variance from both the MT and the LXX are strong evidence for a common tradition. Paul Billerbeck himself thinks that this is quite possible.⁴³

Caird follows his textual argument with evidence on the basis of other parallels. While such similarities are valuable, they in themselves prove nothing.⁴⁴ But this is not the biggest problem with Caird's analysis at this point. His parallels are in themselves a host of confusions and irregularities, particularly the Torah-Christ-Spirit complex. In the first parallel, Caird compares the Torah with Christ,⁴⁵ in the second he compares the Torah with the Spirit, and in the third he compares Christ with the Spirit. While these parallels may be valid in themselves, they are confusing in regard to Eph. 4:8-10. Caird generally seems to argue that it is the Christ-Spirit who descends, but what he then hopes to accomplish by comparing Christ to the gift of the Torah and then the Torah to the Spirit is unclear and confusing.

The important contrast (in the sense of superiority to) which Caird should have drawn when he makes use of the rabbinic Targum on Ps. 68:18

⁴³Supra, pp. 20-22. Paul Billerbeck, Die Briefe des Neuen Testaments und Offenbarung Johannis in Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965), III, 596.

⁴⁴See the discussion on the necessity of functional or genetic relationships for the validity of parallels, p. 63, footnote 45.

⁴⁵That the Torah can be compared to Christ is not at all surprising. See W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, 1965), pp. 147-76, and Billerbeck, II, 353-57. Furthermore, the understanding of the Torah as a well need not be taken figuratively, as Caird indicates on p. 542. See the association of the rivers of water with the Torah in Ps. 1:2-3, and the host of "living water" language, as in Sirach 24:21-22; John 4:14; etc.

is that of Christ and Moses, and he has failed completely in doing this. He should have noted that in contrast to Moses who ascends and descends on Mount Sinai, Christ descends and ascends. Further, whereas it is through Moses' descent that the gift of the Torah is given, it is precisely through Christ's ascent that the gifts of Ephesians are given. Thus it rather appears that Paul was attempting to contrast Christ to Moses by use of the rabbinic Targum in Ephesians. The same contrast is evident in John 1:17. Thus, any identification of the Christ-Spirit with the Mosaic Torah would seem superfluous.⁴⁶

Caird's contention that Psalm 68 is a basis for the Pentecost accounts in both Ephesians 4 and Acts 2,⁴⁷ is highly questionable. Discussions in Chapter III have indicated that the text of Psalm 68 is highly corrupted and at best a unity of fragments. Furthermore, while the similarities Caird adduces do support the contention that the Sinai story is behind the Pentecost account of Acts 2, it is highly questionable to claim, on the basis of a late rabbinic Targum, that there is therefore also a Pentecost story behind Ephesians 4, particularly since the Targum refers to a different verse.

⁴⁶It is important to recognize that a "Christ-Spirit" interpretation is completely eliminated by this view of a contrast between Moses and Christ. Christ descended and then ascended whereas Moses ascended and then descended. The addition of a "Spirit" descent to this view after Christ's ascent would necessitate two descents of the Christ-Spirit, one before and one after Christ's ascent. For further discussion of this contrast between Christ and Moses see J. Cambier, "La Signification Christologique D'Eph. IV.7-10," New Testament Studies, IX (1963), 262-75.

⁴⁷Supra, pp. 32-33.

There are two final criticisms of Caird's view. The first is that Caird does not deal with the captives in the quotation from Ps. 68:18, neither does he consider the possible implication of enthronement in Ps. 68:18 for his interpretation. Theophany in the Psalm could supposedly concur with his view. In other words, Caird in no way deals with Psalm 68 itself.

Summary and Conclusions

After discussing the pros and cons of a descent to the underworld or to the earth at the beginning of this chapter, it was concluded that a view of a descent to the underworld is not possible for the interpretation of Eph. 4:9. By the same token, it was affirmed that the theological evidence of Ephesians as a whole pointed to the validity of a descent to earth. Then, after a lengthy discussion of Caird's interpretation of this text as the descent of the Spirit, a host of criticisms were brought to bear on his view. In view of this fact, his position is to be rejected. Christ contrasts far better with Moses than he identifies with the Spirit. The only positive aspects of Caird's discussion is that it has helped in rejecting the notion of a descent to the underworld and in that it has served to affirm the contention that Paul did use the rabbinic Targum on Psalm 68 in writing Eph. 4:8-10.

CHAPTER V

J. CAMBIER: A NON-HISTORICAL APPROACH

Chapter Thesis

Cambier contends that Eph. 4:7-10 probably does not describe any specific historical events in the life of Christ, but these verses rather depict Christ's universal lordship and presence as well as his universal saving action. The gifts of Christ are the diverse ministries of education whereby the body of Christ grows up to become the perfect and full man in the knowledge of the Son of God.

Introduction

J. Cambier's¹ interpretation of the text of Eph. 4:8-10 is unique. He represents no tradition of interpretation, and he in effect sets out to demythologize verses 9 and 10. After setting forth a summary of the doctrinal context of the pericope under consideration, Cambier deals with the quotation from Ps. 68:18.

Psalm Quotation

In analyzing the Psalm quotation, Cambier first of all concludes that the three textual changes indicate that the rabbinic Targum, since it varies from the MT and the LXX in the same way in which the Ephesians text does, is the text used on the basis for the discussion in Ephesians.²

¹J. Cambier, "La Signification Christologique D'Eph. IV.7-10," New Testament Studies, IX (1963), 262-75.

²See the complete discussion which has already been developed above, pp. 20-22.

Then he notes that the application of the rabbinic Targum to Christ is facilitated by the LXX use of kyrios (verse 18) for the MT Yahweh,³ as well as by the Moses-Christ antithesis. He points out that the gift of Jesus in Eph. 4:7-8 is antithetical to the gift of Moses in the Targum, and that this antithesis of the gifts of Moses and of Christ is evident in the Gospel of John, as in John 1:17; 6:32; and 7:22, as well as in other sections of the New Testament such as 2 Cor. 3:4-18; Rom. 10:5-7; and Heb. 3:1-6. Finally, he contends in this section that, the phrase "leading captivity captive" must refer to Christ. This is especially true when considering the subjecting of the heavenly powers in the context of Ephesians, as in 1:22; 4:14; and 6:10-12.⁴

Christ's Gracious Gift of Ministry

Cambier then goes on to argue that the grace (charis) which is given to every one of us according to the measure of the gift (dōreas) of Christ, as described in Eph. 4:7, is a reference to Paul's apostleship in 3:8, which Paul calls charis. In other words, the gift of grace spoken of is the Christian vocation or the Christian ministry. Put another way, the gift and grace of Christ comes through the Christian ministry.

³Cambier is incorrect here. The name Yahweh occurs in the previous verse (verse 17) in the MT. The precise parallel that Cambier should have pointed to is adonoy in verse 18. Nevertheless, his point that the LXX's translation kyrios of an Old Testament term for God aided the application of the quotation from the Psalm to Christ is probably true.

⁴Cambier, IX, 265.

In tracing the gift and gifts of grace from verses 7 through 11, Cambier points out that the action of Christ in verse 7 is spoken of as the source of the gift (doreas) which in verse 8 is described in the plural (domata). Thus Christ is identified with the ascending figure in verse 8 who gives gifts to men. These are not ordinary gifts, but gifts of the Christian vocation which are then further delineated in verses 11-16 as the gifts of the ministry of education. Education is implied in the words of being edified "in the knowledge of the Son of God," as expressed in verse 13. Finally, these gifts of the ministry of education are equivalent to "filling all things," as expressed in verse 10c. Eph. 4:8b (edōken domata tois anthrōpois) thus completes 4:8a (anabas eis hypsos) just as 4:10b (hina plerōsē ta panta) completes 4:9-10a (to de anebe ti estin ei mē hoti kai katebē eis ta katōtera merē tēs gēs; ho katabas autos estin kai ho anabas hyperanō pantoñ tōn ouranōn), the description of the universal presence of Christ. Christ therefore "fills all things" by giving the gifts of the ministry of education to men.⁵

The Midrash of Verses 9 and 10

After his analysis of the gifts, Cambier continues by noting that verses 9 and 10 are not necessarily references to an historical descent and ascent of Christ and that they are not a mere parenthesis on the anabas of verse 8. Rather, verses 9 and 10 justify verse 8 by explaining and reinforcing the point that every gift accorded to Christians is given

⁵Ibid., IX, 266-67.

through the sole action of Christ. This action of Christ is his: (1) universal presence and lordship, and (2) his universal saving action.⁶

Christ's universal lordship and presence are expressed in a number of ways. Lordship is particularly expressed by the "ascent far above all the heavens," as in Eph. 4:10. This is even more clearly expressed in Eph. 1:20-23 where conquering death, the ascent to the right hand of God, and the subjection of "all things" (ta panta) revives the language of Psalm 110 and Psalm 8. The verb anabainō is not used here, but the ascent is clear.⁷

Universal presence is especially described by the couplets of words which are designed to include the "totality" of all things. Examples are the use of anabainō-katabainō in Eph. 4:8-10, as well as the couplet ge-ouranoi in the same text and again in 1:10.⁸ Besides the use of these couplets, Christ's universal presence and lordship are depicted by the fact that in Eph. 1:22-23, as in 4:15, he is called the "head over all things" through his "body," the church, his "fulness." Thus, by "heading all things up in himself," he unites heaven and earth and all things in himself.⁹

⁶Ibid., IX, 267.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., IX, 268.

⁹Ibid., IX, 268-69. In reaction to a previous study on this topic, M. H. Franzmann, although differing from Gambier in that he accepts the historicity of the events of Eph. 4:8-10, refers to Jer. 23:24 as a parallel to this passage for a similar interpretation.

The second purpose of verses 9 and 10 is to depict Christ's universal saving action. The ascent far above all the heavens and the descent to the lower parts of the earth depicts Christ's universal saving action just as Rom. 10:6-7 does. In Rom. 10:6-7 there is clearly no question of an historical ascent or descent. It is rather a wisdom saying explaining the incapacity of man to produce his own salvation. The point of the passage in Romans 10 is to say that whether man ascends to heaven or descends to hell, he cannot of himself grasp Christ or the salvation Christ gives. A man is on the contrary saved by faith, as Rom. 10:9-10 points out. The same then is true of Eph. 4:9-10 which is not to be taken as an allusion to historical events,¹⁰ but as a reference to Christ's "filling of all things," that Christ's universal salvation is made known to all men by the church's (body, fulness of Christ) usage of the gifts of the ministry of education.¹¹

In a footnote at this point, Cambier quoting Franz Mussner,¹² contends that the attempt to find Gnostic references for verses 9 and 10 is superficial, as is relegating this ascent and descent of Christ to Paul's

¹⁰Although Cambier contends that these verses in Eph. 4:9-10 are not to be taken historically in the sense of a reference to the descent to earth or the underworld, a descent of the Spirit, or even to the parousia, he does hold that these verses which proclaim Christ's universal saving action and his universal presence presuppose an historical Christ. This is true of Paul's theology in general. See p. 271.

