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## ABSTRACT

### LAW AND GRACE IN ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S COMMENTARY ON ST PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

By

D. I MOUZAKIS

In this dissertation an attempt is made to analyse John Chrysostom's interpretation of the crucial theme of Pauline theology: Law and Grace. Following a general introduction on Chrysostom's exegetical work, which also provides a comprehensive list of all the references to Galatians in Chrysostom's works, the theme is treated under six chapters corresponding exactly to those of the Epistle and of Chrysostom's Commentary. The particular topics emerging from this analysis include, the divine origin of both Law and Grace, the preparatory character of Law and the superiority of Grace, the explanation of the early attitude of the Jerusalem Apostles and of Paul himself to the relation of Law and Grace in contrast to that of the false-brethren of Galatia, the examination of the limits and carnal character of the Law in contrast to the potency and spiritual character of Grace, the precise meaning of the superiority of Grace over the Law and, finally the connections between freedom and love with Grace. Chrysostom's doctrine is marked by richness of doctrinal nuances and on several points, as for example on "oeconomy" as a key to understanding the Apostolic approach to the theme of Law and Grace, by original insight. The overall interpretation of Chrysostom, though not radically different from the common interpretation of this Pauline theme in modern scholarship, presents certain features which are typical of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and which could be taken up with profit, not least in the contemporary ecumenical dialogue.

**LAW AND GRACE  
IN ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S COMMENTARY ON ST  
PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS**

**BY**

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14 OCT 1992

ἴθωαι· ἐδὴν ἔστη ὁ πρέμψας μεππῆς

Χ

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πὶ τὸ ἐλαπῆ



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ζον,

Ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος (κῶδ. 193, φ. 3β)



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#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

## PROLOGUE

*The subject of this dissertation has not been treated before, and I am grateful to Dr Dragas for suggesting it to me. It has proved a source of inspiration and satisfaction. This dissertation represents a modest attempt to get into the mind of one of the greatest exegetes of the ancient Church on a central issue of Pauline theology which has been repeatedly discussed by NT researchers both in the past and at present. Chrysostom's doctrine of Law and Grace in his Commentary on the Pauline Epistle to the Galatians is not as original as one might have thought. There are, however, several points of content and emphasis which are peculiar to it and expose a perspective which is typical of the Greek Fathers and Eastern Orthodoxy. The principle of "Oeconomy" as a key to the understanding of the relation of the OT Law to the Gospel is such a distinctive point of content, while the connection of the notions of freedom and love with that of Grace is such a point of peculiar emphasis. These and several other points seem to be very valuable especially in the contemporary dialogue between Eastern and Western Christians.*

*I feel obliged to express my gratitude to Dr Dragas's family and the staff of St Chad's College and of the University Libraries who assisted me in a variety of ways during my stay and research at Durham.*

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Chrysostom's exegetical work

St John Chrysostom knew that by and large the Christians of his time were unable to read and, more importantly, rightly to interpret the Scriptures. They often lacked the spiritual presuppositions and even the basic knowledge of the language and the historical context which were necessary for such a task. Hence he dedicated his life to the preaching and exposition of the Scriptures, presenting them to his fellow Christians as "the words of eternal life".<sup>(1)</sup> This preaching, as one of his modern biographers puts it, was not an abstract account of Christian truths, but a powerful presentation of convictions rooted in personal spiritual life and experience. The teaching of Scripture was for Chrysostom an existential

(1) [Cf. P. Ch. Andriopoulos, Τὸ Κείμενο τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης ὡς ἑρμηνευτικὴ ἀρχὴ εἰς τὸ ἐξηγητικὸν ἔργο τοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσσοστόμου (*The Text of the New Testament as hermeneutical principle in the exegetical work of John Chrysostom*) [reprinted from *THEOLOGIA* vol. 60:2-3 (1989) 476-492 and 60:4 600-653], Athens 1989, 43p.]

matter affecting the whole style of his life to the extent that what he preached was also what he experienced. Thus his sermons had immediacy and urgency as well as sweetness and force. They revealed both a deep love for man and a profound knowledge of the human soul. Their main aim was man's salvation and they were delivered in a natural and totally uncontrived manner as if they arose out of his human resources which were divinely provided.(2)

Chrysostom's exegetical-homiletical work, comprising some 700 exegetical homilies, in fact constitutes the main bulk of his total work.(3) He actually covers full books from the Old and the New Testament, Genesis, the Psalms, the Prophet Isaiah, the Gospels of St Matthew and St John, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St Paul, including, of course, the Epistle to the Galatians.(4) All the Homilies of Chrysostom are divided into two parts, one theoretical and another practical or ethical, and as such they are reminiscent

(2) [Cf. Chrysostom A. Papadopoulos, Ὁ Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος (*St John Chrysostom*), 2nd ed. Athens 1970, 5-6.]

(3) [cf. Andriopoulos, *op. cit.* p. 5]

(4) [Cf. I. Ch. Constantinides, Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος (*John Chrysostom*), Athens 1969, p. 11.]

of the main structure of the Epistles of St Paul. The main subject matter of any homily, be it exegetical, festal or even dogmatical, is treated in the first part. The second part provides a sort of application of the message developed in the previous part to the lives of his audience.<sup>(5)</sup> They were usually written down by fast copyists and were later inspected by himself before they were delivered to the public in a written form.<sup>(6)</sup> As such they do present certain technical rhetorical problems, such as, prolixity, repetitions, digressions, excessive use of dialectics, etc.<sup>(7)</sup> One, however, should not forget that on this particular matter Chrysostom was a child of his time and what seems to us to be problematic was not necessarily so for Chrysostom's audience.<sup>(8)</sup>

## 2. Chrysostom's Homilies on the Epistle to the Galatians

These homilies constitute a running commentary on the

(5) [Cf. Andriopoulos, *op. cit.* p. 7.]

(6) [Cf. Andriopoulos, *op. cit.*, p.6.]

(7) [Cf. Andriopoulos, *op. cit.*, p.6.][D. S. Balanos, *Πατρολογία (Patrology)*, Athens 1930, p. 374.]

(8) [Cf. Andriopoulos, *op. cit.*, p.7.]

actual text of the Epistle to the Galatians, chapter by chapter and verse by verse. There are six of them corresponding to the six chapters of the Epistle. It seems that their present form is due to the work of a redactor who combined the original homilies into chapters in such a way that the text retained the exactness of the exposition, although it lost the brilliance of the original style.<sup>(9)</sup> The content is primarily exegetical, but it does contain the usual amount of moral teaching, as well as some significant dogmatic expositions. This means that important particular themes, such as that of "law and grace", are not developed in a systematic way, but reappear over and over again in the text.

With regard to the time of their deliverance and composition, there are different views among the scholars. The reference in Chapter 1 and in connection with the exegesis of Gal. 1: 15-16 to Chrysostom's "Homily on Paul's change of name"<sup>(10)</sup> as having preceded this exposition<sup>(11)</sup>

(9) [Cf. J. Pelites' Introduction, Ἰωάννου Χρυσοστόμου Ἔργα (*The works of John Chrysostom*) vol. 20, Πατερικαὶ Ἐκδόσεις "Γρηγόριος ὁ Πάλαμᾶς" (Patristic Editions "Gregory Palamas"), Thessalonica 1979, p. 157.]

