

«...ΕΙ ΚΑΙ ΕΓΝΩΚΑΜΕΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ,  
ΑΛΛΑ ΝΥΝ ΟΥΚΕΤΙ ΓΙΝΩΣΚΟΜΕΝ»  
«2 COR. 5:16 AND THE PROBLEM  
OF ST. PAUL'S OPPONENTS IN CORINTH»

B Y  
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Though rightly connected with the identity of St. Paul's opponents in the Corinthian Community, the meaning of 2 Cor. 5:16 has always been a stumbling block for New Testament scholarship. Thus, f.e. L. de Grandmaison called it «un des passages les plus difficiles du Nouveau Testament», while W. Schmithals described it as «probably the hardest 'crux interpretum' of II Corinthians, which is not poor in such 'cruces'»<sup>2</sup>.

In the long history of its interpretation, going back to the early patristic times, various theses were expressed with respect to its position in the context of 2 Cor. 5:11-21 (or even to 6:13), on the first hand, and to its exact meaning, on the other<sup>3</sup>. It seems, however, that none of

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1. Cf., Jésus - Christ, sa personne, son message, ses preuves, 6<sup>e</sup> éd., Paris 1927, T. 1, p. 32, n. 1.

2. Cf., Gnosticism in Corinth. An investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians, E. T. by J. E. Steely, Nashville-New York 1970, p. 302. Schmithals regards it as a «gnostic gloss» along with 2 Cor. 3:17-18 and his study on them originally appeared under the title: «Zwei Gnostische Glossen», *EvTh* 18 (1958), 552-564.

3. For a complete bibliography see E. B. Allo, *Saint Paul seconde épître aux Corinthiens*, Paris 1937, pp. 167, 179-182. J. Dupont, *Gnosis. La connaissance religieuse dans les épîtres de Saint Paul*, 2<sup>e</sup> éd., Louvain-Paris 1960, p. 181, n. 2. B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul et ses lettres*, Paris-Brussels 1962, p. 73, n. 1. J. Cambier, «Connaissance charnelle et spirituelle du Christ dans 2 Cor. 5:16», *Littérature et théo-*

them fits exactly in the context, as is also shown by Schmithal's opinion. Therefore, the task of this paper is: first, to show briefly the inadequacy of its previous interpretations; second, to underline its literary connection with the preceding and following vss. of 2 Cor. 5:11-21; and third, to present a new kind of interpretation which, in my judgment, is the only possible one. This will help, I am convinced, not only to clarify the problem of St. Paul's opponents in Corinth, whose identity has been enigmatic so far, but also to determine the real historical situation in the New Testament era, within which Paul and the other representatives of the Apostolic Church lived and worked<sup>4</sup>.

## I

In patristic exegesis, 2 Cor. 5:16 was taken as a synopsis of Christ's redemptive work and its effects on men. Thus, beginning with Clement of Alexandria<sup>5</sup>, a whole line of interpreters, with the significant exception of Isidore of Pelusium<sup>6</sup>, saw in the expression «κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν» Christ's humanity in complete resemblance to men<sup>7</sup>. Thus, this expression means for Clement Christ's being subject «τοῖς φυσικοῖς πάθε-

logie pauliniennes, Brussels 1960, p. 72-92. O. Michel, «Erkennen dem Fleisch nach (2 Kor. 5:16)», *EvTh* 14 (1954), 22-29. J. B. Soucek, «Wir erkennen Christus nicht mehr nach dem Fleisch», *EvTh* 19 (1959), 300-314. J. F. Collange, *Énigmes de la deuxième épître de Paul aux Corinthiens. Étude exegetique de 2 Cor. 2,14-7,4*, Cambridge 1972, p. 25 ff. M. E. Thrall, «Christ crucified or second Adam? A christological debate between Paul and the Corinthians», *Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament (Studies in honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule)*, ed. by B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley, Cambridge 1973, pp. 143-156.

4. See my recent book, *Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* (Analecta Vlatadon 19), Θεσσαλονίκη 1974, pp. 302-372.

5. Cf., *Ἑλληνικά ἀποσπάσματα ἐξ ἀπολεσθέντων ἔργων Κλήμεντος τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως*. I. Ὑποτυπώσεις, IV, ΒΕΠΕΣ 8, 375 (According to the edition of O. Stählin, Clemens Alexandrinus, Leipzig 1909).

6. Cf., *Epistolae*, IV, 46. MPG 78, 1097.

7. See f. e. Origen, In Jeremiam Hom. XV. MPG 13,430. In Joan. evang. fragm. LXXI. ΒΕΠΕΣ 12,377. Eclogae in Psalm. XVII, ΒΕΠΕΣ 15,332. Eusebius Caes., *Demonstratio Evangelica* IX. MPG 22, 673. Comm. in Psalm. V & XIV, MPG 23,118. & 149. Dydimus Alex., *Expositio in Psalm. V*, MPG 39,1173. John Chrysostom, In epist. II ad Cor., Hom. XI,1. MPG 61, 475. Cyrill of Alex., *Explanatio in epist. II ad Cor.*, MPG 74, 941. Theodoretus, *Interpr. epist. II ad Cor. cap. V.*, MPG 82, 409. John of Damascus, In epist. ad Cor. II., MPG 95, 734. Oecumenius, Comm. in epist. II ad Cor., MPG 118, 977. Theophylactus In epist. II ad Cor., MPG 124, 853 & 856. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christ.* I, 34. MPL 34,33.