¹¹Cambier, IX, 270-71. Supra, p. 41.

¹²Franz Mussner, Christus, das All und die Kirche (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1968), pp. 1-175.

Jewish background. Rather, Paul borrows expressions from this cultural milieu in Asia Minor in order to express the universal Christian salvation. Cambier gives no evidence for this.¹³

**The Midrash of Ephesians 4:8-10 and
The Knowledge of the Action of Christ**

In attempting to relate Eph. 4:7-10 to the following context of 4:11-16, the question arises as to how the gifts of Christ (that is, the knowledge of the universal lordship and presence and the saving action of Christ) are in fact given to men? To be sure, the gifts of Christ are given through the grace and gift of the ministry of education, which is itself the gift of Christ. But even more, it is through the gift of education that the knowledge of Christ's universal lordship and presence and his universal saving action is given to men. Traveling the complete circle, Cambier goes on to contend that the source of the Christian vocation itself is the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4:13), given in measure and proportion to each man. It is through this knowledge and through this Christian ministry of education that Christians are to grow up into unity in the body of Christ, as the perfect man (Eph. 4:13). The perfect man is the body of Christ that is perfect in the knowledge of the Son of God, as well as in truth and love.¹⁴

¹³Cambier, IX, 272-73.

¹⁴Ibid.

This gift of the knowledge of the universal saving action of Christ is universally made known to men through Christ's body, the church, and the knowledge of the Son of God is therefore at the heart of St. Paul's theology of the church. Since it is therefore the church that fills all things with the knowledge of the Son of God, the fulness of Christ is attained in the church (Eph. 1:10; 4:10c; 4:13).¹⁵

Summary and Conclusions

After reviewing Cambier's arguments for the application to Christ of the rabbinic Targum used in the Psalm quotation, his case for the identification of the gift or gifts of Christ in this pericope with the ministry of education was presented. Then it was pointed out that Eph. 4:9-10 has a two-fold purpose: (1) in expressing the universal lordship and presence of Christ, and (2) in portraying Christ's universal saving action. Thus Christ's universal lordship and presence and his universal saving action, as described here, are not to be understood historically, even though this interpretation presupposes an historical Christ. Finally, it is the knowledge of this Son of God's universal lordship and presence and his universal saving action that is made known to the universe through the church, thereby filling up the body of Christ with this knowledge, resulting in growth toward the man perfect in this knowledge.

Cambier's antithetical association of Moses and Christ is excellent, fitting admirably into the structure of Eph. 4:8-10. Understood over

¹⁵Ibid., IX, 273.

against the figure of Moses ascending and descending in the rabbinic Targum, Paul's concern for identifying Christ as the ascending and descending figure in Ephesians 4 can then be adequately explained. This is one conclusion of this study that has already been expressed in Chapter IV and will again play an important role in Chapter VIII.

Cambier's delineation of the gifts of Christ as the ministries of education proclaiming the knowledge of the Son of God for the edifying of the body of Christ and growth toward the perfect man undoubtedly grasps part of the truth. He also hints at the complementary indications of truth and love, but he does not develop these. Cambier's general lack of reference to love which is highly emphasized in the parenthetic section of Ephesians 4 through 6 indicates that his view is narrow. He has consequently also recognized only a part of the truth concerning the "fulness" and the doctrines of the church and eschatology in Ephesians.

Cambier's notion of eliminating the historicity of the ascent and descent in Eph. 4:9-10 is highly questionable. The parallel to Rom. 10:6-7 is not as clear as he makes it appear. The aorist verbs anebē, katebē, katabas, and anabas in Eph. 4:9-10 denote single action and therefore probably refer to specific events in the past. The combination of the future verbs anabēsetai and katabēsetai in Rom. 10:6-7 with the interrogative is an entirely different matter. Future verbs used in an interrogative statement hardly need to refer to particular events, but aorist verbs in declarative statements in most cases do. Consequently, Cambier's non-historical position is rejected here. His methodology is completely unacceptable. Ironically, it will be seen in later chapters that his

conclusions regarding the universal lordship and presence and the universal saving action of Christ are probably correct.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PRIMAL MAN MOTIF

Chapter Thesis

While it may be possible to understand the background of Eph. 4:9-10 in terms of one or more "primal man-redeemer" figures and/or in terms of speculation on Gen. 1:26-28, the available evidence does not allow any definite conclusions in this regard. However, it is probable that some form of the "primal man" motif did provide part of the background for Eph. 4:9-10.

Introduction

The study of the "primal man" motif and its possible relation to the "body of Christ" in Eph. 4:12,16 opens a broad field of investigation, any small part of which would in itself require a separate analysis. As F. H. Borsch¹ writes, it is "a veritable Pandora's box from which there issues forth a vast amount of literature and a host of conflicting opinions." Therefore, to present here a complete discussion of the issues involved would not only be impossible, but unwarranted.² What is essential and what is warranted here is a summary and analysis of the various

¹Frederick Houk Borsch, The Son of Man in Myth and History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 68.

²For relatively complete treatments of the problems and the history of research in this field, see especially Petr Pokorny, Der Epheserbrief und die Gnosis (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), pp. 33-80, and Borsch, pp. 15-431.

strands of the "primal man" motif in Judaic, Iranian, Gnostic,³ and other materials in so far as these strands may possibly provide the background of the discussion of the ascending and descending figure in Eph. 4:8-10. In other words, it is necessary to understand the "primal man" milieu in which Paul was writing in order to comprehend some suggested implications of what Paul is trying to say.

There are certain basic questions which will recur throughout the following discussion. Among these will be questions regarding the validity of speaking of a "redeemed redeemer" figure, as well as of its dating. Were there actually any "redeemer" figures existing previous to the time of Christ, or were these "redeemer" figures instead developed under the influence of Christianity?⁴ Other questions will include those regarding the existence of and distinctions between the heavenly and earthly man figures, as well as their relation to each other and to Ephesians.⁵

Borsch contends that there are four basic theories regarding the source of the "primal man" ideas. The first is that the "primal man" was a corruption and mystical orientation of Greek philosophical ideas.

³The discussion of possible Gnostic influence on the book of Ephesians as a whole is too broad to be taken up here. That there is Gnostic influence will be assumed here. For relevant and thorough discussions see Pokorny, pp. 11-26, and Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Epheser (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), pp. 19-20, 128-29, 132-33, 154-55, 164-65, 168, 170-74, 201-2, 217, 246-47, 262, 272-78.

⁴See Pokorny, pp. 38-39, and Carsten Colpe, Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1961), p. 173-76.

⁵See Borsch, p. 70, and H. M. Schenke, Der Gott "Mensch" in der Gnosis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1962), pp. 17, 153, 155-56.

Borsch rejects this view from the outset,⁶ as do also Schenke,⁷ Doresse,⁸ and R. M. Grant.⁹ There are few who would any longer care to hold this view.

The second theory is that Christianity itself was the dominant influence on the Gnostic "primal man." Such a single-source hypothesis is in itself questionable, says Borsch. He also indicates that this view finds little support today.¹⁰ Among those who attack this position are C. H. Kraeling¹¹ and F. C. Burkitt.¹²

The third major view regarding the source of the "primal man" concept is that it began with Judaism and speculation on Gen. 1:26-28. Borsch indicates that this view is particularly attractive when the penetration of a degree of Hellenistic thought into Judaism and a consequent interaction of Hellenistic, Jewish, and Christian ideas is allowed.¹³ Among

⁷Schenke, pp. 16-33.

⁸Jean Doresse, The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 263.

⁹Robert M. Grant, Gnosticism (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 18.

¹⁰Borsch, pp. 71-72. But see Grant, p. 18. Grant writes, "The most obvious explanation of the origin of the Gnostic "redeemer" is that he was modelled after the Christian conception of Jesus."

¹¹Carl H. Kraeling, Anthropos and Son of Man (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927), p. 190.

¹²Francis Crawford Burkitt, Religion of the Manichees (London: Cambridge University Press, 1925), pp. 71-104.

¹³Borsch, p. 72.

those holding to this view or some variation of it are Schenke,¹⁴ C. H. Dodd,¹⁵ and G. Quispel.¹⁶

Finally, the fourth major view regarding the source of the "primal man" concept is that it has its origins somewhere in the voluminous ancient Near Eastern literature, including such materials as Oriental, Chaldean, Iranian, Indian, Mandaean, and Manichean documents. The majority of modern scholars see the answer lying somewhere in this vast area.¹⁷ Some of the most prominent among these men are Heinrich Schlier,¹⁸ Richard Reitzenstein,¹⁹ C. H. Kraeling,²⁰ and Hans Jonas.²¹

Along with Borsch and the other scholars mentioned above, the first two single-source views regarding the origin of the "primal man" are

¹⁴Schenke, pp. 16-33.

¹⁵C. H. Dodd, Bible and Greeks (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954), p. 147.

¹⁶G. Quispel, "Der Gnostische Anthropos und die Jüdische Tradition," Eranos Jahrbuch, XXII (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1953), 195-234. Note that the pagination of Borsch's footnote on p. 72 is incorrect here.

¹⁷Borsch, p. 73.

¹⁸Schlier, p. 192. See especially H. Schlier, Die Kirche Im Epheserbief (Munster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1949), pp. 82-114, and H. Schlier, Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbief (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1930), pp. 1-75.

¹⁹Richard Reitzenstein, Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium (Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Weber's Verlag, 1921), pp. 93-150.

²⁰Kraeling, p. 126.

²¹Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 23-27.

rejected here. It is better from the outset to seek the source, or rather sources, of the "primal man" theories in the third or fourth views mentioned above, and perhaps even in a combination of them. As Borsch writes,

it is probably wrong to speak in terms of a source. Rather should we think of sources, and, if we are to presuppose anything, it is probably best to reckon with a variety of ideas and cultural backgrounds intermingling, complicating and affecting one another as versions of a legendary Man story were told in different milieux.²²

This study, then, will begin with summaries of these views in the fourth major category, the ancient Near Eastern materials. Presented first is the Gnostic "redeemer" myth, then the search for the "primal man" origins in Iranian materials, then the third category (as noted above) which seeks the "primal man" origins in Jewish literature, and finally two more recent views will be discussed. Although all of these perspectives may be directly relevant to Eph. 4:8-10, these last two views are particularly important.

A Gnostic "Redeemer" Myth Behind Ephesians 4:8-10?