(10) [In fact Chrysostom delivered three Homilies on this theme which are found in MPG 51: 113-12, 123-130, 131-142.]

provides the only significant clue. Since this Homily was actually delivered in Antioch in 388 during the Easter season, it seems that the Homilies on Galatians must also have been delivered in Antioch sometime after 388 and before 397, the year of Chrysostom's elevation to the throne of Constantinople. The post 388 date is corroborated by the fact that Jerome who wrote a commentary on Galatians in 386<sup>(12)</sup> and who mentioned in his prologue the commentators who preceded him (Origen, Didymus the Blind, Apollinarius, Eusebius of Emesa, Theodore of Herakleia and Marius Victorinus), makes no mention of a commentary by Chrysostom. According to Chrysostomus Baur they were probably delivered after those on 1st and 2nd Corinthians.<sup>(13)</sup> Finally Professor Markos Siotis of the University of Athens

(11) [Cf. Καὶ ἡμῖν δὲ εἴρηται τις ὑπὲρ τούτων λόγος, ὅτε περὶ τῆς μεταθέσεως αὐτοῦ τῆς προσηγορίας πρὸς ὑμᾶς διαλεγόμεθα καὶ τίνος ἕνεκεν Σαῦλον αὐτὸν καλούμενον Παῦλον ἐκάλεσεν· εἰ δὲ ἐπιλέλησθε, ἐντυχόντες ἐκείνῳ τῷ βιβλίῳ, πάντα εἴσεσθε ταῦτα, MPG 61: 627]

(12) [Cf. P. Nautin, in *Revue d' Histoire Ecclesiastique*, 1979, p.10.]

(13) [Cf. his *Der heilige Johannes Chrysostomus und seine Zeit*, München 1929, p. 249.]

has placed Chrysostom's Commentary on Galatians between 390 and 392.(14)

### 3. Chrysostom, the exegete and dogmatician

As an exegete Chrysostom is deeply biblical. In other words, he relies almost entirely on a profound understanding of the Bible itself, its letter and its spirit. In short, he lets Scripture interpret Scripture,(15) because he is convinced that "all Scripture is divinely inspired" (Tim. 3:16).(16) As far as his understanding of St Paul is concerned, it is clear that Chrysostom is not related to him merely as an exegete to a master who is the object of exegesis, but as a deep admirer who is totally committed to him, for whom he has the highest respect, and to whom he constantly makes references.(17)

(14) [M. Siotis, Προλεγόμενα εἰς τὴν ἐρμηνείαν τῆς Πρὸς Γαλάτας Ἐπιστολῆς τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου (*Prolegomena to the Interpretation of St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*), Athens 1980, p.100.]

(15) [Cf. Andriopoulos, *op. cit.* p. 10.]

(16) [Αἱ δὲ Γραφαὶ πᾶσαι, οὐ παρὰ δούλων, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τοῦ τῶν ὄλων Θεοῦ Δεσπότητος γραφεῖσαι ἐπέμψθησαν, MPG 61: 624.]

Isidore of Pelusium, then, who is another profound biblical theologian specially committed to St Paul, is justified in saying that "If the inspired Paul had obtained the attic idiom, in order to interpret himself, he would not have done it in any different way than that of the ever-memorable man [Chrysostom]".(18) In an 11th century manuscript it is said that "the mouth of Christ gave birth to Paul's mouth, and that, in turn, Paul's mouth gave birth to Chrysostom's mouth".(19) Typical also is the legend mentioned by Leo the Wise according to which Chrysostom's disciple Proklos, saw from the key hole of the Patriarch's door the Apostle Paul, "bending behind the throne towards the head of the Hierarch and placing his mouth to his right ear and speaking to him".(20) John Damascene mentions that Chrysostom always carried with him an icon of Paul "and looked at it as if he

(17) [Cf. Chrys. Baur, *op. cit.* p. 261.]

(18) [Εἰ ὁ Παῦλος ὁ θεσπέσιος ἀττικὴν εἴληφεν γλῶτταν, ὥστε ἑαυτὸν ἐρμηνεύσαι, οὐκ ἂν ἄλλως ἠρμήνευσεν, ἢ ὡς ὁ προειρημένος ἀοίδιμος ἀνὴρ, MPG 78: 1347]

(19) [Cf. Th. Zeses, Ἄνθρωπος καὶ κόσμος ἐν τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἱερόν Χρυσόστομον [Ἀνάλεκτα Βλατάδων, 9] (*Man and Cosmos in God's Economy according to St John Chrysostom*), Thessalonica, 1971]

was still alive".(21)

As regards his exegetical/hermeneutical method, many scholars have noted that he followed the so called line of the Antiochian theologians who chose the historical grammatical interpretation of the text and rejected any form of allegorical interpretation. This is also accepted by Andriopoulos,(22) Balanos,(23) and P. N. Christou.(24) It is the Serbian theologian, however, Stoyian Gosevitch, who seems to be more successful as to the right description of Chrysostom's exegetical method. As a free Greek spirit, he says, Chrysostom cannot be confined within the limits and methods,

(20) [ἐπικεκλιμένος ὀπισθεν τοῦ θρόνου πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ τοῦ Ἀρχιερέως καὶ τὸ στόμα θέντα δεξιῶ τούτῳ ὡτίῳ καὶ ὁμιλοῦντα αὐτῷ, MPG 107: 257.]

(21) [καὶ ὡς ἐπὶ ζῶντος αὐτοῦ οὕτω προσεῖχεν αὐτῇ, MPG 91: 1287.]

(22) [*op. cit.*, p. 10.]

(23) [Quoted by Andriopoulos, *op. cit.*, 46.]

(24) [Cf. his Introduction to the series Ἰωάννου Χρυσοστόμου Ἔργα (*The works of John Chrysostom*) vol. 1, Πατερικαὶ Ἐκδόσεις "Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς" (Patristic Editions "Gregory Palamas"), Thessalonica 1979, p. 34.]

or tendencies and orientations of the exegetical schools of his time. Though it is true that the theologians of the West, and especially the Germans, have attempted to place all the Fathers and Teachers of the early Church within the strict confines of so-called patristic Schools of interpretation (most notably those of Antioch and Alexandria), and this also applies to Chrysostom who is placed within the Antiochian School. In Gosevitch's view, which is the more widely-spread among Eastern Orthodox theologians, Chrysostom is independent and original following the main stream of the ancient Catholic Church which cuts across opposing tendencies.<sup>(25)</sup> Indeed the Commentary on Galatians clearly demonstrates that Chrysostom does rely on the literal meaning of the biblical text,<sup>(26)</sup> but he does not reject the

(25) [Cf. S. I. Gosevitch, 'Η περί θείας χάριτος διδασκαλία Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου (*St John Chrysostom's doctrine of divine grace*), Athens, 1956, p. 17.]

(26) [This is due to his conviction that all Scripture is divinely inspired and that "there is nothing in it which is simply placed there by chance" (ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς εἰκῆ). Cf., for example, his specific comments in his Commentary on Genesis: MPG 53: 32, 85, and 175, or his comments in MPG 61: 667 (Comm. on Romans) and 61: 617 (Comm. on Galatians).]

typological interpretation whenever it is warranted by the text itself. This is particularly clear in chapter iv, where he deals with the case of Hagar and Sarah who represent the two conditions of life under law and under grace.<sup>(27)</sup>

Chrysostom the exegete does not exclude Chrysostom the dogmatician. As Gosevitch points out, the moral and social message always has an underlying dogmatic conviction and *vice versa*,<sup>(28)</sup> and this is clearly to be seen in his theological influence in the East and in the West.<sup>(29)</sup> Photios' view, that Chrysostom "would not withhold anything from his audience, provided that their capacity allowed it and that it was always for their salvation and benefit",<sup>(30)</sup> is particularly apt.