σιν», and for Chrysostom «τὸ ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν εἶναι τῆς φύσεως, οἷον ἐν τῷ διψῆν, ἐν τῷ πεινῆν, ἐν τῷ κοιπᾶν, ἐν τῷ καθεύδειν». Here of course a differentiation is drawn up between Christ's «κατὰ σάρκα» and man's, since sin is absolutely foreign to Christ's human nature, while it is presupposed as a «sine qua non»-condition in man before his redemption. In other words, man «κατὰ σάρκα», is the non-redeemed man («ἡμῶν μὲν γὰρ τὸ 'κατὰ σάρκα' τὸ ἐν ἁμαρτίαις εἶναι»), while the redeemed one is the «μὴ κατὰ σάρκα» but «ἐν Πνεύματι», i. e., without sin («τὸ μὴ ἐν ἁμαρτίαις εἶναι») as a result of Christ's work and the «theosis» of the entire human nature through his exultation to God's right hand, which was appropriated by man. Thus vs. 16a is connected with the expression «ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν» in 16b. In the Fathers' thought, here is implied the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the believers, following Christ's exultation. The importance of this event is, as Chrysostom says, that «ἡ ζωὴ ἐκείνη ἢ σαρκικὴ ἀπώλετο, καὶ ἄνωθεν ἐγεννήθημεν ἐν Πνεύματι, καὶ ἑτέραν οἴδαμεν πολιτείαν καὶ διαγωγὴν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ κατάστασιν τὴν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς»<sup>8</sup>.

This kind of interpretation is of course in line with the whole course of thought in vss. 14-21. Since by «οὐδένα» in 16a the Fathers mean all those who have been redeemed by Christ's death, which has universal dimensions, its connection with «ὑπὲρ πάντων» and «οἱ πάντες» in vss. 14-15<sup>9</sup>, and with «ἔτι τις ἐν Χριστῷ» in vs. 17, is obvious<sup>10</sup>. In other words, the patristic interpretation of 2 Cor. 5:16 emphasizes the organic

8. Op. cit.,

9. See also J. F. Collange, *Enigmes*, p. 257. All other suppositions that by «οὐδένα» is meant only Paul (cf., J. Cambier, *Op. cit.*, p. 79f), or only the Christian «ministers» (cf., A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, I. C. C., 5th ed., Edinburgh 1956, p. 177f), or only the Corinthian community (cf., P. Bachmann, *Der Zweite Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 3. Aufl., Leipzig 1918, ad loc. R. Bultmann, *Exegetische Probleme des zweiten Korintherbriefes*, Uppsala 1947, ad loc.), are ruled out as unfounded.

10. The unity and interdependence between vss. 14 and 15 rule out the suggestions that vs. 16 is connected either with vs. 14 or with vs. 15 alone, as certain interpreters supposed. Cf., f. e. H. Lietzmann, *An die Korinther*, I-II, 4. Aufl. von W.G. Kümmel, Tübingen 1949. R. Bultmann, *Exegetische Probleme*, ad loc. A. Plummer, *Op. cit.* J. Héring, *La seconde épître de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens*, Neuchâtel-Paris 1958, ad loc., etc. For the same reason I can not accept the opinion that vs. 16 is parenthetic. See f. e. H. D. Wendland, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 3. Aufl. Göttingen 1938. H. Lietzmann, *Op. cit.* A. Plummer *Op. cit.* P. N. Trembelas, *Ἑπίγραμμα εἰς τὰς Ἐπιστολάς τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης*. T. I. Ἐπιστολαί: Πρὸς Ρωμαίους - Β' Κορινθίους, 2d ed. Ἄθῆναι 1956, p. 478,

unity of vss. 14-21, but leaves out of account vss. 11-13. This automatically raises certain questions. Are vss. 11-13 a separate, independent unit, not related to vss. 14-21? If so, what purpose does Paul's mention of his opponents here, meant by the expression «τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ», serve, if he does not give any continuity to his thought? Isn't he presented as changing subjects abruptly in the course of his speech with no coherence whatsoever? It is evident that we can not give answers to these questions on the basis of this kind of interpretation, which then proves itself inadequate.

Later scholarship moved along the lines of partistic interpretation with slight variations. The missing element here is the strong theological and dogmatic presuppositions. Thus «κατὰ σάρκα» is again referred to Christ's human existence «according to external distinctions», «by what he is in the flesh»<sup>11</sup>. The only difficulty for scholars is, as R. Bultmann put it, whether «κατὰ σάρκα» modifies the objects «οὐδένα» and «Χριστόν» or the verbs «οἴδαμεν», «ἐγνώκαμεν» and «γινώσκουμεν»<sup>12</sup>. In the first case, it introduces an unreal condition, and in the second a real one. Thus, the exegetes have been restricted to the choice between two alternatives. And in fact, this is what happens all along<sup>13</sup>. Bultmann himself leans towards the second alternative, but with profound hesitation, for he says that «...this decision means nothing for the sense of the total context, for a 'Christ regarded in the manner of the flesh' is just what a 'Christ after the flesh' is»<sup>14</sup>.

Thus in the terms of modern scholarship's interpretation of 2 Cor. 5:16, the main issue turns round the long debated problem of Paul's acquaintance with the historical person of Jesus Christ, either previous or subsequent to his conversion<sup>15</sup>, and its legitimacy for salvation in Jesus Christ by faith, which he preached. This, as we all know, has taken immense dimensions ever since A. Schweitzer's «Quest of the Historical Jesus», and was climaxed in R. Bultmann's thought, where the emphasis lies not on the historical person of Christ «according

11. A. Plummer, Op. cit., p. 176.

12. See, Theology of the New Testament, E.T. by K. Grobel, New York 1951, T. I. p. 238-239. Cf., idem, Exegetische Probleme, p. 17.