While it has long been recognized that there are major differences between the concept of the "body of Christ" in Paul's letter to the Romans (12:4,5) and his first letter to the Corinthians (6:15-17; 12:12-31) on the one hand and the concept of the "body of Christ" in Ephesians 1 and 4 on the other, no one has explained the reasons for the difference,

²²Borsch, pp. 72, 68. For the basis of rejecting the view that the "primal man" myth has its roots in Christianity, see the argument of Auispel, p. 50, and of Schenke, pp. 51-52.

nor has anyone related this concept to that of the "primal man." Whereas in Romans and in 1 Corinthians the "body of Christ" was nothing more than a metaphor for a spiritual and social grouping, the development of the "body" concept to the "cosmic, supra-individual person" in Ephesians and Colossians remains a mystery. Heinrich Schlier²³ initiated what was to become a long series of discussions on this matter by positing, on the basis of Mandaean and Manichean literature, that behind this developed concept of the "body of Christ" in Ephesians was a "primal man" figure, the myth of the Gnostic "redeemer" or "redeemed redeemer" who was portrayed as the "head" of the "body," the "members" of which he redeemed. This would of course mean for Schlier that the ascending and descending figure in Eph. 4:8-10 would also be viewed in terms of the Gnostic "redeemer."²⁴ The major question then, naturally, was in precisely what manner these notions of the Gnostic "redeemer" had actually influenced the concept of the "body of Christ" in Ephesians, whether the writer of Ephesians had borrowed these Gnostic ideas of the head and members for his theology, or whether he had developed his own theology of the "primal man" and the "body of Christ" in reaction to these Gnostic ideas. The answer of

²³Schlier, Christus und die Kirche, pp. 37-48. Actually, Schlier based much of his work on previous research done by Toni Schmidt in his Der Leib Christi (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1919), pp. 1-249.

²⁴Schlier and his followers are not always precise in their definition of the Gnostic "redeemer." What is really meant by this is any number of an array of "redeemer" figures in early Gnostic documents such as the Mandaean and Manichean literature. See Carsten Colpe's listing later in this chapter for some precise delineations of these figures, Infra, pp. 62-64.

Heinrich Schlier and Ernst Kasemann was that there was direct influence of the Gnostic literature on Paul. Paul borrowed from them to develop his own theology.²⁵

An Iranian Myth Behind Eph. 4:8-10?

While Schlier and Kasemann and those who followed their view had assumed that later Gnostic ideas had existed early enough to influence the writing of Ephesians and Colossians, other scholars objected and held that although the Mandrean and Manichaeic literature was in itself later than Ephesians and Colossians, this same literature was nevertheless a late development of earlier pre-Christian Iranian and related materials. Perhaps the most prominent of these scholars is Richard Reitzenstein. Reitzenstein sought especially to see pre-Christian ideas of the "redeemer" in the Iranian figure Gayomart.²⁶ C. H. Kraeling and Frederick Borsch have elaborated upon his research, giving full accounts of this figure. While complete accounts of Gayomart cannot be given here, it is instructive to note that Gayomart is a righteous, innocent man who suffers and finally dies at the hands of the evil powers or spirits. He was the first man and prototype of humanity, an element of the spiritual creation of Ahura Mazda, but his death is in no way viewed as having soteriological significance. What is important is that Gayomart is viewed as the first righteous, moral, or religious man. Thus, while the soteriological emphases of Ephesians

²⁵Pokorny, p. 34.

²⁶Borsch, p. 75.

could not possibly be traced back to Gayomart, it is apparent even from this description of only a few characteristics that there are similarities between Gayomart and the "powers and spirits" and the moral language of Eph. 1:7; 2:2,13,16; 3:10; 4:13-32; and 6:10-12.²⁷

Borsch in particular gives detailed accounts of two other Near Eastern "primal man" figures, Saoshyant and Yima, which are related in some manner to Gayomart himself. However, all of these figures and others are interrelated, and they all develop within the context of ancient Near East religions such as Zoroastrianism and Mithraism.²⁸

The primary objections to this view have been set out by Carsten Colpe. Colpe basically objects that none of the Mandaean or Manichean materials, nor any other early Gnostic or Iranian sources, actually speak precisely of a "redeemed redeemer" figure. According to him, there is little evidence that the "redeemer" is himself first redeemed. Various strands of ideas concerning a figure who redeems are found in various materials, yet none of them occur together in any one text coherently enough to speak of a "redeemed redeemer." He concludes that this label is therefore false and must be rejected.²⁹

²⁷Kraeling, pp. 75-95, and Borsch, pp. 76-78. For complete descriptions of the Iranian figure Gayomart, the reader is referred to these works.

²⁸Borsch, pp. 75-84.

²⁹Carsten Colpe, Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1961), pp. 171-93. See also Pokorny, p. 75-75.

A Judaic Source for Ephesians 4:8-10?

One strand of thinking among those who attempt to see the sources of the "primal man" ideas in Judaism is represented by G. Quispel and Eduard Schweizer.³⁰ Quispel contends that the "primal man" myth originated in the movement and development of Judaic and Samaritan ideas and their interrelationships with the common astrological and Platonic notions of the soul. Quispel speaks of two strata. In the older stratum the Jewish chokma or sophia as the "world-soul" plays the primary role. Then on the second level, this "world-soul" is combined with older anthropological notions of an imprisoned and redeemed Adam figure. Out of this combination of two different strata arises the new "primal man" which then provides the background for further direct development in the Manichean literature.³¹

Eduard Schwizer takes the same basic position as Quispel, but he adds the influence of the logos concept to Quispel's portrayal of sophia.³² It should also be noted that both Quispel and Schweizer deny that there was any pre-Christian notion of a Gnostic "redeemer" figure.³³

³⁰Eduard Schweizer, Neotestamentica (Zurich und Stuttgart: Zwingli Verlag, 1963), pp. 272-316, or also Eduard Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 57-74.

³¹Quispel, XXII, 195-234. It should be noted here that, according to Quispel, there is a direct development from the two strata mentioned to the Manichean literature, thus eliminating the contention that the ideas of redemption or salvation in the Manichean materials are a direct development from Christianity. This view is important in view of the contention by R. M. Grant, pointed out, *Supra*, p. 52, note 9, that the Gnostic "redeemer" myth is a direct development from Christianity.

³²Schweizer, Neotestamentica, pp. 272-316.

³³Pokorny, p. 36.

Another perspective among those who attempt to see the sources of the "primal man" ideas in Judaism is set forth by Schenke. Schenke says that the Gnostic teaching of a Gott "Mensch," as he terms it, developed from allegorical speculation on the concept of the image of God in Gen. 1:26-28. This figure is the third in his three categories of the "primal man":

- a. There is the "allgod," who himself has two basic forms, the idea of the world which is God and which is pictured as a journeying man, and the concept of the world which originates and subsists in the parts of a dead God or giant.
- b. There is the "primal man" who through his virtues ascends to heaven and becomes the king of paradise.
- c. There is the Gnostic Gott "Mensch" who has two forms, the highest God in heaven who is the original man and his image who has fallen to earth.³⁴

Schenke notes that these three figures were not originally related, and that any relationships that exist are secondary and later. It is especially to be noted, he says, that "allgod" was secondarily related to the Gott "Mensch" in Manichean literature only through a combination of the Gnostic sophia myth and the Iranian tradition of Gayomart. Out of this combination then came the "primal man" teaching of a "redeemed redeemer." Since this combination is secondary and as late as the Manichean literature, he rejects the contentions of Schlier and Käsemann

³⁴Schenke, p. 153.

that the Gnostic "redeemer" myth could possibly have had any influence on the "body of Christ" concept in Ephesians.³⁵

H. Hegermann³⁶ takes a view similar to that of Schenke in seeing the roots of the "primal man" myth in Judaism and in holding that its development has little to do with the New Testament. Through a reconstruction of the background of Col. 1:15-20 and Eph. 1:21-22, he emphasizes the existence of a pre-Gnostic, Judeo-Alexandrian myth of a godly cosmic aeon (similar to the Gnostic sophia myth mentioned by Schenke). This is the same as Philo's "creation-mediator."

Up until this point three basic positions have been reviewed. After summarizing Schlier's concept of the Gnostic "redeemer" myth and presenting the search for the "primal man" sources in Iranian and other ancient Near Eastern literature, the views holding to a Jewish source were outlined. The inconclusive nature and multiplicity of the views presented easily show the difficulties involved in evaluating the worth of each view for interpreting Eph. 4:8-10. But before such evaluation can be done, two other points of view, those of Carsten Colpe and Petr Pokorny, must be presented.

³⁵Ibid., p. 155. Schenke's argument here is another that can be used against the contention of R. M. Grant and others that the Gnostic "redeemer" is a direct produce of Christian influences. See his previous discussion p. 58, note 31. Schenke further leaves open the possibility of the influence of the "allgod" concept on the "body of Christ" of Ephesians. He thinks that the manner in which Christ is understood in Ephesians and Colossians as "head" of the world and "head" of the church is very similar to the notion of the "allgod."

³⁶H. Hegermann, Die Vorstellung vom Schöpfungsmittler im hellenistischen Judentum und Urchristentum in Texten und Untersuchungen (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), pp. 67-87, 154, 163.

Impossibility of a "Redeemed Redeemer" Myth?

As do some of the other scholars summarized above, Colpe (according to Pokorny) thinks that the "body of Christ" in Ephesians is similar to Philo's godly logos and cosmic person. Paul used these same ideas to reinterpret the "Son of Man," and it is in this manner that he contrived the "body of Christ" in terms of a "head-members" theology.³⁷ Then his Christian idea to some extent influenced the "primal man" figure in Gnosticism.³⁸

Even more interesting than Colpe's position are his analyses of other views already mentioned. Against Reitzenstein, he has contended the impossibility of using Mandaean and Manichean literature because of its late dating.³⁹ But most important of all, he has contended against the possibility of pre-Christian "redeemer" ideas, pointing out that even the formula "redeemed redeemer" is inaccurate. In none of the texts usually discussed, he says, is a coherent "redeemed redeemer" presented. In fact, he outlines four ways in which this formula can be described:

1. The "redeemed redeemer" can be a figure who gathers the godly parts of human souls;
2. he can be the one who paves the way to heaven for the souls on earth;

³⁷Pokorny, p. 38, Colpe, Schule, p. 63, and also Carsten Colpe, "Zur Leib-Christi-Vorstellung im Epheserbrief," Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche. Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias in Beiheft Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Alteren Kirche (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Topelmann, 1964), XXVI, p. 182.

³⁸Colpe, pp. 67, and 98-99.

³⁹Borsch, p. 75.