The present study, however modest its scope or range, does also constitute a further proof of Chrysostom's ability in

(27) [Cf. MPG 61: 662.]

(28) [*op. cit.* p. 15.]

(29) [*op. cit.* p. 16.]

(30) [ὅσα ἢ τῶν ἀκροατῶν ἐχώρει δύναμις καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκείνων συνέτεινε σωτηρίαν καὶ ὠφέλειαν, οὐδὲν οὐδαμοῦ παρήκεν, Quoted by P. Bratsiotis, Ἡ διὰ μέσου τῶν αἰώνων ἐπιβίωσις τῶν τριῶν Ἱεραρχῶν (*The three Hierarchs throughout the ages*), Athens 1939, p. 18.]

propounding dogmatical teaching, which is marked by the seal of biblical exegetical authenticity. The doctrine of grace, in its distinction from and relation to the law, which is the subject-matter of this dissertation and which is central to Chrysostom's Commentary on Galatians, constitutes, according to the Greek Patrologist D. Balanos, one of Chrysostom's most beloved doctrinal themes.<sup>(31)</sup>

Talking about Chrysostom the dogmatician, we must also point out that his Commentary under investigation refers to and exposes several heretics. These include the Arians,<sup>(32)</sup> the Manichaeans,<sup>(33)</sup> the Marcionites,<sup>(34)</sup> and also several pagan customs which had been retained by Christians to the extent that they caused serious deviations from the truth.<sup>(35)</sup> The discussions of the case of these customs and of the case of the Manichaeans are particularly interesting, because they

(31) [Cf. his *Patrology, op. cit.*, p. 362 and 366.]

(32) [MPG 61: 614-617]

(33) [MPG 61: 668, 669; cf. also MPG 58: 599 (on Gal. 5:12).]

(34) [MPG 61: 621.]

(35) [Cf. MPG 61: 623.]

lead Chrysostom to develop certain aspects pertaining to Christian anthropology and especially to the relation of the soul to the body, or to spirit and matter, which bring out the positive character of the Christian doctrines of creation and salvation.

#### **4. Chrysostom's references to the Epistle to the Galatians in his writings**

In order to gain a more spherical and complete image of John's Chrysostom's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, we searched for all those places in his total work which refer to this Epistle. We used for this the Chrysostom volumes in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, the Chrysostom volumes in the Patristic Editions "Gregory Palamas" which have been published in Thessalonica since 1979, R. A. Krupp's work, *Saint John Chrysostom: A Scriptural Index*, 1984. But we found it particularly valuable to make a cursory reading through the entire work of Chrysostom published by Migne. The wealth of material that emerged from this investigation has proved to us that had Chrysostom not written the specific Commentary under investigation we could still reconstruct one from all the references to Galatians in his

works. Such are the limits of the present investigation that we can only supply here the list of references and use the most important of them in the main body of our thesis.

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- In Joh, Εἰς τὸν ἁγ. Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ Εὐγγελιστὴν
- In Kal, Λόγοι εἰς τὰς Καλάνδας
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- Synopsis scripturae Sacrae, Σύνοψις τοῦ Δευτερονομίου

## CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1. The Subject-Matter of the Epistle: Law and Grace

Saint John Chrysostom begins his Commentary on Galatians by underlining the anger of the Apostle, which permeates his entire Epistle. He also explains that he is fully justified since certain people, strangers to the Churches of Galatia, "who had been siezed by Judaic prejudice"<sup>(1)</sup> admonished the Galatians "to circumcise themselves, to keep the [Jewish] Sabbaths and the New Moons, and to be intolerant of Paul who discarded them".<sup>(2)</sup> This error, that is the return to the observance of circumcision, the Sabbaths and the New Moons,

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(1) [του Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ κατεχόμενοι, PG 61: 613<sub>8,9</sub>.]

(2) [δεῖ περιτέμνεσθαι, καὶ Σάββατα καὶ νομηνίας τηρεῖν, καὶ μὴ ἀνέχεσθαι Παύλου ταῦτα ἀναιροῦντος, PG 61: 613<sub>11-13</sub>.]

was for Paul, as Chrysostom points out, "great and huge".<sup>(3)</sup> Beyond this, however, Paul is also confronted with the uprising of the members of the Galatian Church against him on account of those who accused him that he did not possess apostolic authority and that his apostolicity was derived from that of the Jerusalem Apostles. To add weight to these views these Judaizers made a verbal appeal to the "pillars" (στύλους) of the Church of Jerusalem, Peter, James, and John, whom they presented as observants of the ordinances of Judaic Law. At this point Chrysostom observes that the three Apostles "in truth did not prevent [this observance]; but they acted thus not as upholding a sort of dogma, but as condescending to those believers who came from among the Jews",<sup>(4)</sup> On the other hand referring to the Apostle to the Nations, Chrysostom observes that since "he preached to the nations, he was not in need of such a condescension, although, "when he came to Judea, he too made use of this condescension".<sup>(5)</sup> By making this clarification Chrysostom

(3) [μέγα καὶ ὑπέρογκον, *ibid.*]

(4) [ἀληθῶς οὐκ ἐκάλυον· ἀλλ' οὐ δογματίζοντες τοῦτο ἐποίουν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ συγκαταβαίνοντες τῶν ἐξ Ἰουδαίων πιστευόντων, PG 61: 613<sub>16-18</sub>.]

demonstrates trustworthily the seeming difference between Paul and the Apostles of the Church of Jerusalem, underlining the fact that the stance of the three towards the Jewish Law was simply one of toleration. In other words, they were prepared to accept the observance of certain regulations of the Law as a matter of condescension because their sermon was addressed to Jews. Paul, however, who preached to the Gentiles, was not obliged to observe such a stance.

It is not by accident that Chrysostom uses this word "condescension" (συγκατάβασις) in this particular instance. He rather does it deliberately because he wants to stress the necessity of the act of "oeconomy" (οἰκονομία).<sup>(6)</sup> Thus, for Chrysostom, it is "on account of oeconomy" (κατ' οἰκονομίαν) that "Peter, James and John do not prohibit circumcision, nor the keeping of the Law".<sup>(7)</sup> This means that for the holy Father the simple forbearance on the part of the Jerusalem Apostles of the observance of the Law by Jewish Christians

(5) [ὅτε ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ γέγονε, καὶ αὐτὸς τῇ συγκαταβάσει ἐχρήσατο ταύτη, PG 61: 613<sup>18-20</sup>.]

(6) [See the Appendix on "Oeconomy".]