13. See E. B. Allo, Op. cit., p. 179. M. E. Thrall, Op. cit., p. 153.

14. Cf., Theology of the New Testament, p. 239

15. A. Plummer mentions five suggestions expressed on this problem. Cf., Op. cit., p. 177f. H. Windisch, on the other hand, mentions six. See, Der zweite Korintherbrief, 9. Aufl. Göttingen 1924, ad loc. Cf., also E. B. Allo, Op. cit., p. 167, 179-182,

to the flesh», but rather on its existential meaningfulness proclaimed by the kerygma<sup>16</sup>.

But then what about the context of 2 Cor. 5:11-21 within which vs. 16 is placed? Does it really fit, especially in connection with Paul's debate against the ideas of his opponents? If so, what were the charges and who were the «έν πρόσωπώ καυχόμενοι»? In its efforts to find a way out of this dilemma, modern exegesis found refuge in the long debated problem of Gnosticism in the New Testament, put forward on the basis of Paul's use of such words as «σωτηρία», «γνώσις», «σοφία», and «μυστήριον», which, it is true, abound in his Corinthian correspondence. Thus, it has been contested that Paul's opponents in Corinth were Gnostics of various origin and who had deeply influenced the members of the Church there<sup>17</sup>. But in order to fit 2 Cor. 5:16 into this line of thought, an alchemistic kind of exegesis was developed, which eventually not only did not give an adequate answer to the problem, but on the contrary, created a greater confusion. The outcome of it was that vs. 16 was regarded as a «gloss». Only this solution could re-establish the continuity in the text between vs. 15 and 17.

Thus, the real problem for patristic as well as modern exegesis is the exact position of vs. 16 in the context of 2 Cor. 5:11-21. And although I am in agreement with the thesis of modern exegesis that the exact meaning of vs. 16 is connected with the problem of Paul's opponents in Corinth, the highly theological expressions in vss. 14-21 exclude the possibility that Paul is here defending himself against charges that he had or had not known Christ «according to the flesh», as all interpreters suggest<sup>18</sup>. The emphasis he places upon Christ's having died «for

16. See on this J. M. Robinson. *A new Quest of the Historical Jesus*, London 1963<sup>3</sup>. H. Anderson, *Jesus and Christian Origins*, New York 1964, C. S. Voulgaris, «*Ἡ ἐνότις τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*», p. 41-60.

17. See W. Schmithals, *Op. cit.* and the bibliography there cited.

18. Though we lack information about Paul's acquaintance with the historical person of Jesus Christ, we can assume with certainty that Paul had seen Jesus in the streets of Jerusalem and the towns of Palestine during his ministry. But due to his pride as a fanatic Jew and especially as a Pharisee, Paul never willed to approach Jesus. Prof. M. A. Siotis' comments on this are very characteristic: «Paul, he says, was in fact a fanatic Jew and he remained dedicated to the mission assigned him by God for his nation even after his call to the apostolic office (cf. Rom. 11:25-36). Thus Jesus Christ was easily acknowledged by Paul not only as the Messiah foretold by the prophets, but also as the glory of Israel as such. It was exactly this strong national conscience that did not allow Paul to get close to Jesus Christ during the days of his public ministry in Palestine and have thus a direct personal acquaintance

all) (and not for «some» or «certain ones») can not be overlooked. As a matter of fact, it is with this idea in mind that we have to look for the right interpretation of 2 Cor. 5:16. In doing this however, we have first to establish the literary connection of vs. 16 with vss. 11-15 and 17-21.

## II

First of all, we notice that the arrangement of the ideas in vss. 11-15 done by W. Schmithals is mistaken<sup>19</sup> because it disregards the literary construction of the passage. On the contrary, we observe that vss. 13 and 14, beginning with the causal conjunction «γάρ» standing after the first word of the sentence, are causal clauses used by the author to give a reason for, or an explanation of, a preceding or following statement. And according to the standards of Greek writing, causal clauses can be used successively, as here<sup>20</sup>. This means that vss. 11-15 are bound together and form a literary unit. This is further supported by the fact that the content of vss. 14 and 15 deal with the same concept, i.e. Christ's death and its effects upon men.

This however does not mean that vss. 11-15 stand independently of the context of 2 Cor. 5:11-21. On the contrary, its continuity is secured by vs. 16 which begins with a consecutive clause introduced by the consecutive conjunction «ὥστε», accompanied by the finite verb «εἶδα» in the present indicative. Clauses of this kind state the actual result of the leading verse in the previous clause<sup>21</sup>, which here is the verb «ἀποθνήσκειν»<sup>22</sup>. Vs. 16 then is bound to vss. 11-15 grammatically as well as

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and experience of his teaching and of his divine mission in the world. This in no way means that Paul was ignorant of the spiritual movement, the reputation, the death and the appearances of the risen One until his ascension. Being a Pharisee, Paul knew of Jesus and thought about the person of Jesus Christ what the other fanatic nationalist Pharisees did...» (transl. mine) See: Προλεγόμενα εἰς τὴν ἐρμηνείαν τῆς πρὸς Γαλάτας ἐπιστολῆς τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου, Ἀθήναι 1972, p. 26.

19. See Op. cit., p. 303.

20. See H. W. Smyth, Greek Grammar, Cambridge 1966, p. 637 (§2803). Cf. also E. G. Jay, New Testament Greek—An introductory Grammar, London 1958, p. 57.

21. Cf. H. W. Smyth, Op. cit., p. 510 (§ 2274). Cf. also C. F. D. Moule, An Idiom book of New Testament Greek, 2d ed. Cambridge 1959, p. 144.