3. he can also be a "redeemed redeemer" in the sense that he himself must have been redeemed before he can redeem others;
4. and he can be the "redeemed redeemer" in the sense that after his descent he cannot of his own power lead the way to heaven, but must be elevated by the highest God.⁴⁰

In summarizing his point of view, Colpe points out that there is no one figure in the texts considered that can be said to include all the characteristics which are variously attributed to him. The notion of the "redeemed redeemer," he says, is rather only a way of looking at the various texts from different points of view without trying to reconcile them. Even more, none of these figures which are supposed to depict the "redeemed redeemer" can be identified with the "primal man." There is only one text which pictures the "redeemer" as an embodied figure. Consequently, Colpe concludes that this entire approach to the problem is invalid.⁴¹

While Colpe is probably correct in calling attention to the diversity outlined above, it is not to be hastily concluded that these texts have not influenced Ephesians. For example, Borsch says that even though men like Reitzenstein may have gone too far in their conclusions on the basis of Mandaean and Manichean texts, there is little to suggest that

⁴⁰Colpe, pp. 173-74.

⁴¹Ibid., The tension between the "redeemed redeemer" figure and the "primal man" motif as discussed here and in the following paragraph is due to the difficulty often involved in attempting to identify the heavenly and earthly man, as pointed out Supra, p. 51.

his entire approach was incorrect.⁴² Pokorny contends that even though Colpe is correct in his view that there is no consistent, specific "redeemed redeemer" myth, there are still various soteriological ideas about "redeemer" figures in the milieu of thought which could have, in one way or another, influenced the various Gnostic ideas of the "redeemer" as well as the "body of Christ" theology of Ephesians and the ascending figure.⁴³

A Possible Solution to Ephesians 4:8-10

While Carsten Colpe goes too far in his criticism of "redeemed redeemer" hypotheses, his own four-fold delineation of various views of the "redeemed redeemer" suggests at least one possible solution to the problem of the ascending and descending figure in Eph. 4:8-10. Even though there may have been no fixed "redeemed redeemer" myth, it is still possible that some of the ideas about "redeemer" figures that he outlines could have been Paul's target when writing Ephesians.

It has been pointed out previously that it is essential in interpreting Eph. 4:8-10 to answer the question why Paul envisioned the necessity of assigning the ascent and descent to the same figure (verse 9).⁴⁴ It is therefore suggested that Paul could possibly have been attempting to counteract two contemporary views of "redeemer" figures portrayed in the second and fourth categories of Colpe's listing. The first view (number 4,

⁴²Borsch, p. 75.

⁴³Pokorny, p. 48.

⁴⁴Supra, p. 32.

page 53) is that there was a "redeemer" figure who had descended from heaven and could not on his own lead the way to God, himself being elevated by the highest God. The second view (number 2, page 53) is that there was a "redeemer" figure who paved the way to heaven for the souls on earth (ascent without first descending). Paul could have been contending that Christ fulfills both of these functions. Thus Christ combines both the ascending and descending Gnostic "redeemer" figures in his own person. As Eph. 4:9-10 points out, the one who ascended is also the one who descended. Like the first Gnostic "redeemer" figure described above, the Christ "redeemer" who descended and then died on the cross (Eph. 2:16) for man's redemption (Eph. 1:7; 2:13) was again raised up and made to sit in heavenly places (Eph. 1:20) by the highest God, the Father of glory (Eph. 1:17). Like the second Gnostic "redeemer" figure outlined by Colpe, this same Christ then paves the way to heaven for the souls on earth in that the Father raises men up with Christ and makes them sit in heavenly places together with Christ (Eph. 2:5-6). Thus, Paul could possibly have described the function of Christ's total work in reaction to two other contemporary ideas of Gnostic "redeemer" figures.⁴⁵

⁴⁵It should be noted here that the heavenly "redeemer" figure in Ephesians is identified with the earthly "primal man" ideas in terms of the cross and the shedding of blood in Eph. 1:7; 2:13; and 2:16. This whole view, though apparently making Paul understandable in Eph. 4:8-10, is however only an hypothesis based on similarities noted between the diverse ascending and descending "redeemer" figures portrayed in Gnosticism and the ascent and descent of Christ in Ephesians. No genetic or functional (in the sense of working or operating together in some way) relationship has been demonstrated. For the dangers involved in taking similarities in form as bases of proof see W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: Johns Hopkin's Press, 1946), pp. 61, 67. Albright points out the necessity of showing genetic or functional relationships, not mere similarities, when dealing with the interrelationships of cultures.

A Reaction Against Early Gnosticism in Ephesians 4:8-10?

Petr Pokorny is one of those who does not fully accept the criticisms of Colpe. He indicates that while it is correct to say that there is no precise pre-Gnostic "primal man-redeemer" or "redeemed redeemer," it is important to note that the "God Man," as Schenke terms it, plays an important role in Gnostic materials such as the Naasene literature, the Apocryphon of John, and the Poimandres. Since this is some of the earliest Gnostic material, there could have been little influence from Christianity on it. Yet, in spite of this, there are many allusions to Old Testament anthropogeny in this literature. Thus Pokorny, following Schenke, finds the roots of the "primal man" figure in the Old Testament.⁴⁶

Pokorny, however, goes further than Schenke. He posits the pre-Christian existence of a "primal man" myth (not a "redeemer" at this point), as well as the Gnostic (outside of Christianity) change of Jewish speculation on Gen. 1:26-28 from an allegory to a myth.⁴⁷ This Gnostic myth of the "primal man" or "Gott 'Mensch," as Schenke prefers to call it, is important in Gnosticism because there are added here new soteriological elements.⁴⁸ Among these are concepts of the "cosmic body" (which Jewish literature like that of Philo does not have)⁴⁹ and the "primal man" as both a heavenly and an earthly figure, united with God

⁴⁶Pokorny, pp. 40-41, 49.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 41-42.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 48-49.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 59-63.

through knowledge. Even though there is no consistent soteriological pattern here, Pokorny contends that these scattered soteriological notions provided a negative point of contact and springboard for the writer of Ephesians.⁵⁰

Pokorny further contends that the writer of Ephesians reacted against these scattered Gnostic soteriological ideas (he rejects the Pauline authorship of Ephesians). Pokorny contends that the writer of Ephesians rejected the early Gnostic "cosmic body" soteriology (the gathering of all souls into one body), and that he also reinterpreted the idea of a cosmic supra-individual "person" or "body" involved here, emerging with the new concept of Christ's "body," the church. Pokorny further indicates that the writer of Ephesians used the metaphor of the "body" in Rom. 12:4,5, 1 Cor. 6:15-17; 12:12-31 as a positive theological basis for "negatively" reinterpreting or applying the early Gnostic "cosmic body" idea to the church. Thus, through a combination of ideas from Paul's letters and the early Gnostic materials, the writer of Ephesians emerged with a new concept of the church as the "body of Christ," a concrete supra-individual person or social organism of which Christ himself is the "head."⁵¹

The evidence for Pokorny's thesis is derived from what he terms the G-Schicht (an early Gnostic stratum of ideas) found particularly in the

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 48.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 48-49, 68-69.

works mentioned previously.⁵² The following are but a few illustrations from the Naassenerpredigt which he adduces from various manuscripts and tractates. The Naassenerpredigt is particularly valuable since it can be dated somewhere around 80 A. D.⁵³

Pokorny notes that the supra-individual person of Eph. 4:13-15 is found throughout the Naassenerpredigt wherever the reborn spiritual people and the "primal man" are spoken of. The "cosmic body" of Eph. 1:23 and 4:15 can be seen in the Naassenerpredigt two ways. On the one hand the "primal man" has a cosmic meaning, and on the other hand the "primal man" is subjected to the cosmic powers of fate and embodied. The concept of the "head" in Eph. 1:23 and 4:15 is found in the Naassenerpredigt in the notion of Adamas as the "head" of a building. The "growth" of Eph. 4:15-16 appears only incidentally, and finally, the idea of a sociological organism, as in Eph. 4:16 and 5:29-30, has no parallel at all in the Naassenerpredigt.⁵⁴

Acknowledging the lack of the ideas of "growth" and the "sociological organism" in the Naassenerpredigt, the question of course arises as to precisely how and why the writer of Ephesians came to react to these G-Schicht concepts in the way that he did. Pokorny points out that, seeing the need for a reaction, the writer of Ephesians combined the "creation-mediator" Christology of the earliest Christian hymns (compare Col. 1:15-20) with the "body" metaphor of the Pauline corpus. Originally,

⁵²Supra, p. 66.

⁵³Pokorny, p. 52.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 53.

the notion of Christ as the "creation-mediator" was derived from earlier ideas where the logos or chokma which mediated in creation (the "soul" of the kosmos and therefore of "all things") had in one way or another been associated with speculation on Gen. 1:26-38.⁵⁵ This idea of Christ as the mediator of creation then became a part of the earliest Christian hymns. Soon Christ was seen not only as the "creation-mediator" or "head" of the kosmos, but also as "head" of his "body," the church, depicting the church as a supra-individual person (compare andra teleion in Eph. 4:13). It was this idea of the church as a supra-individual person, combined with the sociological metaphor of the "body" in the Pauline corpus that resulted in the new and uniquely Christian concept of the church as a sociological, concrete organism headed up in Christ. In other words, the church as a "body" in the sense of a supra-individual person (andra teleion) has been given a concrete, sociological orientation. It is no longer a metaphor.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Supra, pp. 51-53. This view is close to that of Quispel, Schweizer, Hegermann, and Schenke. Quispel differs in that the anthropological stage is secondary for him, and Pokorny questions this "secondary" characteristic.

⁵⁶Pokorny, pp. 63-69. This new idea of the church as a sociological, concrete organism is strikingly similar to the medieval notion of a Corpus Christianum where this concrete sociological aspect was extrapolated far enough to include political bounds. It is no wonder, then, that Luther--see Karl Holl, Luther, in Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, [Paul Siebeck], 1932), I, 339-44--and recently, Edmund Schlink, seriously object to prematurely speaking of the church as the body of Christ. They are speaking not against the view of a concrete, sociological organism, but against a medieval political structure with the pope at its "head." Understood in this perspective, Schlink is by no means protesting the view of the church as the body of Christ as delineated in Ephesians, but against the misuse of this idea.

Applying this theology, as Pokorny sees it, to the ascending and descending figure of Eph. 4:8-10, it is Christ (viewed over against the background of various aspects of the Gnostic "redeemer" figure) who descends and ascends, and it is Christ who "fills all things." The correlative of Christ "filling all things" is the concept of Christ as the goal of this "fulness" in Eph. 4:13. Thus there is here the picture not only of a concrete, sociological organism, but also of an active growth toward Christ, that is, an eschatology.⁵⁷ Pokorny understands this eschatological concept of "growth" or "fulness" in terms of a growth in faith. His basis for this interpretation is primarily Eph. 4:13, mehri katantēsōmen hoi pantes eis tēn enotēta tes pistēos kai tes epignōseos tou huiou tou theou.⁵⁸

This eschatological concept of "growth" as "fulness" will be explored in detail in the next chapter. At this point, however, it is necessary to summarize the findings regarding the possibility of a "primal man" background for Eph. 4:8-10 and attempt possible conclusions.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter the possibilities for recognizing some form of a "primal man" motif behind the structure of Eph. 4:8-10 have been reviewed. This review was set forth in terms of the four basic views regarding the

⁵⁷For the note of eschatology involved here, see especially Heinrich Schlier, "kephalē," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, and translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), III, 680-81.