(7) [οὐκ κωλύουσι περιτέμνεσθαι, οὐδὲ νόμον μὴ τηρεῖν, (PG 61: 613<sup>51-52</sup>).]

could in no way be identified with the position of Paul's opponents who, regarded such an observance as a necessary condition for all Christians whether of Jewish or Gentile origin. Such an identification, says Chrysostom, can only be characterized as deceitful (ἀπάτη). In fact, as he explicitly observes, the real intention of this identification was not intended to be a praise for the three Apostles, "but to deceive the Galatians", since "they were attempting to persuade them to observe the Law out of season".(8)

The point made here by Chrysostom is very important and, indeed, constitutes the key to the understanding of the problems in Galatia as they are presented in Paul's Epistle. In the first instance, these "false-brethren" (ψευδάδελφοί) attempted to mislead the Galatians for their own profit, as it is eloquently and explicitly stressed in another place in this Commentary: they sought "to assume for themselves the authority of teachers".(9)

Chrysostom seems to have really and accurately grasped the depth of Paul's thought, who, for self-evident reasons,

(8) [ἀλλ' ἵνα Γαλάτας ἀπατήσωσι.. ἐπειθον ἀκαίρως τῷ νόμῳ προσέχειν, (PG 61: 613<sup>55-56</sup>.)]

(9) [διδασκάλων ἀξίωμα ἑαυτοῖς περιθεῖναι, (PG 61:613).]

avoided being more specific and categorical. Nevertheless, he stresses that the time of the observance of the Law has passed away for good and that the attachment to it cannot but be considered at least as untimely.

## 2. The divine origin of Paul's mission and teaching

Chrysostom tackles next the subject of Paul's call to the apostolic office by God himself and not by men. Here he combines what Paul says in his Epistle to the Galatians with the verse Acts 13:2, which makes mention of his and Barnabas' "dedication" (ἀφορισμός) to the work of the apostolic mission by the Holy Spirit. Thus he presents Paul's acquisition of his apostleship as the work of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. Consequently, as Paul himself observes, his teaching, like his call, was not of human but of divine origin. What exactly was this teaching?

The quintessence of Paul's teaching can be summarized in the statement of the termination of the power of the Law on account of the redemptive work of Christ and, consequently, of "the untimeliness (ἄκαιρος) of the observation of the Law". This is why Chrysostom moves next to the work of the

Son and to the importance and validity of Baptism in the name of the whole Trinity. The Cross and the Resurrection are characterized as divine beneficence offered to all human beings equally. Thus the place of the Law has now been taken by the beneficent reality of the Cross and the Resurrection,<sup>(10)</sup> which has objective, catholic and universal dimensions in contrast to the Law, which was restricted to the Jews alone.

This view of St Paul is fully shared by "all the brethren who are with him" and, consequently, "what he writes, he writes with their consent".<sup>(11)</sup> At this point one could raise the objection, why does Paul make mention of "all the brethren" who are his associates since, as he stressed previously, what he teaches is derived from God and not from men? The answer to this objection/question is given by Chrysostom himself, who argues that Paul wishes to show that that "there are many who share the same opinion with him"<sup>(12)</sup> and, consequently, he was not alone when he stressed the "untimeliness" of the observation of the Law after

(10) [MPG 61: 645<sub>41-48</sub>.]

(11) [καὶ πάντες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ ἀδελφοί ... ἅπερ γράφει, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκείνων γράφει γνώμης, MPG 61: 616<sub>37-38</sub>.]

the granting of the beneficence of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ. Far from being personal, this opinion of Paul is common to many others in the Church and, as a result, those who insist on the observation of the Law run the risk of becoming cut off from the rest of the body of the Church, since "the name of the Church is a name of symphony and concord".

### 3. The Pauline Teaching on Grace and the Unity of the Church

The teaching of the Church as expressed by the Apostles has catholic dimensions, i.e. it is marked by a unity which entails organic integrity and coherence, because it is on a par with the Church which is one. In other words, the unity of the Church and the unity of her teaching are inseparable. This means that if the Galatians chose to follow the teaching of the Judaizers, they "run the risk of falling away from Grace",<sup>(13)</sup> and, in turn, of taking a stance of opposition against God's will.<sup>(14)</sup> Through this last point Chrysostom

(12) [πολλοὺς ἔχει τῆς γνώμης κοινωνοὺς, MPG 61: 61635-36.]

underlines the magnitude of the Galatians' responsibility and, even, sin. Thus, commenting on Gal. 1:3, he remarks that, "Here he calls God "Father" not by way of paying some sort of compliment to them, but by way of vigorously touching upon and recalling to memory the cause whereby they were made sons"(15), i.e. the Grace of man's adoption and redemption in and through Christ. But what precisely is the meaning of this Grace?

#### 4. Grace as man's adoption to sonship and redemption by God

The meaning of this Grace is summed up in the statement that God who is the Father of his Son by nature, also becomes Father of the faithful by Grace on account of Christ's work in contrast to the work of the Law. The defence of the opposite by Paul's opponents reveals lack of

(13) [τῆς χάριτος ἐκινδύνευον ἐκπεσεῖν, MPG 61: 616<sup>59</sup>-617.]

(14) [πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἑαυτοὺς ἐξεπολέμησαν, MPG 61: 617<sup>2-3</sup>.]

(15) [Πατέρα δὲ ἐνταῦθα τὸν Θεὸν καλεῖ οὐ κολακεύων αὐτοὺς, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα καθαπτόμενος, καὶ ὑπομιμνήσκων τὴν αἰτίαν δι' ἧς ἐγένοντο υἱοί, MPG 61: 617<sup>14-16</sup>.]

gratitude on their part towards Christ, since, in the last analysis, they lay aside the Grace of his passion and resurrection and embrace the observance of the Jewish Law. Thus, Chrysostom can stress, that "it is not through the Law, but through the bath of regeneration that they were made worthy of such an honour".(16).

Underlining the magnitude of God's beneficence to men, Chrysostom stresses the appalling existential condition of all human beings at the time of Jesus Christ, in spite of the reign of the Jewish Law. Thus, he says, "we were entangled in countless evils and had become liable for the ultimate punishment.. and the Law, not only did not supply acquittal but condemnation, inasmuch as it made sin more obvious, but also did not have the power to supply liberation, or to put an end to God's wrath".(17) On the contrary "the Son of God made this impossible thing possible, loosening the sins and translating enemies to a position of friends, and granted

(16) [MPG 61: 617<sub>16-18</sub>.]

(17) [μυρίοις ἑαυτοὺς περιεπίραμεν κακοῖς, καὶ τοῖς ἐσχάτοις ἡμεῖς ὑπεύθυνοι κολάσεως.. καὶ ὁ μὲν νόμος οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἀπήλλαξεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατεδίκησεν τὸ μὲν ἁμάρτημα φανερώτερον καθιστάς, ἐλευθερῶσαι δὲ οὐκ ἰσχύων, οὐδὲ παῦσαι τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ὀργήν..]

countless other goods".(18) With these words Chrysostom presents most vividly the impotence of the Law and the infinite possibility of the redemptive work of Christ. It is precisely this fact that renders "inopportune" or "untimely" (ἄκαιρον) not only the efficacy but also the observance of the Law as a means of salvation.

The Law did have the ability to reveal the magnitude of sin and to condemn, but was deprived of the ability to cancel out or to condemn sin and, thus, to reconcile mankind to God. On the contrary, Christ came not "to put us to death, but to take us out of the present life,..., or to prepare us to become worthy of the heavenly manner of life while we are left in this world".(19) Thus man's salvation acquires an eschatological perspective which consists in man's participation in the heavenly kingdom of God, as Chrysostom points out in a typical way: "Christ did indeed free us from previous

(18) [ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦτο δυνατὸν ἐποίησε, τὰς τε ἁμαρτίας λύσας, καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐν τάξει φίλων καταστήσας, καὶ μύρια ἕτερα χαρισάμενος ἀγαθά", MPG 61: 61748-56.]