22. The connection between vs. 16 and vss. 14-15 is also accepted by H. Lietzmann, Op. cit., p. 125. Cf., J. Weiss, Paulus und Jesus, Göttingen 1909, p. 27.

conceptually. On the other hand, vs. 17 also begins with «ὥστε» followed by a simple conditional form, according to which the truth of the conclusion depends solely on the truth of the condition<sup>23</sup>. But this double «ὥστε» in the beginning of vss. 16 and 17 creates a confusion to the exegetes who regard it as introducing a double conclusion from vss. 11-15. And since, according to them, this can not possibly be correct, they detach vs. 16 and connect vs. 17 with vs. 15 as its actual conclusion<sup>24</sup>. Grammatically, this is not so as overlooking certain facts, and first of all the fact that vs. 16 contains two complete clauses separated by a semicolon. The first clause (16a) is a result clause related directly to vss. 14-15. The second clause (16b) is a concessive clause introduced by «εἰ καὶ»<sup>25</sup>, which commonly admits that a condition exists (granting that), but does not regard it as a hindrance<sup>26</sup>. Then vs. 17 begins naturally with a conditional sentence preceded by «ὥστε» which gives it the form of a conclusion. This successive use of two consecutive clauses is not unusual, as W. Schmithals thinks<sup>27</sup>, but it serves to emphasize the conclusion or expand it further into a new direction. This brings out the correspondence between «ἐν Χριστῷ»<sup>28</sup> in vs. 17 and «ζῶσιν... τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγεθέντι» in vs. 15. In other words, the central idea here is the *universal significance* of Christ's death and not simply his death. This is further strengthened not only by the relationship between «εἰς» and «πάντες» in vs. 14, but also by the repeated use of «πάντες» in vss. 14 and 15, which gives it an emphasis. Thus the «ζῶντες» are related to the «πάντες» as the part to the whole. The «ζῶντες» are those who have appropriated Christ's death and live not «ἑαυτοῖς» but «τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι

23. See H. W. Smyth, Op. cit. p. 516 (§ 2298a).

24. See W. Schmithals, Op. cit. p. 303. H. Lietzmann, Op. cit. p. 126. According to R. Bultmann, Exegetische Probleme, p. 17, «verse 17 unfolds the idea of the ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον of verse 14». Cf., also E. B. Allo, Op. cit. p. 167. A. Plummer, Op. cit. p. 179.

25. Or, «εἰ δὲ καὶ», according to some other MSS.

26. Cf., H. W. Smyth, Op. cit., p. 538 (§ 2375).

27. Op. cit., p. 304. Closer to reality is P. Schmiedel's opinion that Paul could «without too much negligence attach both ὥστε 'ς to 15». See, «Die Briefe an die Korinther», Freiburg 1893, p. 210.

28. And not «κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν», as J. F. Collange says. Op. cit., p. 264: «En effet, il nous paraît juste de noter la correspondance (Χριστόν (κατὰ σάρκα) — ἐν Χριστῷ et de comprendre chacune de ces expressions à la lumière de l' autre».

καὶ ἐγεροθέντι). Hence the connection between them and «εἷ τις ἐν Χριστῷ»<sup>29</sup> is clear.

Summing up, we see that 2 Cor. 5:11-21 is a literary unit distin-

29. Contrary to what has been said with respect to this expression, we can not avoid its identity with the parallel expressions «σῶμα Χριστοῦ» in Paul, and «ἐν ἔμοι» in John (6:56; 15:1-10; 17:20). With reference to the former which constitutes the center, round which the discussion on Ecclesiology nowadays evolves (cf., C.S. V o u l g a r i s, Op. cit., p. 217ff), we observe that the image of the «body» presents an ontological reality in an harmonious whole marked by the unity of substance and the multiplicity of the members. In other words, what connects the members is not their external similarity of uniformity, but the oneness of nature in which they participate. Therefore, saying that the believers are members of Christ's body, which is the Church (cf. Eph. 1:24), Paul means not that they are themselves Christs, but that they participate («communio») in his human nature with which they are clothed (cf., «ἐνδύομαι» Gal. 3:27) in Baptism, becoming thus «σύμφυτοι» with Christ (Rom. 6:5, etc.). This unity of nature is neither external similarity, nor identity, but «communio», because each person partakes in the whole human nature, while at the same time it preserves its own personality. Being incorporated in the body of Christ man does not become an 'atom', but a living member of a living organism and hence a real person since he participates in the nature of the pre-eminent person of Christ.—Now, the same applies to John's expression «ἐν ἔμοι». In his prayer to the Father, Jesus asked Him about his disciples «ἵνα ὧσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἐν ἔσμεν, ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ ἐν ἔμοι, ἵνα ὧσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν...») John 17:23]. What we observe here is neither Christ's absorption by the Father nor the disciples' absorption by Christ, but Jesus' communion in the divine nature of the Father, on the one hand, and the disciples' communion in the human nature of Christ on the other. In both cases the persons remain.—As far as the expression «ἐν Χριστῷ» is concerned, we observe that its comparison with parallel expressions in Gnosticism (cf., C. S. V o u l g a r i s, Op. cit. p. 230ff) is completely mistaken. On the contrary, its use by Paul proves its peculiar character and its substantial content and meaning. The parallel expressions in Gnosticism abolish the difference between the subject and the object. i.e., God and man, in a way that there appears an absolute identity between them, i.e., the identity («ταύτισις») between God and man, so that man becomes himself God. Such a thing is foreign to Paul's thought, however. Paul understands men's «theosis» as participation in God's glory (cf., 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:18-25, etc.) as God's children «κατὰ χάριν» and therefore, as «heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ», through which they will «obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God» (Rom. 8:16-17, 21. Cf., Gal. 4:6, 7. John 1:12, etc.). This in no way implies absorption by God or by Christ since it refers to an eschatological reality in the future, which is the object of hope. What man possesses in the present is not the divine bliss, but his reconciliation with God through Christ, i.e., the guarantee («ἀρραβὼν») of his future inheritance (cf. Eph. 1:14) as a result of his participation in Christ's human nature. Therefore, what distinguishes man from Christ, is the reality and the sense of the person, while what unites him with Christ, is the sense and the reality of substance. See more on this in C. S. V o u l g a r i s, Op. cit., p. 231ff.