⁵⁸Pokorny, pp. 68-80.

"primal man" figures mentioned by Borsch. After rejecting the first two which saw the "primal man" motif as influenced by Greek philosophy or as a direct development from Christianity, a considerable portion of time was spent surveying the possibilities for a Gnostic "redeemer" myth in Schlier's sense, for a "primal man" source in Iranian and related literature, for a "primal man" source in Judaism, and then finally for a "primal man" source as described by Colpe and Pokorny.

It has already been concluded that Eph. 4:8-10 could be understood in terms of two descriptions of Gnostic "redeemer" figures described by Colpe.⁵⁹ However, this possibility was advanced here only on the basis of similarities noted. This is hardly enough for definite conclusions. Pokorny's analysis of the early Gnostic literature and his suggestion that by the author of Ephesians is reacting against these ideas is enticing, but he has not demonstrated his case conclusively. His view of the church in Ephesians as a concrete, sociological organism headed up by Christ is probably correct. But to follow Pokorny completely, it would be necessary to reject the Pauline authorship of Ephesians and date this letter relatively late. Even then, the question regarding whether or not the early Gnostic ideas were early enough to influence the author of Ephesians still remains. Further, he too has not consistently shown genetic relationships, although he does this more than many others. However, if Pokorny's conclusions of a reaction against early Gnostic themes fail, particularly in the reconstruction of genetic relationships, then room still remains for seeing this early Gnostic literature as having a

⁵⁹Supra, pp. 62-63.

direct influence upon Ephesians. Thus Schlier could yet be correct in advancing some form of a Gnostic "redeemer" figure as a direct influence on Ephesians. Similar objections must be raised regarding the inconclusiveness of relating Eph. 4:8-10 to Judaic speculation on Gen. 1:26-28. The genetic and functional relationships simply have not been clearly drawn. For example, no one has clearly shown the "development" from the original allegory on Genesis 1 to the "primal man" myth. The same problem accrues to analyses of the Iranian and other ancient Near East "primal man" figures, even though Borsch holds strongly to at least some value in these materials.⁶⁰

In summary, it is concluded that none of the views summarized in this chapter give a complete and satisfactory answer for the background of Eph. 4:8-10. All of them are plagued with the difficulties of demonstrating genetic relationships on the basis of sketchy evidence.

There does appear to be sufficient evidence to conclude cautiously that many of the "primal man-redeemer" ideas developed independently of Christian influence. Another cautious conclusion that can be drawn is that Eph. 4:8-10 was probably written somewhere within the milieu of "primal man" discussion. The array of similarities which can be drawn at least points the interpreter in this direction, and future research on this pericope will have to discuss the "primal man" issues. However, final conclusions regarding Eph. 4:8-10 and the "primal man" motif cannot be drawn until further evidence, and particularly genetic and functional

⁶⁰Borsch, p. 75.

relationships, are produced. The matter of fact which remains is that this whole area of discussion is still, in Borsch's phrase, a Pandora's box and a host of conflicting opinions.

Chapter Thesis

In addition to a concept of "fulfillment" in Eph. 4:8-10, 13, as God's active power in Christ and his church, which opposes the early Gnostic notions of "fulfillment" as the heavenly process, "fulfillment" may in Ephesians also include God's steadfast love.

Introduction

Until now, the major emphasis has been upon the explanation and background of the quotation from Isaiah 45 and the ascending and descending figures in verses 9 and 10. Except for two brief allusions in Chapter VI, the concept of "filling all things" in verse 10 has been virtually ignored. It is this phrase that will be analyzed in this chapter, and it is this phrase which, more than any other, attempts to answer the question regarding the scope, goal, or intent of Eph. 4:8-10. This is already indicated by the use of being at the beginning of the phrase in verse 10c. The major question of course is what is meant by "filling all things." Exactly what is meant by the plurality of verse 10c and the glorification for Christ of verse 13? Precisely what is meant by to pants in verse 10a and again in verse 15? Further, what is the relation of all of these concepts to the rather compressed usage of these terms in Eph. 3:22-23?

CHAPTER VII

THE FULNESS MOTIF

Chapter Thesis

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Introduction

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Contemporary Views on "Fulness" and "All Things"

While there seems to be a general agreement among contemporary scholars regarding the meaning of these terms for Ephesians, there are some areas of difference because the terms at times appear rather fluid. This is particularly true in the case of plēroma. Therefore a summary of the views of four modern scholars with slightly differing points of view will be presented here.

In his discussion of these terms as related to their usage in Ephesians, Petr Pokorny looks again to what he has termed the G-Schicht, an early stratum of Gnostic writings. He deals specifically with the first tractate of the Hermetica, the Poimandres. Here Nus (Mind) is the highest God who is the Father of "all." This "all," whether expressed as ta panta or pan,¹ is a universal idea and has a comprehensive religious meaning. It includes the earth, the underworld, and also the present and future ages. In this view the "all" is separated from the Nus by a fence or a wall. The lower spheres in particular are dependent on the Nus only through the mediation of the higher spheres, and in this sense men are captives on earth.² Pokorny also notes, however, that the "all" in the thirteenth tractate of the Hermetica seems to refer more to the powers and elements of the Gnostic world existing in the heavens between man and God. The initiated Gnostics must pass through this "all" on their way

¹"All Things" or "All" seems to be used interchangeably, as in Eph. 1:22,23. See also Petr Pokorny, Der Epheserbrief und Die Gnosis (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), p. 72.

²Pokorny, p. 71. See also F. H. Borsch, The Son of Man in Myth and History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 59-60.

to heaven. He concludes that this latter view, however, is influenced by the Septuagint and does not represent the basic Gnostic view.³

For Pokorny, the plēroma of Ephesians and of the G-Schicht is not the later Gnostic hypostasis, and it can have various meanings. In contrast to the concept of the "all," in Ephesians the "fulness" is generally a spiritual dimension which depicts the authority of Christ over the intermediary powers. Thus when Christ "fills all things," he spreads his spiritual power through the universe, through his body, the church, which is his "fulness." He can do this because in his ascent (Eph. 1:20; 4:8-10) he has conquered the intermediary powers, and they and "all things" are now in effect under his control, dependent on him. This spiritual power of Christ is now "filling" the universe through his body, his "fulness." This can be capsuled in the formula "Christ = head of the church = the one who fills all in all, and the church = the body of Christ = the fulness of him who fills all in all." Thus Christ conquers and controls the "all," but the "all" is not his body. His body is the church, the spiritual power of his "fulness."⁴

Heinrich Schlier sees the ta panta in Ephesians in the universal sense. For support he points to Eph. 1:10,22-23; 3:15; and 4:10,15 where Christ is viewed as the "head" of "all things," defined in terms of heaven and earth (1:10). Christ became the "head" of "all things" in that he

³Pokorny, pp. 72-73.

⁴Ibid. Pokorny's notion of "fulness" in Ephesians as a kind of "spiritual power," and his rather easy association of this concept with the "church" is confusing. He does not adequately explain this view. There may be a further problem regarding the ta panta in 4:15. The objection that in Eph. 4:15 ta panta may be understood as the substantive

ascended through the heavens, and this is portrayed in Eph. 4:10c as "filling all things." Thus plēroma for Schlier is to be taken in a lordly or "herrscherlich" sense. In ascending through the heavens and thereby "filling all things," Christ becomes and remains lord of "all things." This sense of "filling" is the same, he says, as the "impersonal power" in the Stoic-pantheistic literature.⁵

Gerhard Delling⁶ points out that the "all" or "all things" refers to all of the beings capable of decision. This includes not only people, but all the intermediary powers and authorities as well. It does not, according to him, refer to nature as such. Delling notes that the "fulness" as it is used here does not refer to the Stoic plēroma as an impersonal power (contra Schlier), but it is rather the Old Testament concept of God's active creation of, caring for, guarding, and preservation of the world. To be sure, plēroma is used in various senses in Ephesians (such as the "fulness" of time in 1:10 and being "filled" with the Spirit in 5:18), but its basic sense in Eph. 1:22,23; and 4:8-10,13,

identified with Christos at the end of the verse could be raised in reaction to the last point made here. However, if the ta panta is here taken in the sense of "in every way," thus translating the statement of 4:15 as "we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ . . ." then there can be no objection to Pokorny's point that the "all" is not Christ's body.

⁵Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an Die Epheser (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), p. 193. One problem with Schlier's view of "filling all things" is that he has ignored the instrumental dative, tē ekklēsia, of Eph. 1:22.

⁶Gerhard Delling, "plēroma," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, founded by Gerhard Kittel and now edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1959), VI, 291.

and Colossians is that of the Old Testament active care of God. This same Old Testament motif is applied to Christ in Eph. 1:22,23 and again in 4:10,13 in that the Wesensfuelle of God is in Christ. This is not a reference to a personal union in the Godhead, but it is rather a reference to a unity of action, a functional unity. As God cares for the world in the Old Testament, so Christ actively "fills all things."⁷

In an article entitled "The Scope of the Redemptive Task," Martin H. Scharlemann⁸ views the ta panta as a collective term for the universe which contains the intermediary powers. The intermediary powers are viewed as in control of the universe. The point to be remembered, says Scharlemann, is that even these powers have in fact been created by and for Jesus Christ.

Scharlemann views the Gnostic plērōma as that whole series of interlopers and chain of intermediary beings between God and man, each one less perfect than the one above it. These interlopers or chain of powers which filled up the gap between God and the imperfect world were thus described as the "fulness." Over against this view, Scharlemann contends that the book of Colossians holds to a perspective which sees Christ himself as that "fulness," as that which fills up the gap between God and man (rather than the Gnostic interlopers). However, Scharlemann indicates that these ideas of "fulness" may be rooted in Old Testament as in Ex. 40:34 where the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and again as

⁷Ibid., VI, 287-90, 302.

⁸Martin H. Scharlemann, "The Scope of the Redemptive Task," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXVI (May 1965), 295-296.

in 1 Kings 8:10 where a cloud fills the house of the Lord to such an extent that the priests cannot enter it. In this case, he says, the "fulness" would represent the incarnate presence of God. However, he indicates that this interpretation is not feasible for Colossians.⁹

In his more recent book Stephen: A Singular Saint, Scharlemann does apply the Old Testament background listed above to Eph. 1:23. Here Scharlemann again lists the Exodus and 1 Kings passages, indicating that the author of Ephesians is employing this kind of terminology to underline his conviction that the tabernacling presence of God among men was to be found in Christ.¹⁰ Furthermore, since Christ is the "head" of the church, his "body," this "fulness" is extended to the Christian community which is in fact the permanent residence, the eternal dwelling place of God. This latter point is specifically to be noted in Eph. 2:22 where the church, pictured as a holy temple, a naon hagion, is spoken of as the katoiketerion (tou theou), which is the Septuagint term for permanent residence.¹¹

⁹Ibid., XXXVI, 292, 297.