(19) [ἵνα ἀποκτείνῃ ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἐξαγάγῃ τῆς παρούσης ζωῆς, ..., ἀλλ' ἵνα ἀφείδῃ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ παρασκευάσῃ τῆς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς διαγωγῆς γενέσθαι ἀξίους, MPG 61: 61832-35.]

sins and also secured our future. For to say that "he gave himself for our sins", was an indication of this; but to add, "that he might redeem us from the present evil", revealed the future security".<sup>(20)</sup> In contrast to the Law, the Grace which is derived from the redemptive work of Christ, not only liberates from the condemnation of sin, in its eschatological perspective, but also offers man the possibility to be enrolled into the future kingdom while still being here. With all the above Chrysostom completes his interpretation of the introductory text of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

##### 5. Grace replaces the Law as the will of the Triune God.

What was the particular problem of the Galatians? According to Chrysostom, who bases his account on his understanding of Paul's thought and its intentions, the

(20) [καὶ τῶν προτέρων ἡμᾶς ἀπήλλαξεν ὁ Χριστὸς ἀμαρτημάτων, καὶ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον ἠσφαλίσατο. Τῷ μὲν γὰρ εἶπεῖν 'τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν', ἐκεῖνο ἐδήλωσε· τῷ δὲ προσθεῖναι 'ὅπως ἐξέλῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος πονηροῦ', τὴν πρὸς τὸ μέλλον ἀσφάλειαν ἐνέφηεν. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ Νόμος καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐν ἠσθένει, ἡ δὲ χάρις πρὸς ἀμφοτέρωθεν δυνατὴ γέγονε, MPG 61: 619<sub>41-48</sub>.]

Galatians "suspected that they would be pleasing to the Father, by persecuting Christ as the Jews through the observance of the Law",<sup>(21)</sup> without realizing that "by doing this they provoked not only Christ, but also the Father".<sup>(22)</sup> In other words, the Galatians had had the illusion that by insisting on the observance of the Law they were actually doing the will of God, as it was expressed in the Old Testament and as it was done by all the other Jews who had not accepted Christ and his redemptive work.

Thus to deliver them from such a deceit Paul underlines that Christ's work is not autonomous in comparison with, or independent from, the will of God the Father, but belongs to the framework of his plan which entails two phases or two chronological periods. According to Chrysostom "there is one will of the Father and of the Son, so that what the Son wished that also the Father willed".<sup>(23)</sup> Consequently,

(21) [ὕπῳπτεινον ἀρέσκειν τῷ Πατρὶ, καθάπερ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Χριστὸν διώκοντες, MPG 61: 620<sup>27-28</sup>.]

(22) [οὐ τὸν Χριστὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν Πατέρα παροξύνουσιν τοῦτο πράττοντες, MPG 61: 620<sup>29-30</sup>.]

(23) [ἐν θέλημα Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ, ὅπερ ὁ Υἱὸς ἐβούλετο, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἠθέλησεν, *Ibid.*]

"just as the old one is not of the Father alone, but also of the Son, likewise the Grace of the Son is not of the Son alone, but also of the Father, and all things are held in common".<sup>(24)</sup> This means that in the second phase of the Divine plan God the Father collaborates, just as in the first phase the Son was collaborator of the Father. Clearly, then, both phases of the Divine Oeconomy have the same starting-point and are included in the same plan of God, whose will and operation are not different from the the will and operation of the Son, and *vice versa*.

The second phase of this plan appears to be a development and completion of the first phase, so that, according to Chrysostom, since the second is the perspective of the first, the Law, which was the distinctive feature of the first, is included in the second as its presupposition, which, however, transcends the limited framework of the Law. The observance of the Law after Christ denotes a persistence on the presupposition instead of on the reality, as such, which grants salvation. Thus, the Law has no soteriological capability, since the appropriation of the reality of the Grace

(24) [ὡςπερ γὰρ ἡ παλαιὰ οὐ τοῦ Πατρὸς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ, οὕτω καὶ ἡ χάρις οὐ τοῦ Υἱοῦ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς, καὶ πάντα κοινά, MPG 61: 620<sub>32-35</sub>.]

in Christ renders redundant the exclusive attachment to the presupposition. As a consequence the insistence of the false-brethren on the observance of the Law put them in opposition to the whole reality which God offered them in the person and redemptive work of Christ. "You who are running away from God who calls, consider of what sort of punishment you shall be responsible".<sup>(25)</sup> Thus the Law, which is now deprived of the capability to effect salvation, is for Chrysostom a "yoke of slavery" (ζυγὸς δουλείας).<sup>(26)</sup>

What are, however, the soteriological anthropological consequences of this difference? According to Chrysostom, it is Christ who reconciled us (κατήλλαξε)<sup>(27)</sup> with the Father and who gave us the gift of Grace. Of themselves human beings were unable to be saved and to be reconciled with the Father. But this impotence was also shared by the Law, in spite of the fact that it was God's Law. "For we were not saved by works of righteousness".<sup>(28)</sup> This is because the

(25) [ὁ θεοῦ καλοῦντος ἀποτηδῶν, ἐννόησον ὅσης ἂν εἴη τιμωρίας ὑπεύθυνος.]

(26) [MPG 61: 620<sub>51-55</sub>.]

(27) [MPG 61: 620<sub>16-17</sub>.]

Law's impotence was not subjective but objective and anthropological; i.e. without Christ man did not have the potential to fulfil the Law and to be saved. Such a potential was offered by Christ who, through his redemptive work, granted man the possibility of his liberation from the condemnation (the shackles) of the Law. At this point, however, Chrysostom does not provide any elaboration, but simply restricts himself to the point of the text. Yet, he will come back to this later on.

### 6. The unified Gospel of Grace.

Following on, Chrysostom turns his attention to Paul's view concerning the unity and uniqueness of the Gospel and, consequently, stresses that any teaching foreign to it cannot possibly enjoy any apostolic authority. By the word "Gospel", however, he means the one teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and his redemptive work which is attested by the symphony of the four Gospels. "When the four say the same things, there is not one and another on account of the

(28) [οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἐσώθημεν, MPG 61: 621<sup>17-18</sup>.]

different persons, but one through the symphony of the above mentioned".(29) The composition of Gospels by four persons does not necessarily imply four different Gospels, but rather denotes the presentation of the one Gospel of Christ from the point of view of each one of the authors, which is determined by his aim and the particular addressees to whom it is addressed. The "other Gospel" (τὸ ἕτερον Εὐαγγέλιον) which the Judaizers of the Church of Galatia preach, consisted in the preservation of the validity of the Jewish Law, a teaching which they deceptively presented even as Pauline, thus arousing the vehemence of the Apostle. Such a view, however, was considered to be overturning the entire Gospel, since "it did not just introduce by way of innovation only one or two commandments, that concerning circumcision and that concerning the observance of certain feast days, but indicated that by providing a little alteration it spoiled the whole, and said that the Gospel is overturned".(30) Thus the content of Christ's Gospel is bound up with the identity of those who preach it. In the same manner the content of the teaching of the Judaizers is bound up with their identity.