guished for its organic coherence. Verse 11 starts with an inferential «οὖν» which signifies that something follows from what precedes. In other words, it marks a transition to a new thought and continues a narrative or resumes an interrupted narration. This new thought is related to the readers by a copulative «δέ». In vs. 12, Paul differentiates his readers from his opponents whom, as usually, he does not mention by name<sup>30</sup>. Then from vs. 13 there follow two successive causal clauses and a final clause (vss. 13-15) where he states his own position over against the position of his opponents. This is followed by his conclusion (vs. 16) which is contrary to the assumption of his opponents (not stated but implied) and is expanded into a new direction (vs. 17) which is developed then into a wider theological statement (vss. 18ff).

Having these facts in mind, we proceed to the interpretation of vs. 16 within the context of 2 Cor. 5:11-21.

### III

We start with the analysis of the expression «τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχώμενους» in vs. 12 and the identification of Paul's opponents hiding behind it.

The words «καυχᾶσθαι», «καύχημα» and «καύχησης», the sense of which is «to boast» or «glory», usually in a bad sense as «self-glory», are in the N.T. characteristically used almost exclusively by Paul alone. In R. Bultmann's view, for Paul «καυχᾶσθαι» discloses the basic attitude of the Jew to be one of self-confidence which seeks glory before God and which relies upon itself. For this reason, Paul sets in contrast to «καυχᾶσθαι» the attitude of «πίστις» which is appropriate to man and which is made possible, and commanded, by Christ<sup>31</sup>. Bultmann points to the case of Rom. 3:21-27 where the first question after the first dogmatic exposition of «χωρὶς νόμου» and «διὰ πίστεως» is: «ποῦ οὖν ἡ

30. No doubt, this is part of Paul's strategy throughout his letters. He only refers to them either by using certain adjectives, as f. e. «ψευδαπόστολοι» (2 Cor. 11:13), «ψευδάδελφοί» (2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4), «παρείσακτοι» (Gal. 2:4), «ἐργάται δόλιοι» (2 Cor. 11:13), «ἔχθροί τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ» (Phil. 3:18), etc., or by referring to their attitude and intention (cf. 2 Cor. 11:20; Gal. 2:4. etc.). That Paul avoids mentioning persons, for reasons not very clear to us, is evident from Luke's case, who is mentioned only in Col. 4:1; Philm. 24 and 2 Tim. 5:11. See more on this M. A. Siotis, «Luke the Evangelist as St. Paul's collaborator», Neues Testament und Geschichte (O. Cullmann zum 70. Geburtstag), hrsg., H. Baltensweiler-B. Reicke, Zürich-Tübingen 1972, pp. 105-111.

31. see in ThDNT, III, 648f.

καύχησις;... ἐξεκλείσθη). The boasting in God and the law which Judaism required, has been, according to Paul, perverted into an «ἐπα-ναπαύεσθαι νόμῳ» (Rom. 2:17,23). This «καυχᾶσθαι» is in truth a «πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκί» (Phil. 3:3f), i.e., in the fact of the descent from Abraham<sup>32</sup>, the opposite of which is «εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἐαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι» (2 Cor. 10:7). That the «καύχησις» of the Jews was a «καύχησις» (pride) for their descent, is evident from the connection between «ἐν σαρκί» and «περιτομή» in Gal. 6:13-14. This makes it easy to understand that Paul's opponents in Galatia are «ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί» (Gal. 6:12), i.e., those who want to please the Jewish nation and especially its representatives in the Great Sanhedrin<sup>33</sup>.

In contrast to this «καυχᾶσθαι» or «εὐπροσωπεῖν ἐν σαρκί», Paul sets the «καυχᾶσθαι ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ» (Gal. 6:14), because in the cross of Christ, God has brought to nothing all the greatness of both Jews and Gentiles, «ὅπως μὴ καυχήσῃται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ» (1 Cor. 1:25-31; cf. 2 Cor. 10:17). Hence the believer strictly knows only a «καυχᾶσθαι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ» (Phil. 3:3) which means that he has abandoned all self-boasting (Phil. 3:7-10)<sup>34</sup>.

Therefore we see an identity between «τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχώμενους» of 2 Cor. 5:12 on the one hand, and those who «καυχῶνται κατὰ σάρκα» in 2 Cor. 11:18 and Gal. 6:13 or those who are «ἐν σαρκί, πεποιθότες» in Phil. 3:4, on the other. In all these cases the antithesis is brought out by several expressions referring to the qualities of the Christians. Thus, f.e. in Phil. 3:3 they are «ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ»<sup>35</sup>. In Gal. 6 it is the world

32. Note also John the Baptist's reaction against the current Jewish conception that God would save the Jewish people merely on the basis of their descent from Abraham. Cf., Lk. 3:7-9. Cf., 4:25-27. Matth. 3:4ff and Justin's Dialogue with Trypho, 140,2. MPG σ. 797. See further C. S. Voulgaris, 'Ἡ περὶ σωτηρίας διδασκαλία τοῦ Εὐαγγελιστοῦ Λουκᾶ, Ἀθήναι 1971, p. 46ff.