¹⁰Martin H. Scharlemann, Stephen: A Singular Saint (Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1968), pp. 126-27. Scharlemann does not connect his interpretation of plēroma in Eph. 1:23 with the concepts of "fulness" in 4:10c or 4:13. When he discusses Eph. 4:8 in this same context, he is making the point that both the rabbinic Targum and the author of Ephesians have applied the Psalm to a new situation. The Targum applied it to Moses and the author of Ephesians to the new community (Christ and the community are the New Testament parallels of the Old Testament temple), or the "new Israel." Since the covenant with Israel and the kingdom of David (2 Samuel 7) had come to an end, the real fulfillment of these covenants has come in the creation of the church, God's eternal dwelling place.

¹¹Ibid., p. 125. In anticipation of points to be made regarding the Johannine prologue later in this chapter, it is instructive to take note here that the same idea of "tabernacling" among men can be recognized in the eskēnōsen of John 1:14.

In summary, it may be said that, generally speaking, modern commentators view the pan or ta panta as a reference to the universe, or at least to those "willing" powers which control the universe. The interpretation of plēroma is more problematical. For Pokorny "fulness" in the G-Schicht and Ephesians is a kind of vague spiritual "filling" of the universe, whereas for Schlier it is a Stoic, impersonal power or force. In contrast to this Delling and Scharlemann see here Old Testament ideas of God caring for the world and "filling" the temple. Since there is little evidence to the contrary the concept of ta panta or pan as having universal import is accepted in this study. However, while there is perhaps room in the concept of "fulness" to allow validity for views of "fulness" as "impersonal power" (Schlier) and even as "Spiritual power" (Pokorny), the following pages will primarily indicate that the Old Testament and Johamine evidence strongly points toward a perspective of "fulness" in Ephesians as God's active presence and care, indeed His "steadfast love." Delling and Scharlemann have begun research in this direction, and the evidence presented here will carry their initial conclusions further.

The Fulness Motif in the Old Testament

Delling has based his concept of "fulness" on Old Testament passages such as Jer. 23:24 where God "fills" heaven and earth, as well as on Intertestamental literature like Wisdom of Solomon 1:7 where the Spirit of the Lord "fills" the world and in essence holds "all things" together. For him these passages reflect God's creative guarding or watching over the world. Scharlemann traces the "fulness" in Ephesians back to Ex. 40:34

where the glory of the Lord "fills" the tabernacle and again in 1 Kings 8:10-11 where the cloud "fills" the house of the Lord to the extent that the priests cannot enter it. But neither of these men research the matter in detail.

In a tradition parallel to that of 1 Kings 8:10-11, 2 Chron. 5:13-6:4 adds the significant aspect of the Lord's "steadfast love":

and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD,

"For he is good,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever,"

the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

Then Solomon said,

"The LORD has said that he would
dwell in thick darkness.

I have built thee an exalted house,
a place for thee to dwell in for
ever."

Then the king faced about, and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. . . . (RSV)

The concept of the Lord's "steadfast love" occurs in the immediate context of the idea of the Lord "filling" the temple with a cloud to the extent that the priests cannot enter to minister. The functional relationship occurs in that when praise (doxology) is given to the Lord for his "steadfast love," at that moment the glory of the Lord "fills" the temple.¹²

¹²The MT here uses the term hesed for "steadfast love," and the LXX uses the word eleos. For "filling" the LXX uses pleroō and the MT uses malē. These terms in the original present no further problem here. It is interesting to note that this temple is the place where Israel is to dwell forever. The verb used is kataskēnoō, not Scharlemann's katoiktērion or katoikeo. Supra, p. 78. As shall be shown, the same verb kataskenoō is used in Ezek. 43:5-7 also of God's eternal dwelling in the temple.

A similar example occurs shortly following in 2 Chron. 6:40-7:3 in a heightened form:

Now, O my God, let thy eyes be open and thy ears attentive to a prayer of this place.

"And now arise, O LORD God, and
go to thy resting place,
thou and the ark of thy might.
Let thy priests, O LORD God, be
clothed with salvation,
and let thy saints rejoice in thy
goodness.

O LORD God, do not turn away the
face of thy anointed one!

Remember thy steadfast love for
David thy servant."

When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD'S house. When all the children of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the earth on the pavement, and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying,

"For he is good,
for his steadfast love endures for
ever." (RSV)

In 6:41-42 Solomon ends his prayer with a plea for the Lord to remember His "steadfast love" for his servant David. Then, at the beginning of Chapter 7 when Solomon had ended his prayer, immediately fire came down from heaven, consumed the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord "filled" the temple. Although the idea of "steadfast love" occurs here at the end of a prayer form, rather than in the form of a doxology, the concepts of God's "steadfast love" and "filling" the temple are closely related. But even more, a doxology equivalent to that in 2 Chron. 5:13-6:4 occurs in verse 3. Like the prayer form in 6:41-42 and like the doxology of 2 Chron. 5:13-6:4, this doxology relates the concepts of "steadfast love" to that of the glory of the Lord "filling" the temple. Thus in

2 Chron. 5:13-6:4, "steadfast love" in the form of doxology occurs prior to the "filling," and in 2 Chron. 7:1-2 it occurs after the "filling." Again, in 2 Chron. 5:12-6:4 "steadfast love" occurs only prior to the "filling," and in 2 Chron. 6:40-7:3 it occurs both before and after the "filling." Yet in all cases, there is only one basic event. These different aspects are related to that one event and are therefore related to each other.¹³

It is significant that the concept of the glory of the Lord "filling" the temple occurs again in Ezek. 43:5-7 where the "filling" is related to "enthronement," or rather, the God who is already enthroned. As the Spirit lifts Ezekiel up and takes him to the inner court, the glory of the Lord "fills" the temple, and at that point Ezekiel hears the enthroned Lord speaking to him out of the temple. The Lord says:

Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever.¹⁴

The point to be drawn from this reference is the relationship of the "fulness" and "enthronement" themes.

¹³The same terms are used in the original here as in 2 Chron. 5:13-6:4. Supra, footnote 12.

¹⁴For the word dwell the LXX here uses kataskēnoō, as also in 2 Chron. 6:2 and John 1:14 (omitting the prefix kata). The point of difference is that in Ezek. 43:5-7 it is God, not only the Israelites, who will dwell in the midst of his people Israel forever. In John 1:14 it is of course the logos who eskēnōsen en hēmin. Actually, Ezekiel offers much more in terms of similarities to Ephesians than has been indicated here. They have been excluded from the text because they may be irrelevant for immediate purposes of this study and because as scattered references, may really mean no more than that they are interesting. For example, in Ezek. 39:21-29 there is the cosmic notion of the Lord setting his glory, with which He also fills the temple, among the nations. Could this have any relation to the cosmic ta panta of Ephesians? Again,

In Is. 6:1-7, the three themes of "filling," "enthronement," and "steadfast love" are used in the same context:

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;

the whole earth is full of his glory."

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said; "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven."

Here the Lord is pictured on a high and lofty throne, His train and smoke "fill" the temple, and one of the seraphim brings a coal from the altar for the forgiveness of Isaiah's sins (steadfast love). Thus it appears that the three themes under discussion are located in the same context here.

In summary, it can be asserted that the themes of "filling" and "steadfast love" are sometimes integrally related in the same immediate contexts in the Old Testament. The theme of the "enthroned" Lord can

Ezek. 39:23 speaks of Israel's captivity, a theme little different than that of the quotation from Ps. 68:18 in Eph. 4:8. (The idea of proclaiming liberty to the captives in Is. 61:1 may also have some relation to the quotation from Ps. 68:18 in Eph. 4:8.) Again, there is the notion of God's steadfast love in Ezek. 39:25-26, and the idea of the pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel (cf. Eph. 5:18) comes in Ezek. 39:29. Close to Ezek. 44:4 where the glory of the Lord again fills the temple, Israel is in 44:6 called a "rebellious" house, similar to the theme of the rebellious in Ps. 68:18. Only further investigation can tell whether or not these similarities should be taken seriously for the interpretation of Eph. 4:8-10.

also be associated with the "filling" the temple, the Lord comes to the "tabernacle," to dwell, among his people. All of these themes may be related to possible parallels in Eph. 4:8-10.

Fulness in the Johannine Prologue

It has often been indicated that there are similarities between the "ascent" and "descent" in Eph. 4:8-10 and the "ascent" and "descent" in the Gospel of John, particularly John 3:13; 6:33,38,41,42,50-51,58,62; and 20:17. It has also been correctly objected that the Johannine material is dated later than Ephesians and cannot therefore be used for interpreting Ephesians. This, however, is not true of the early materials of the Johannine prologue where the concept of "fulness" occurs twice, in John 1:14 and again in John 1:16. It does not occur elsewhere in the Gospel. Even more fascinating is the possibility that "fulness" is here related to the concept of God's "steadfast love."

Raymond Brown¹⁵ has recently pointed out that the prologue of the Gospel of John was originally an early Christian hymn which has been emended and used as an introduction to this Gospel. According to him, scholars are not completely agreed as to original structure of the hymn, but it is important to recognize that there is general agreement on seeing, among others, verse 14 as part of the early and original structure. It is verse 14 that is the most important for consideration here. On this basis, then, it is assumed that the materials from the Johannine prologue

¹⁵Raymond Brown, The Gospel According to John, in The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 1, 21.

discussed here are early enough to form a part of the same thought world in which the author of Ephesians was involved.¹⁶ Further, if the tradition of the Apostolic Church that the Gospel of John was written in Ephesus is true, which Charles Kingsley Barrett takes to be the most likely conclusion, then this adds weight to the possibility of some relation between the Johannine material and Ephesians.¹⁷

¹⁶There is even possible further corroboration for this view if Rudolf Bultmann was correct in ascribing the Johannine prologue to a Gnostic hymn arising from a circle of followers of John the Baptist. Even more important, H. H. Schaefer, taking Bultmann's research further afired, relegated the prologue of John to Enos, a "God 'Man'" or "primal man" figure. See Rudolf Bultmann, "Der religionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Prologs zum Johannes--Evangelium," Eucharisterion. Festschrift für Hermann Gunkel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1923), II, 1-26, and Richard Reitzenstein and H. H. Schaefer, Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland (Leipzig und Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1926), pp. 36-341. While Schnackenburg and a number of others reject this point of view, F. H. Borsch has recently pointed out that this whole discussion regarding possible John the Baptist and "primal man" origins for the prologue of the Gospel of John remains an open question. He writes that this position, although by no means proven, remains attractive without question. Reginald Fuller is of the same opinion. See Rudolf Schnackenburg, Das Johannesevangelium, in Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament, (Freiburg, Basel, und Wien: Herder, 1965), IV, 205-7; F. H. Borsch, The Son of Man in Myth and History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 259-60, 268; and Reginald H. Fuller, New Testament in Current Study (New York: Scribner, 1962), p. 129. If it is possible that there is somehow a "primal man" basis for the prologue of John, and if the conclusion in Chapter VI, Supra, pp. 69-72 that Eph. 4:8-10 is written within and in one way or another influenced by the "primal man" milieu, then there is further evidence for seeing possible relations between the thought of Ephesians and the prologue of John's Gospel.