(29) [ὅταν γὰρ οἱ τέσσαρες τὰ αὐτὰ λέγωσιν, οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο διὰ τὴν τῶν προσώπων διαφορὰν, ἀλλ' ἓν διὰ τὴν τῶν εἰρημένων συμφωνίαν, MPG 61: 622<sub>4-7</sub>.]

## 7. Paul is transferred from Law to Grace

Finally Chrysostom turns to Paul's conversion and especially to the manner of his calling and to its purpose, i.e. to "the revelation of the fullness of knowledge to him" (ἀποκαλύψαι τὴν γνώσιν αὐτῷ πάσαν). Paul was called by God, in order that the real, the true knowledge, which is derived from God, might be revealed to him and in order that he might preach it to the nations. For Chrysostom Paul's conversion and calling are the result of the divine will which, of course, did not refer to the extension of the validity of the Jewish Law, but to its termination, and to its replacement by the redemptive work of Christ. Putting his own words in Paul's mouth, Chrysostom puts forth the typical statement: "I was transported to the dogmas of the Church, putting off every Jewish preconception".<sup>(31)</sup> From that moment onwards Paul was seized "by the eros of the truth alone",<sup>(32)</sup> and all this, says Chrysostom, occurred on account of the

(30) [καὶ μὴ μίαν μόνην ἢ δευτέραν ἐπεισῆγον ἐντολήν, τὴν τῆς περιτομῆς καὶ τὴν τῶν ἡμερῶν, μόνον καινοτομοῦντες· ἀλλὰ δεικνύς ὅτι μικρὸν παραπονηθὲν τὸ ὅλον λυμαίνεται, εἶπε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον ἀνατρέπεται, MPG 61: 622<sub>28</sub>-32.]

Oeconomy.<sup>(33)</sup> Clearly, then, Paul had had an exceptional place in God's plan as an agent of its implementation. This is why his calling to the Apostolic office had been decided by God "from his mother's womb". Thus from a terrible persecutor of Christ he was spectacularly transformed into the most fervent preacher of the redemptive person and work of the Saviour.

We may now try to summarize the results of our above analysis in a concise and systematic way. Although this first chapter of Chrysostom's Commentary contains 10 and 9 explicit references to νόμος and χάρις respectively, the fact is that both of these notions are central to its argument and the points emerging are of considerable theological importance.

As far as the νόμος is concerned Chrysostom could not be clearer about its divine origin, which reveals its kinship with χάρις.<sup>(34)</sup> As a matter of fact it is both the Father and the

(31) [μετέστην πρὸς τὰ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας δόγματα, καὶ πᾶσαν ἀπεκδυσάμην πρόληψιν Ἰουδαϊκὴν, MPG 61: 627<sub>16-18</sub>.]

(32) [ὁ τῆς ἀληθείας ἔρως μόνος, MPG 61: 627<sub>25</sub>.]

(33) [MPG 61: 627<sub>31-32</sub>.]

Son who are expressly mentioned as the originators of the Law. There is not one but several nuances of meaning to the notion of νόμος, which, however, can be reduced to two main ones, one particular and one general.

In most cases the predominant (particular) nuance is that of "Jewish religious practices"<sup>(35)</sup> with particular reference to the practice of circumcision. Observance of these practices was a matter of great agitation among the earliest Christian communities, which emerged out of a Jewish socio-religious context. It seems that the problem was to some extent caused by the Jews themselves who attempted to control the emerging Christian communities. The apostolic answer to this problem differed from place to place and according to circumstance, sometimes exhibiting tolerance and sometimes unequivocal opposition. It was all a matter of "oeconomy" or "condescension", which was ultimately aimed at salvation. This particular aspect of Chrysostom's exposition is of signal importance, not only as an interpretative tool for certain problems within the early apostolic communities, but also because it shows, that what by the time of Chrysostom had

(34) [MPG 61: 620.]

(35) [MPG 61: 613, 622.]

come to be known as "ecclesiastical or canonical oeconomy" had its roots in the apostolic tradition.

The other semantic (general) nuance associated with the term νόμος is that of "the entire Old Testament",<sup>(36)</sup> which is contrasted by Chrysostom as a whole to "the New Testament founded upon Christ". This nuance is implied or suggested by the previous one, inasmuch as the contrast between Jewish and Christian practices is often extended into a contrast between the Old and the New Testaments.<sup>(37)</sup>

No particular stress is laid in this chapter on the usefulness of the νόμος, except on one occasion, where the νόμος is presented as a "paedagogue" leading to Christ.<sup>(38)</sup> The stress is rather laid on the νόμος's negative function and weakness for producing a positive result. More specifically, the νόμος exposes human sin, without, however, providing the possibility of liberating humanity from the grip of sin or, far less, of reuniting humanity to God the Father.<sup>(39)</sup> Another weakness of the νόμος is the fact that it is of limited chronological

(36) [MPG 61: 619, 620.]

(37) [MPG 61: 619.]

(38) [παιδαγωγὸς εἰς Χριστόν, MPG 61: 617.]

application, since it reaches, according to the will of the Triune God,<sup>(40)</sup> the chronological limit of its application as soon as Christ's redemptive work is completed.<sup>(41)</sup>

As in the case of νόμος, so in the case of χάρις, the nuances of meaning are variable. There are, however two particular nuances which stand out as the main ones in this exposition. The first one is associated with Paul's calling by God to the apostolic office. It is the Grace of the Son and the Spirit which commissioned him to undertake the work of an apostle and which seals his teaching with the distinctive mark of divine authority.<sup>(42)</sup> The Grace of the Spirit is credited in this case with the appropriation by Paul of the Grace of Christ. The second particular nuance of χάρις is a broader one. It is connected with the redemptive work of Christ, the heart of the Gospel, or, more specifically, with the beneficence that flows out of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and the Resurrection.<sup>(43)</sup> Chrysostom expressly

(39) [MPG 61: 617, 619.]

(40) [MPG 61: 613.]

(41) [MPG 61: 613.]

(42) [MPG 61: 628.]

says that this beneficence is rooted in the common will of the Father and the Son.<sup>(44)</sup> It is further clarified here that the beneficial consequences of this Grace are: a) the reunification of humanity through divine adoption,<sup>(45)</sup> b) the liberation of humanity from the grip of sin,<sup>(46)</sup> and c) the acquisition of the possibility of entry into the future kingdom.<sup>(47)</sup>

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(43) [MPG 61: 616, 617, 619, 620, 628.]

(44) [MPG 61: 617, 624.]

(45) [MPG 61: 619.]

(46) [MPG 61: 617.]

(47) [MPG 61:618, 619.]