33. Cf., Gal. 1:10 «ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν». It is the merit of Prof. M. A. Siotis to have brought this out clearly, contrary to all other interpretations. See his Προλεγόμενα..., p. 59, 83f. According to him, Paul's adversaries, who rushed into the Galatian churches, were not judaizing Christians from Jerusalem, but Jews used as agents of the Great Sanhedrin to spy out Paul's activity in the diaspora and destroy the unity of the Apostolic Church. In fact, these agents looked forward only to personal interests by pleasing the official representatives of Judaism. See also C. S. Voulgaris, 'Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, p. 307ff.

34. R. Bultmann, in ThDNT, III, 649.

35. Cf., also the expressions in Rom. 2:29 «περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι»; Col. 2:11 «ἐν ᾧ (i.e., Χριστῷ) καὶ περιετέθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ... ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, συναφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι».

within man which has been crucified through the cross of Christ, through which man has been turned into a «καινή κτίσις» (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). In 2 Cor. 11:17 they are those who behave «κατὰ κύριον», and in 2 Cor. 5:12 the «καυχόμενοι ἐν καρδίᾳ»<sup>36</sup>.

It is obvious then that the «ἐν προσώπῳ καυχόμενοι» in 2 Cor. 5:12 are neither Jewish Christians nor Gnostic Pneumatics boasting of 'outwardly visible advantages', as W. Schmithals contends<sup>37</sup>, but pure (non-Christian) Jews glorying for their «κατὰ σάρκα» descent, for the law and the other privileges of Israel. Here we observe the continuity of a basic attitude of the Israelite people over against the people of the other nations and religions in the O.T. era and later Judaism<sup>38</sup>. And if we realize the Church's self-consciousness that Christ marked the end of all these privileges, we can see why the Jews stressed them especially with reference to the Christians. The abolition of the law, of circumcision and of the descent from Abraham Paul had made absolutely clear to the Corinthians during his visit to them to preach the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1f) and repeated it in his first letter (1 Cor. 1:22f; 7:17-20). He also stated here that «οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι» (1 Cor. 7:17).

The foregoing discussion helps us to understand better the meaning of «κατὰ σάρκα» in vs. 16. And as we will see, whether we take it as modifying the verbs or the objects, its significance remains the same.

Paul's use of the word «σὰρξ» is very complicated. In spite of all that has been said or written on it<sup>39</sup>, there has been no definite con-

36. See also R. Bultmann, ThDNT, III, 650, n. 39. J. F. Collange, Op. cit., p. 75, on the other hand, sees in 2 Cor. 5:12 the echo of 1 Sam. 16:7 (cf., 1 Thess. 2:17): «Nous montrerons encore dans chaque cas précis que cette opposition est partout présente dans notre passage: au visage - apparence - parade devant les hommes lié à Moïse et à sa Loi, Paul oppose ce qui se passe en profondeur (devant Dieu et non devant les hommes, rendu possible par l'Esprit), le coeur».

37. See, Gnosticism, p. 303. Cf., D. Georgi, Die Gegner des Paulus im zweiten Korintherbrief. Studien zur religiösen Propaganda in der Spätantike, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1964, p. 255. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, p. 234f. It is interesting to point out here that Schmithals' connection of «ἐν προσώπῳ» with «ἐξέστημεν» in vs. 13, according to which he says that a «glorying ἐν προσώπῳ» is «to boast of ecstasies» is not based on any philological or conceptual and theological grounds.

38. Cf., R. Bultmann, ThDNT, III, 646-648.

39. See f. e. E. Schweizer, ThDNT, VII, 125ff. R. Bultmann, Theology, I, p. 232ff. D. E. H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul, Philadelphia 1964, p. 37ff. J. A. T. Robinson, The Body—A study in Pauline Theology, London 1963<sup>6</sup>, p. 11ff, and the bibliography there cited.

clusion so far. The real difficulty lies in the fact that scholars are not always able to distinguish when Paul uses it in terms referring to man's hypostasis, to his position before God, and in connection with actual historical conditions. Thus, its interpretation is often contradictory to the word's actual meaning in the context of the text. Two examples will suffice to show the confusion of conclusions drawn out of certain expressions.

The first is the expression «σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι» in Gal. 1:16 which has been taken to mean 'man as such'<sup>40</sup> However, the context shows that Paul is here speaking of his own nation, i.e., the Jews, and its representatives in the Great Sanhedrin, to whom he did not «προσανέθετο»<sup>41</sup> Christ's call «ἵνα εὐαγγελιζήται αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν», as he did not «προσανέθετο» it also to the apostles before him. Instead, he «ἀπῆλθεν εἰς Ἀραβίαν». In other words, Paul did not discuss his divine call to apostleship either with the Jewish or with the Christian leaders, but he immediately left for Arabia<sup>42</sup>.

The second example is the expression «κατὰ σάρκα» in Gal. 2:20 which has been regarded to mean a physical life<sup>43</sup>. The context demands a different understanding of it, however. The occasion is Paul's antithesis to Peter's eating with gentile converts in Antioch, an act that proved him as behaving «ἔθνικῶς» and «οὐκ Ἰουδαϊκῶς» (vs. 14). Based on this, Paul develops his thought on the inadequacy of the law for salvation and on the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, «ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ» (vss. 15f). Faith in Jesus Christ is equally necessary for both, Jews and Gentiles. Speaking about himself, he says that «ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ», i.e., 'that which I live now as a Jew («ἐν σαρκί»), I live it by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me' (vs. 20). Then he goes on to say that if he gives this new way of life up and subjects himself again to the law that marked the Jewish way of life, he will prove himself a transgressor (vs. 18). But for Paul who felt God's grace deeply as a transforming power that transformed his whole existence, this was impossible: 'I do not disregard the grace of God; for if justifi-

40. E. Schweizer, ThDNT, VII, 128. R. Bultmann, Op. Cit., p. 233.

41. «Προσανατίθεμαί τινι» = confer with somebody. Cf., H. G. Liddell R. Scott, Μέγα Λεξικὸν τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης, Ἀθήναι 1910, p. 730.