¹⁷Charles Kingsley Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John (London: SPCK, 1965), p. 111. See also Werner Georg Kummel, Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 175.

Having thus adequately substantiated the early date of the materials in the prologue of John relevant to the present discussion, it is necessary to return to the analysis of "fulness" in John 1:14 and 1:16. John 1:14 will be dealt with first.

The basic point of discussion in John 1:14 is the phrase plērēs charitos kai alētheias. Whether plērēs modifies logos, doxan, or monogenous is of little import for this analysis.¹⁸ Any of these three antecedents would in no way alter the following points. The crux of the matter is that the phrase plērēs charitos kai alētheias is strikingly similar to the Old Testament glory of the Lord "filling" the temple as it is associated with hesed, that is, of God's "steadfast love." The term plērēs itself needs no elaboration.¹⁹

What is important is that Schnackenburg and Brown contend that the phrase charis kai alētheia is a Hebraism reflecting the famous Old Testament pairing of hesed and emet. Brown contends:

God's hesed is His kindness or mercy in choosing Israel without any merit on Israel's part and His expression of this love for Israel in the covenant. . . . For the Qumran Essenes their community was a covenant of hesed. God's emet is His fidelity to

¹⁸Brown, p. 14. By way of anticipation, charitos kai alētheia is important here because the terms charis and alētheia are used repeatedly in Ephesians 4.

¹⁹The assertion of John 1:14 that it is the logos who became flesh and eskēnōsen en hēmin lends weight to drawing a parallel between comparing this verse to the Old Testament glory of the Lord "filling" the temple, the place where God then dwells (kataskēnoō). Supra, p. 82, footnote 14.

the covenant promises. . . . In Exod xxxiv 6 we hear this description of Yahweh as He makes the covenant with Moses on Sinai: "The Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and rich (rab) in hesed and ,emet. . . ."²⁰

In summary, the point to be made from all of this is that here in the prologue of John, as in some of the Old Testament materials, there is a relation of "fulness" or "filling" and of God's "steadfast love." It is anticipated here that this same relation between "fulness" and "steadfast love" will be found in Ephesians 4.

This same basic thought is elaborated in John 1:16. The one who is "full of grace and truth" not only "tabernacles" among us, but we also receive of his "fulness."²¹ Thus, if we receive of God's "fulness," that is, of his "grace and truth," his "steadfast love," by receiving of Christ, then this is a train of thought possibly similar to that of Ephesians 4 where Paul, in the context of exhortation to love and truth, admonishes his readers to grow up into the "fulness" of Christ.

John 1:17 adds that "grace and truth" are set in contrast to (not as a strict opposition or rejection of, but as superiority to) the law of Moses, spoken of here as a gift (edothē) in a manner similar to the way in which the rabbinic Targum on Ps. 68:18 spoke of the Torah as a gift. Since this is the case, there is here a significant parallel to the

²⁰Brown, p. 14. Brown also notes that charis occurs only in the prologue of the Gospel of John. For essentially the same argument as this one given by Brown, see Schnackenburg, IV, 204, 247-48, as well as Lester J. Kuyper, "Grace and Truth," Interpretation, XVIII (January 1964), 3-19. It should also be noted here that the Johannine charis kai aletheia follows the MT hesed and ,emet rather than the LXX oiktirmōn kai eleemōn makrothumos kai polyeleos kai alethinos, which is slightly different.

²¹Here the genitive case plērōmatos is used in place of the form which occurs in John 1:14.

possibility of "Moses-Christ" and "Torah--gift-of-grace" contrasts in Eph. 4:8-10. Just as Christ may be contrasted to Moses in John 1:17, so he also is contrasted to Moses in Eph. 4:8-10. In contrast to Moses who ascended and then descended with the gift of the Torah, Christ descended and ascended. Because of (not by, through, or in conjunction with; the single action aorist participle anabas and the hina add weight to the translation "because") Christ's conquering ascent through the world of the intermediary powers and authorities (enthronement), he now has the power to give his gifts of grace and truth, that is, of his "steadfast love" to man. Thus Christ's conquering power and his gift of "steadfast love" truly "captivates captivity," or sets men free from the intermediary powers and free for the reception of Christ's "steadfast love." It is this same "steadfast love" of Christ which "fills all things," as indicated in Eph. 4:10c. Or in other words, "all things" are "filled" with the gift of Christ's love. This is finally the scopus, the goal or intention of the text of Eph. 4:8-10.²²

In summary, the prologue of the Gospel of John is generally early enough to warrant the possibility of drawing relationships between John 1:14-17 and Eph. 4:8-10. Further, this language of John 1:14 and 1:16 integrally relates God's "fulness" in terms of "steadfast love," as

²²See the conclusions drawn at the end of Chapter IV and V. Supra, pp. 40 and 47-9, based on the article by J. Cambier. See also Schnackenburg, IV, 252. It should be noted here that, while there is a similar contrast of Christ and Moses in Eph. 4:8-10 by the use of the rabbinic Targum, there is also a difference between John 1:14-17 and Eph. 4:8-10. This difference is in that Christ's "fulness" of "grace and truth" or "steadfast love" is received upon Christ's descent" in John 1:14-17 whereas it is received upon his "ascent" in Eph. 4:10. This difference is probably a unique twist by Paul's own hand in speaking to a different

does the Old Testament material analyzed previously. Finally, the contrast of Moses and Christ, and of Moses' gift of the Torah and Christ's gift of "steadfast love," may possibly be a parallel to the suggested contrast on the basis of the rabbinic Targum used in Eph. 4:8-10.

The Fulness Motif in Qumran

Raymond Brown, as quoted above, has already alluded to the fact that the Qumran community saw itself as a community of hesed. But it appears that he may not have gone far enough. In an article on the influence of Qumran on Ephesians, Karl Georg Kuhn²³ indicates that the "fulness" and "steadfast love" of God are also intricately associated in some Qumran materials. He writes:

Während das Alte Testament Gott mit adjektivischer Wendung als rab hesed "reich an Gnade" bezeichnet (Ps. ciii.8 u. ä. St.), ist in Qumran der substantivische Ausdruck "die Fülle, der Reichtum der Gnade (Gottes)" geläufig.

However, even though Kuhn relates the concept of God's grace to "fulness" (die Fülle), it is even apparent from his own article that the rab is rather a parallel to the to ploutos (Eph. 1:7) than to "fulness"

problem, that of the Gnostic intermediary powers. But this difference in no way nullifies the Old Testament roots of "fulness" as "steadfast love" (reflected in "grace and truth" in John 1:14) and of the glory of the Lord "filling" the temple (reflected in "he tabernacled among us" in John 1:14) which appear to be reflected in Eph. 4:8-10 and its context. See here especially the new community as the naon hagion language of Eph. 3:20-22, and Scharlemann's discussion of this, Stephen: A Singular Saint, pp. 125-27.

²³Karl Georg Kuhn, "Der Epheserbrief im Lichte der Qumrantexte," New Testament Studies, VII (1960-1961), 336-37.

in Ephesians. Thus, it is open to question whether or not Kuhn is correct in relating "fulness" and "steadfast love" in Qumran. Since this is the case, Qumran will not be adduced as evidence for the general thesis of this chapter that there is integral relationship between these two concepts in some biblical literature.²⁴

Summary and Conclusions

After reviewing the concepts of ta panta and plērōma in the perspective of four contemporary scholars, it was concluded that there was general agreement regarding the meaning of ta panta as a reference to the universe, the totality of things. Then, after leaving open the possibility of seeing the concept of "fulness" in Ephesians as meaning "impersonal power" (Schlier) or as "spiritual power" (Pokorny), it was pointed out that both Old Testament and Johannine evidence strongly point to a perspective of "fulness" as God's active presence and care, and indeed his "steadfast love." Delling and Scharlemann had directed their efforts along these lines, although they had not gone so far as to assert that "fulness" in Ephesians is a reference to God's "steadfast love." Beginning with the views of Delling and Scharlemann, this chapter then proceeded to outline the Old Testament and Johannine evidence for adding God's "steadfast love" to "fulness" as God's active presence. The evidence from Qumran was regarded as inconclusive, and the motif of "enthronement" in the context of "fulness" was also treated in passing.

²⁴It may be objected here that the roots of "fulness" in Ephesians should still be sought in Qumran because of the conjectured great influence that Qumran has had on Ephesians, as recently suggested by Kuhn and others. However, Kuhn himself specifically says that Qumran has not influenced

Viewed in these terms, the phrase hina plērōse ta panta in Eph. 4:10c spells out the scopus of the pericope 4:8-10. The scopus, the goal or intent of this pericope, is to show with his gift of "steadfast love" that Christ "fills all things" because he ascended far above all the heavens. In his ascension he was enthroned in heaven and above all the intermediary powers and could then and on that account "fill" the universe with the gift of grace, God's "steadfast love."²⁵

Ephesians in the area of Christology, and therefore also not in the area of ecclesiology. He specifically points out that there is no "head-body" concept in Qumran, and that this is a later hellenistic-Jewish influence on the theology of Ephesians. Kuhn, VII, 346.

²⁵See the more complete discussion of this in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

ESSENTIAL UNITY OF EPHESIANS 4:8-10

IN THE PARENETIC CONTEXT

Chapter Thesis

The argumentation of Eph. 4:8-10 is not an unnecessary, fragmented collation of phrases, but it is rather an integral unit designed to set forth Christ's "fulness" as his universal power, as his gifts of the knowledge of and faith in the Son of God, and as his "steadfast love." It also contests both rabbinic and early Gnostic ideas.

Introduction

In the preceding chapters, this investigation has analyzed and evaluated an abundance of material that has at least tangential relevance for the interpretation of Eph. 4:8-10. It is the purpose of this chapter not to summarize, but to bring together the positive results and show how they relate to the Ephesians pericope in its parenetic context. The discussion here will answer the problems presented in Chapter I and will complete the argument which was begun in Chapter VII.