## CHAPTER 2

### 1. The Cause of Paul's visit to Jerusalem

In the first part of the second chapter of his Commentary Chrysostom expounds the cause of Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, which occurred fourteen years after his first visit there and which was of a completely different character. (1) He does not deal here with the "historical problem" of the exact number of Paul's visits to Jerusalem. He simply refers to the two visits which Paul mentions in his Epistle; the first one (Gal. 1:4) taking place three years after his conversion and the second (Gal. 2:1), fourteen years later. According to the researches of contemporary scholars, this "second visit" is connected with the so-called Apostolic Synod which is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 15). NT scholars differ in their evaluation of the fourteen year period which elapsed before the present (second) visit; for some, this is the

(1) [Gal. 2:1-10.]

actual time of Paul's conversion, while for others it is the time of Paul's first *official* visit to Jerusalem, three years after his adoption of Christianity.(2)

According to Chrysostom the cause of this "second visit" was the Holy Spirit, who revealed to the Apostle the need to go to Jerusalem. In fact his use of the term "cause" rather denotes here the "ultimate ground", since, as the Apostle himself states, this visit would not have taken place without the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

The immediate cause, however, for this visit pre-existed and was related to the divisive accusations of various people, foreign to the body of the Church, which, as Chrysostom explained in the first chapter of his Commentary, radically differentiated Paul's position on the observance of the Jewish Law from that of the Jerusalem Apostles. In any case, for Chrysostom "what happened" (τὸ γινόμενον), i.e. Paul's visit to Jerusalem, was not a merely human affair, "but a sort of divine oeconomy forstalling many events, both present and future ones".(3) Indeed, it was according to some divine plan

(2) [Cf. M. Siotis, Προλεγόμενα εἰς τὴν πρὸς Γαλάτας Ἐπιστολήν, Ἀθήναι, 1980. S. Agourides, Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν Καινὴν Διαθήκην, Ἐκδόσεις ΓΡΗΓΟΡΗ, Ἀθήναι 1971, σσ 247-255.]

that "the Grace of the Holy Spirit drove him" and "prepared him to go up and communicate" [with the Jerusalem Apostles].(4)

Thus Paul goes to Jerusalem according to the will of the Holy Spirit and wondering in himself whether it was "in vain" (μήπω εἰς κενόν) that he had laboured all this time all over the world in teaching the Gospel of Christ and admonishing people that the Jewish Law had come to an end. In the light of the discussion which followed, this question does not seem to have been a real one, but to have been aimed at exposing the absurdity of the opposing view. Indeed, Chrysostom makes it explicit that the Apostle "did not need to learn whether he had been labouring in vain",<sup>(5)</sup> but acted in this manner "in order that his accusers might be better informed",<sup>(6)</sup> about the rightness of his teaching. Besides, the

(3) [ἀλλὰ θεία τις οἰκονομία πολλὰ προοραμένη καὶ τῶν παρόντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, MPG 61: 633<sub>45-47</sub>.]

(4) [MPG 61: 633<sub>40-41</sub>.]

(5) [οὐκ αὐτὸς ἐδεῖτο μαθεῖν, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔτρεχεν, MPG 61: 633<sub>52-53</sub>.]

(6) [ἵνα οἱ ἐγκαλοῦντες πληροφορηθῶσι, MPG 61: 633<sub>12</sub>.]

occasion would be provided for the Apostles to express their consensus on the particular issue of the observance of the regulations of the Law. Chrysostom will return to this point, once he has delineated the differences between the "false brethren" and those who had adopted the genuine apostolic mind.

## 2. The "False Brethren" and the Apostles

Grasping the full extent of Paul's problem, Chrysostom shows that the real distinction is not one between Paul and the "pillars" among the Apostles, but one between these pillars and those people who falsely claimed the authority of the former in order to advance their fraudulent plans. The latter followed closely Paul's missionary activity and tried systematically to undermine it. Chrysostom calls them "false brethren" (ψευδαδέλφους), following the suggestions of Paul himself, and thus suggests that they were intruders from outside and strangers to the true spirit of the Gospel.

The identity of these ψευδάδελφοι has been a matter of dispute among the contemporary NT scholars. By and large Western scholars tend to adopt the view that they were Jewish Christians (Jews who had been converted to

Christianity) who did not understand Christianity as constituting a radical deviation from their ancestral traditions, whereas Eastern (Orthodox) scholars believe that they were simply Jews who intruded (παρησεῖλθον) into the Christian communities pretending to be Christians with the aim to monitor and influence the course of Christian expansion. In fact they were, as Chrysostom calls them, Jewish "spies" (κατάσκοποι) -- a description which perfectly fits Paul's reference to "spying" (κατασκοπήσαι) in Gal. 2:4.(7)

As regards their actual policy, these false brethren claimed to be followers of Peter, John and James in stressing the obligatory observance of certain regulations of the Jewish Law as necessary presuppositions for salvation, and thus put to question the absolute sufficiency of the redemptive work of Christ. It is certainly true that in practice the Jerusalem Apostles did seem to oppose what the false brethren demanded. Yet, as Chrysostom explains, the motivation and "raison d' être" behind the Apostolic policy on this matter was vastly different. Here is his most pertinent statement which brings out this important difference: "For he who

(7) [Cf. οἵτινες παρεισήλθον κατασκοπήσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν].]

commands, does something with eagerness as a necessary prerequisite, but he who does not demand, nor does he prevent anyone willing from doing something, does not allow this as something that needs to be done, but as fulfilling some sort of oeconomy".<sup>(8)</sup> This distinction clearly differentiates the "legal stance" of the false brethren, based on the continuing validity of the Law, from the "oeconomic" stance of the Apostles, which acknowledges human weakness without, however, compromising on the Christian perception of redemption. Another way of expressing this difference is to say that it is parallel to the difference between the "rule", which is binding for all, Jews and Gentiles, and the "concession", or even "exception", to "Jewish weakness" (Ἰουδαϊκὴ ἀδυναμία), which was applicable only to Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. It is crucial to note that this concession was not a concession to the Law but to Jewish weakness. In other words it was an exceptional pastoral measure which was aimed at helping the Jews to move gradually, and not abruptly, to the new conditions of life

(8) [ὁ μὲν γὰρ προστάτιων, μετὰ σπουδῆς ὡς ἀναγκαῖον καὶ προηγούμενον, ποιεῖ, ὁ δὲ αὐτός μεν μὴ κελεύων, τὸν δὲ βοθλούμενον μὴ κωλύων, οὐχ ὡς δέον γενέσθαι συγχωρεῖ, ἀλλ' οἰκονομίαν τινα πληρῶν, MPG 61: 635<sub>13-17</sub>.]

which stood in direct contrast to those pertaining to their traditional upbringing. Chrysostom makes this point quite explicit when he writes, that "in Jerusalem everyone was scandalized, if anyone transgressed the Law, if anyone prevented the practice of circumcision.(9) The Apostles, however, were fully aware that this was applicable only to Christians of Jewish origin. This is why, as Chrysostom puts it, they made no such demands on Christians of Gentile origin, but "ordered that they should not be disturbed" by such considerations.(10)

It is also important in this connection to note Chrysostom's use of two particular verbs in drawing out the contrast between the apostolic stance and that of the false brethren. These are the verbs "to condescend" (συγκαταβαίνειν) and "to legislate" (νομοθετεῖν). As Chrysostom points out the former characterizes the Apostles' attitude to Christians of Jewish origin and denotes tolerance of Jewish regulations, whereas the latter was applied by the same to Christians of

(9) [ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις πάντες ἐσκανδαλίζοντο, εἴ τις παραβαίῃ τὸν νόμον, εἴ τις κωλύσεις χρήσασθαι τῇ περιτομῇ, MPG 61: 634<sub>32-34</sub>.]