42. I think that this is also the meaning of «σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα» in Matth. 16:17, contrary to what E. Schweizer says, Op. cit., p. 124, 128.

43. Cf., E. Schweizer, Op. cit., p. 134. J. A. T. Robinson, Op. cit., p. 21. R. Bultmann, Theology, I, p. 235.

fication could be achieved through the law, then Christ died to no purpose' (vs. 21)<sup>44</sup>.

Turning now to Paul's use of the expression «κατὰ σάρκα», we observe that, almost always<sup>45</sup>, it means a natural human relationship and refers to Israel as a nation, the distinctive characteristic of which was its physical descent from Abraham. In these cases, a contrast between this expression and another point of view hides behind it or is expressed<sup>46</sup>.

Thus in Rom. 4:1 it is said of Abraham that he is the «προπάτωρ ἡμῶν κατὰ σάρκα». In other words, Abraham is the natural progenitor of the Jews (including Paul), who are in turn Paul's «ἀδελφοί» and «συγγενεῖς κατὰ σάρκα, οἵτινες εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται» (Rom. 9:3-4; cf. 11:14 «τὴν σάρκα μου»). The Israelite nation is the «Ἰσραήλ κατὰ σάρκα» (1 Cor. 10:18; cf. Gal. 2:15), while the believers in Christ are the «Ἰσραήλ τοῦ θεοῦ» (Gal. 6:16). In the same way Ishmael, born «ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης», was Abraham's son «κατὰ σάρκα», i.e., in the sense of natural human progency, while Isaac, born «ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας», was his son «διὰ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας» (Gal. 4:23, 29f).

The same categories apply also to Christ's natural descent. In other words; Christ is a kinsman of the Jews, because he was born «ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα» (Rom. 1:3) and descended from the same forefathers as all the other Israelites (Rom. 9:5 «ὧν οἱ πατέρες, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα»). But according to his divine origin, he is «υἱὸς θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης»<sup>47</sup>.

It is to be noted that in all these cases «κατὰ σάρκα» modifies substantives and the reference is to natural human relationship, precisely to the Jews. And contrary to the dominant opinion<sup>48</sup>, this is also the meaning of «κατὰ σάρκα» when it modifies verbs. We saw this in the case of Gal. 4:23, 29<sup>49</sup>. It is interesting to point out, however, that when «κατὰ σάρκα» modifies verbs, the context is Paul's arguing with the Jews as

44. It is to be noted, however, that the above expressions have different connotations in other places of Pauline usage.

45. A possible exception may be Rom. 8:4f., where the text is not very clear since Paul switches between this word and the human «θνητὸν σῶμα», which he places in contrast to Christ's resurrected body.

46. Cf., R. B u l t m a n n, Op. cit., p. 237.

47. Rom. 1:4; cf., Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 1:2, 5, 8; 3:6, etc.

48. Cf., R. B u l t m a n n, Theology, I, p. 237. E. S c h w e i z e r, ThDNT, VII, 130f.

49. This is accepted also by R. B u l t m a n n, Op. cit., p. 237.

his opponents in view. Thus, in Gal. 4:23 it is absolutely clear that Paul refutes the arguments of the Jews when he says: «Λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε; γέγραπται γάρ...» (vs. 21-22).

Likewise in 2 Cor 10:2-3 we find the expressions «κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας», «ἐν σαρκὶ περιπατοῦντες» and «κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα» with the same meaning. These expressions are accusations and slanders against Paul and his fellow-workers on behalf of his opponents, whom he indicates here with the expression «τινας τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς...» (vs. 2). Against them Paul opposes the «οὐ», i. e., he rejects their slanders and explains his position by using a causal clause introduced by «γάρ» standing after the first word. His answer to them is that «τὰ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρειν ὀχυρωμάτων» (vs. 4f). He continues by differentiating himself and his fellow-workers, saying «οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρῖναι ἢ συγκρῖναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων, ἀλλά...» (vs. 12), because, according to his opinion, «οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων ἐκεῖνος ἐστὶν δόκιμος, ἀλλὰ ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν» (vs. 18)<sup>50</sup>. As he goes on, he becomes more and more rigorous using bitter expressions till he finally mentions his opponents: «Ἐβραῖοί εἰσιν; καγὼ. Ἰσραηλιταὶ εἰσίν; καγὼ. σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν; καγὼ...» (11:22f). This forces us to conclude that the expressions «κατὰ σάρκα (or ἐν σαρκὶ) περιπατοῦντες» and «κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα» in 2 Cor. 10:2f. have the meaning of 'walking in the Jewish way of life according to the law' or 'living and behaving like the Jews under the law'. It is obvious then that the Jews, in contrast to Paul, were propagating the idea that when becoming a Christian, one does not have to give up his Jewish national and religious principles. As a matter of fact, if we bring to mind relevant expressions in Galatians and Acts, the Jewish national and religious symbols were, according to them, important to the Christian. Now, what would be the consequences in case these ideas prevailed, it is easy to understand. Official Judaism tried to keep the Church within its national confines for the purpose of preserving its national unity in view of the revolt against the Roman occupation which was under way. But this would mean the Church's complete destruction as she would turn into a Jewish sect, observing the law and living within the national stream of Judaism. Paul was well aware of this,

50. Apparently Paul has in mind here his election by Christ on the road to Damascus and his work among the Corinthians «σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν» (2 Cor. 12:12), which are the signs of an apostle.

however, because, preaching a Gospel that declared man's freedom from the law, he could not accept the Church's subjection to it. Man's dedication to Christ and his Gospel, in whose service he had been called by God to be an apostle, left no room for the observance of the law.