Relation and Explanation

The basic function of the quotation from Ps. 68:18 in Eph. 4:8 is to support the contention in verse 7 that Christ's gift is given to individuals. Paul uses the text of the rabbinic Targum where the verb "gave" rather than "received" appears. Mowinckel has indicated that the Psalm in the original may have allusions to the idea of giving (not receiving)

gifts, but the text of the Psalm does not specifically say this. J. Cambier correctly contends that this concept of the giving of the gifts of grace is a theme which runs throughout this pericope and is perhaps evident in verse 10c which is in turn integrally related to the "gifts" of verse 11.

In quoting Ps. 68:18 in verse 8, Paul has also purposely introduced the "ascent" and "captivity." These themes are not inserted at random, but they are important for Paul's whole argument. Verses 9 and 10 are therefore not a midrash which has no bearing on the immediate discussion, as F. W. Beare and others contend. On the contrary, Paul takes hold of these concepts and uses them to the advantage of his basic argument regarding the giving of gifts. It is in fact because of Christ's ascent that the gifts may be given and the captives led to freedom.

In quoting the rabbinic Targum on Ps. 68:18, Paul did not want the gifts given at the ascent of Christ to be confused with the gift of the Torah at the ascent of Moses on Mount Sinai. He therefore not only explains this difference in verses 9 and 10, but he intentionally poses a contrast between Christ and Moses, pointing out Christ's superiority to Moses. Moses had ascended Mount Sinai in order to descend with gift of the Torah. Christ, however, descended to earth first and then in his conquering power (enthronement) ascended to heaven that through his gifts he might then "fill all things," the whole universe. Thus verses 9 and 10 not only support the quotation from the Psalm in verse 8, but they add to the argument as a whole. Beare is correct in pointing out that verses 9 and 10 are a polemic against the rabbinic interpretation of Ps. 68:18, but he fails to see the argument of verses 9 and 10 as it relates to the whole theme of the giving of "gifts."

But there is more to the "ascent" than this. Paul is also probably contesting some form of a Gnostic "redeemer" myth, perhaps in terms of those figures isolated by Colpe and listed in Chapter VI. It is not a Gnostic "redeemer" figure but rather Christ who is enthroned as he ascends far above all the heavens, thereby conquering all the intermediary powers and leading captive men free. Here Paul seems to be applying Yahweh's enthronement in Ps. 68:18 to Christ's enthronement in his ascent to heaven.¹ There may also be an allusion here to the cosmic powers of chaos in Psalm 68 (Mowinckel, Chapter III), but these possible allusions are not as clear as is the "enthronement." Thus, if the polemic against an early Gnosticism or "primal man" figure as outlined here is true in addition to the polemic against Moses portrayed above, then there is further evidence for the view taken here that the argument of verses 9 and 10 are integral to the whole of Chapter IV. Even further evidence for the integral relation of Eph. 4:9-10 to the entire context of the book is adduced in that the theology of Ephesians is highly concerned with the conquering of the intermediary cosmic powers (Eph. 1:21,22; 2:2; 3:10; 6:10-12). The one difficulty with this view may be that there are no contrasting "gifts" in the Gnostic literature.

¹It may be objected here that a Psalm cannot be used as the basis of an argument against Gnosticism. Presumably, Gnostics would not recognize its validity. This is the position taken by Martin H. Franzmann. However, if it is true that Gnosticism may at least in part be a development from Jewish apocalyptic (or even directly from Christianity) then a Psalm could easily be used to oppose an early Gnostic schism. See Robert M. Grant, Gnosticism (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), pp. 12-19.

In Eph. 4:10c, Paul is no longer describing the contrast between Christ and some other figure, but he is here leading into the argument of verse 11. Christ ascended and was enthroned in power above all the heavens and because of that could "fill all things" by giving gifts to men (Chapter VII, pages 74 and 75). Verse 11 therefore not only revives the "gifts of verse 7 and verse 8, but it is also an outgrowth of the "gifts" as Christ's "fulness" which verse 11-16 goes on to elaborate in detail. In other words, verses 11-16 are not only a delineation of gifts, but they are an explication of the gift of Christ's "fulness" (compare verse 13).

The content of this gift of Christ's "fulness" is explained particularly by the findings of Chapter VII, as well as by previous explications of the "gifts," such as those by Pokorny, Cambier, and Schlier. All of these fit well into the context of the parenthesis in Ephesians 4.

The concept of "enthronement to power" (Psalm 68; Mowinckel, Chapter III) over the whole universe may be, as Schlier says, evident in the "filling all things" of Eph. 4:10c, although there is little in the immediate context to suggest that "fulness" itself means "power." "Power" is perhaps better portrayed in the conquering "ascent."

Better represented in the Ephesians 4 context is the theme of growth in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. Both Pokorny and Cambier have generally represented this view which occurs in 3:17,19 in 4:13,14, and again in a more negative sense in 4:17,18a, and 21.

The theme of the gifts of Christ's "fulness" as his "steadfast love," however, occur even more frequently, as in 3:17; 4:2,15,16,18b,19,22,23, 24,25-32, 5:2, and really throughout this parenthesis. All of these

exhortations to good works and decent behavior in Eph. 4-6 are rooted and grounded in love (3:17). Thus, the gift of Christ's "fulness" as his "steadfast love" is attested not only by Old Testament literature (perhaps also by the theme of "theophany" in Psalm 68; see Kraus and Weiser in Chapter III), the Johannine prologue, and perhaps even by Qumran, but particularly by the parenetic context of Ephesians 4 itself.

It should also be noted here that the gift of Christ's "fulness" as his "steadfast love" in Eph. 4:8-10 has both ecclesiological and eschatological implications. Ecclesiological, it says that Christ is actively working in his holy body, the church, which is also his "fulness" in an earlier use of that term (1:23). This means that the church is actively "filling all things," that is, the universe, with Christ's "steadfast love." Eschatologically, the gift of Christ's "steadfast love" means that, as the church works out this "steadfast love" or "fulness" of Christ, it is concretely attaining unto that complete and perfect supra-individual man, whose "head" is Christ. Thus there is here no eschatology of an "end" of all things, but a "filling of all things" a bringing of all things to completion and perfection through Christ's "steadfast love."

Finally, then, the scopus or goal of the text of Eph. 4:8-10 is to point out that it is Christ, not anyone or anything else, who is the source of and who actually works out this perfection and completion. The primary intention of this pericope is therefore not to be an underscoring of Christ's divinity, although there may be allusions to that effect in the text.²

²This is again the view of Martin H. Franzmann and others who hold that the acclamation of Yahweh as God in the Psalm is the primary motif which Paul revives in this Ephesians pericope. See this discussion, Supra, p. 18.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

After the initial problems and procedure of this study were discussed in Chapter I, Chapter II set forth an outline of the basic structure and more detailed textual problems of Eph. 4:8-10. Then, consequent to an analysis of various interpretations and uses of Psalm 68, it was concluded that the Psalm is not to be viewed as an "eschatological hymn" or as a collection of "lyrical fragments." The primary concerns of the Psalm are rather "enthronement" and "theophany." It was also observed that the rabbinic Targum on Ps. 68:18 is closer to the quotation in Ephesians than are either the MT or the LXX, and was therefore probably used by Paul. It was noted that there are two different liturgical uses of Psalm 68, the Jewish Pentecost and the Latin liturgy of the Ascension. The very fact that these different liturgical uses have different interpretations of Psalm 68 eliminates the possibility of using either one of them as a primary criterion for interpretation of the Ephesians passage.

Chapter IV resolved that it is not possible to view the phrase ta katōtera tēs gēs as a reference to the underworld, but that it is rather to be applied to the earth itself. It was pointed out that, although the important variant prōton should be eliminated from the text, the descent occurs prior to the ascent. Thus the view of a descent of the Spirit was rejected, and the view of a contrast between Christ and Moses was suggested. At this point the decisive case for Paul's use of the text of the rabbinic Targum was accepted.

Chapter V presented a review of J. Cambier's interpretation of Eph. 4:7-10 as a non-historical reference to the universal lordship and presence and the universal saving action of Christ. It was observed here that while his conclusions are not new and are generally acceptable, his methodology did not remain true to the text. It was noted further that his emphasis on the "gifts" throughout the pericope was perceptive, as was his stress on the "knowledge of the Son of God."

Chapter VI reviewed the possibilities for seeing Eph. 4:8-10 in the context of a "primal man" figure. It was concluded that this figure, probably in some form of a Gnostic "redeemer," does lie behind this text. One possible solution was to see Eph. 4:8-10 over against two Gnostic "redeemer" figures listed by Colpe. However, there was not sufficient evidence to draw any definite conclusions in this regard.

After a short review of the concepts of "all," "all things," and "fulness" in early Gnostic literature, the insights of Delling and Scharlemann regarding the "fulness" motif were expanded by tracing this motif through the Old Testament, Johannine, and Qumran materials. It was concluded that the motif of "fulness" was often integrally associated with the concept of God's "steadfast love," and that God's "filling" of the temple with his glory in the Old Testament and his "tabernacling" among his people in the prologue of John's Gospel was analogous to the "body of Christ" as Christ's "fulness" in Ephesians. In other words, Christ "fills" the new temple, that is, the new community, with "steadfast love." Christ, through the new temple or new community, "fills all things" with his "steadfast love." The Qumran material was judged of

negligible worth, and "fulness" was further associated with "enthronement" in Ezekiel and Isaiah.

After these conclusions were evaluated, Chapter VIII brought them together and pointed out that Eph. 4:8-10 is a unit which sets forth Christ's "fulness" as his universal power, as his gifts of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, and as his gift of "steadfast love." It is through this "fulness" of Christ that the "body of Christ," the church, "fills all things" with "steadfast love." To borrow a phrase from George Forell,¹ at least part of what ecclesiology in Ephesians means is "faith active in love." It is in this manner that the concrete, supra-individual body grows up to become the perfect and complete man in Christ. Thus the eschatology of this pericope, of the verses immediately following, and apparently of Ephesians entirely, does not portray an end and destruction of the present world, but it rather presents an eschatology of bringing the present world (ta panta) to completion and perfection in the completion and perfection of the church. Therefore, there is here a positive rather than a negative eschatology.

A few concluding remarks regarding directives for further research may be useful. This study has in general opened up more possibilities for interpretation than it has drawn conclusions. Further research, then, should be done in at least two basic areas if a conclusive exegesis of Eph. 4:8-10 is ever to be found. First of all, the whole area of research regarding the "primal man" is extremely volatile. No final conclusions

¹George Forell, Faith Active in Love (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954), pp. 11-189.

regarding Eph. 4:8-10 can be drawn until much more is known of this figure. More specifically, the relations between and perhaps fusion of the Jewish speculations and the Gnostic and Iranian developments must be further delineated. The second major area for further study should be that of the "fulness" motif in the Old Testament and Johannine literature. In this regard, the possible underlying relations between the Gospel of John (particularly the prologue) and Ephesians should be investigated in more detail. "Primal man" motifs may lie behind both works. Then, when these two major areas have been covered in greater detail, more may be said about Eph. 4:8-10.

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