#### IV

In view of this situation therefore, the dilemma posed by scholars with respect to the correct meaning of «κατὰ σάρκα» in 2 Cor. 5:16 can not be regarded as a dilemma at all. As in the other cases, so here, too, the reference is to natural human relationship. The background is the same. Paul refutes the ideas of his opponents referred to in vs. 12. The remarkable similarity between the arrangement of the material in 2 Cor. 5:11-21 and Gal. 4:21ff; 2 Cor. 10:2ff., is characteristic. As in the other cases, so here, too, the Christian community is the target of Paul's opponents. Thus the construction of the whole passage runs as follows: by writing to the Corinthians, Paul refers to his opponents (vs. 12)<sup>51</sup>, he proceeds to an explanation of his opinion (vss. 13-15), on the basis of which he refutes the thesis of his opponents (vs. 16), he extends his conclusion into a new direction (vs. 17), and finally he develops it further theologically (vs. 18ff).

Now on the basis of Paul's explanation, we can infer the nature of the ideas of his opponents. Paul's emphasis upon the universality of Christ's death and resurrection leaves no doubt that his adversaries tried to minimize the independence of the Gospel from the law and turn it into an internal affair of the Jewish national and religious system on the basis of Christ's descent «κατὰ σάρκα» from Abraham<sup>52</sup>. In other words, they tried to present Christ as one of the great teachers of Judaism. Undoubtedly this served the ultimate purpose of Judaism to maintain its national unity and eventually its very existence<sup>53</sup> in view of the Church's

51. Cf., Gal. 4:21 «Λέγετέ μοι οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι...»; 2 Cor. 10:2 «ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λεγομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς...».

52. Cf., the comment of O e c u m e n i u s, Argumentum posterioris Pauli ad Corinthios epistolae. MPG 118, 905: «...Εἶτα ὑφηρπάζοντο παρὰ τινων καὶ τὰς προφάσεις τῶν σχισμάτων ποιούντων, ὥστε παρακαθέζεσθαι τῷ γράμματι τοῦ νόμου, καὶ ἀδιάφορον ἡγεῖσθαι τὴν παρὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χάριν, καὶ μᾶλλον προσέχειν τοῖς ἐν προσώπῳ κωνχωμένοις» (italics mine).

53. See on this P. R i c h a r d s o n, Israel in the Apostolic Church, Cambridge 1969.

expansion among Jews and Gentiles. This, as was noted, constituted the most serious threat against the Church's existence<sup>54</sup>. We should not forget that in the N.T. era Judaism was split into various religious sects of different concepts on the traditional O.T. religion, but with a unified position towards the national symbols, as f.e. the temple and the city of Jerusalem, the Great Sanhedrin, etc., and above all towards the law and circumcision. With this fact in mind we can not avoid the conclusion that the efforts of Judaism with reference to the Church aimed at turning her into another Jewish sect alongside the already existing ones.

Against the Jewish misconceptions regarding the Gospel, Paul opposes Christ's love for all men and stresses the universal character of his death. 'Christ's love, he says, forces us (*συνέχει ἡμᾶς*)<sup>55</sup> to assume that one died for all; therefore all died' (vs. 14). In other words, Christ's death did not affect certain persons, but humanity as a whole in its very nature. And he died for all, he continues, so that those who live by having appropriated his death, *μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι* (vs. 15). Therefore, from now on we regard no one according to his descent (*κατὰ σάρκα*); and even though we have known Christ as a Jew according to his descent, we know him thus no longer (vs. 16)<sup>56</sup>. Thus whoever is in Christ, he is a new creation (*καινὴ κτίσις*); the old standards have passed away, behold everything has become new (vs. 17).

That this thesis is absolutely in line with Paul's thought expressed elsewhere needs not be mentioned. What we have to note here, however, is that we must look carefully and see if, whenever Paul expounds the universality of salvation in Christ, the background is always a conflict between him and Judaism. This seems to be the case with respect to the Epistle to the Romans, where this theme constitutes its central point. On the other side, Prof. M.A. Siotis has shown this with reference

54. Cf., C. S. Voulgaris, 'Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, p. 350-372.

55. Cf., H. G. Liddell - R. Scott, Op. cit., Compare the poor translation of the King James Version and the poorer one of the Revised Standard Version.

56. As I noticed at the beginning of the present study, the only exception among the patristic interpretations of 2Cor: 5:16 is that of Isidore of Pelusium, Epistolae. IV, 46. MPG 78, 1097: *«Εἰ καὶ ἐσεμνυόμεθα πρώην οἱ ἐξ Ἰουδαίων πιστεύσαντες τῇ κατὰ σάρκα αὐτοῦ συγγενείᾳ, νῦν οὐ ταύτη ἐναβρυνόμεθα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κατ' οἰκειότητα αὐτοῦ ἀγχιστεία, ἣν διὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς καρπούμεθα».*



to the Epistle to Galatians<sup>57</sup>. In my judgment, the same applies also to the Epistles to the Corinthians, where the universality of salvation is expounded in connection with the propaganda of Paul's Jewish opponents, who were also the real protagonists that created the situation there. But with respect to this problem, I expect to come up shortly with a more extensive study on the Corinthian Correspondence.

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57. See his Προλεγόμενα εἰς τὴν ἐρμηνείαν τῆς πρὸς Γαλάτας ἐπιστολῆς τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου, Ἀθήναι, 1972.