(10) [ἐνομοθέτουν μὴ παρενοχλεῖν τούτων, MPG 61: 635<sub>33f</sub>.]

Gentile origin and denotes the strict ruling not to keep the regulations of the Jewish Law. Clearly, then, the apostolic concession on the observance of Jewish regulations was made only in Judaea "where the Law was in full force" (ἐνθα καὶ ὁ νόμος ἐκράτει),(11) whereas the false brethren aimed at imposing these regulations "everywhere" (πανταχοῦ). For Chrysostom this clear differentiation points to the fact that the false brethren were indeed "spies" (κατάσκοποι) whose primary aim was not to build up but to "attack and destroy" (πορθῆσαι καὶ καθελεῖν) the newly founded churches by Paul.(12) Furthermore Chrysostom exposes the self-interest and malice of these Judaisers by pointing out that "they sought to please themselves"(13) and to "place the other Christians under the old slavery",<sup>(14)</sup> and by contrasting

(11) [MPG 61: 635<sub>40f</sub>.]

(12) [*ibid.*]

(13) [ἐαυτοῖς παρασκευάσωσιν τὴν εὐκολίαν, MPG 61: 635<sub>51-52</sub>.]

(14) [ὑπὸ τὴν δουλείαν αὐτοῦς τὴν παλαιὰν εἰσαγαγεῖν βουλόμενοι, *ibid.*? Cf. also the statement, ἵνα μειζρόνως ὑποβάλωσιν τῇ δουλείᾳ, MPG 61 635<sub>53-54</sub>]

these to the apostolic practice which sought to "lead the Christian Jews little by little out of their 'slavery'".(15) Ultimately the problem was one of choosing between the "Grace" of the Lord Jesus Christ and the "slavery" of the old Law.(16)

### 3. Paul's agreement with the Jerusalem Apostles

Having clarified the difference between the Apostles and the false brethren concerning the observance of Jewish regulations by Christians, Chrysostom attempts next to demonstrate the absolute agreement between Paul and the Apostles on all subjects and especially on the particular one under discussion. He bases this agreement on the common origin of their apostleship and on their commitment to the Gospel of Christ which both preached as the way to salvation.

We have already come across, in our examination of the first chapter of Chrysostom's commentary, his insistence that

(15) [ἵνα κατὰ μικρὸν ἐξαγάωσιν τῆς δουλείας, MPG 61:635<sup>57</sup>.]

(16) [Cf. τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦς ἐκβαλεῖν καὶ πάλιν ὑπὸ τὸν τῆς δουλείας ζυγὸν ἀγαγεῖν, MPG 61: 635<sup>36-38</sup>.]

"there is not one and another [Gospel] on account of the different persons, but one through the symphony of them all".(17) In other words, Chrysostom held that the Gospel was actually and essentially one but was presented by the Apostles in different ways in order to meet the particular needs of different audiences and to serve effectively in their salvation. Thus, Paul sent Timothy on a mission to Christians of Jewish background having first circumcised him "so that he might be more acceptable to his audience".(18) There were no gaps in the Apostles' minds and as a result of this they were able to adapt their *kerygma* to the needs of their addressees, without, of course, compromising, in any way, the content of its essential message. To put it otherwise, they knew how to approach their audience with discrimination and oeconomy and, thus, secure positive response to their message and successful outcome to their mission. The case of Timothy's circumcision serves to demonstrate this approach, because it reveals that Paul, who was the supreme preacher to the nations concerning the abolition of the Law, was not hesitant

(17) [Cf. ch. 1:6, MPG 61:622<sub>4-7</sub>.]

(18) [ἵνα εὐπαράδεκτος γένηται τοῖς ἀκροαταῖς, MPG 61:636<sub>38-40</sub>.].

to adopt a more moderate stance in the case of a Jewish audience. As regards the case of the other Apostles, who, rather allegedly, according to the claims of the false brethren active in Galatia, were clear upholders of the regulations of the Law, it is important to note that when they met with Paul in Jerusalem, "not only did they not censure him" (οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐπετίμησαν), for his insistence on the abolition of such regulations, "but declined from uttering any objection whatsoever to the extent that they actually praised him; for 'to praise' is the exact opposite to 'to object'".<sup>(19)</sup> Thus, far from disagreeing with Paul on this allegedly controversial matter, the Jerusalem Apostles were in agreement with him so as to congratulate him for his attitude. This means that the claim of Paul's opponents in Galatia concerning his Christian attitude to the regulations of the Jewish Law was baseless.

#### **4. The distinction between Paul's mission and that of Peter**

According to Chrysostom all the Apostles believed in the absolute authority of Christ's redemptive work and in the

(19) [ἀλλὰ καὶ τοσοῦτον ἀπέσχον τοῦ μέμψασθαι ὅτι καὶ ἐπήνεσαν· τὸ γὰρ ἐναντίον τοῦ μέμψασθαι τὸ ἐπαινέσαι, MPG 61: 63748-51.]

removal of all necessity concerning the relics of the Law. Such a consensus was due to the fact that what they preached was based on Christ's will, "for it would not have been given, nor would Grace have been in operation, if this preaching was not desirable to Christ".<sup>(20)</sup> Consequently it was on the basis of Christ's will that the distinction was made between Paul's mission and that of the other Apostles. Chrysostom stresses this point, by putting the following words into Paul's mouth(!): "As regards the *kerygma*, we divided the oecumene, and I took the nations and they took the Jews according to God's will".<sup>(21)</sup>

It is not, therefore, accidental that Chrysostom puts forth the explanation that when Paul speaks about uncircumcision "he means the nations", and when about circumcision, "the Jews". Nor is it accidental that by such juxtapositions (uncircumcision/Nations, circumcision/Jews) he clarifies the analogous position taken by the Apostles. Thus, inasmuch as God willed that Paul should preach the Gospel to the Nations

(20) [οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ἐδόθη, οὐδὲ ἐνήργησεν ἡ χάρις, εἰ μὴ δοκοῦν αὐτῷ τὸ τοιοῦτον κήρυγμα ἦν, MPG 61: 638<sub>39</sub>-41.]

(21) [ἐν μὲν τῷ κηρύγματι, φησὶν, διειλόμεθα τὴν οἰκουμένην, κ'αγὼ μὲν τοὺς ἐξ ἐθνῶν, ἐκεῖνοι δὲ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἔλαβον κατὰ τὸ τῷ θεῷ δοκοῦν, MPG 61: 639<sub>23</sub>-26.]

he did not have to ask for the observance of any regulations of the Jewish Law, whereas the other Apostles, whom God had chosen to preach to the Gospel of Grace to the Jews, applied some sort of condescension concerning the observance of Jewish regulations "in order that they may gradually lead the Jews out of slavery".(22)

Chrysostom realizes, of course, that the incident of Antioch involving Peter, who interrupted communion with Christians of Gentile origin on account of certain people who were sent there from Jerusalem by James, could be presented as an obstacle to his views. Hence he offers his response by producing a discussion of the circumstances of that incident and claiming that Peter's attitude "is not indicative of strife but of oeconomy".(23) In fact, as Chrysostom explains, Peter had to take the attitude he took in Antioch, in order to appear to be consistent with what he was doing in Jerusalem and to avoid the suspicion that he was afraid of Paul and lacked apostolic authority. Besides, Peter wanted by his breaking communion with Christians of Gentile origin to give

(22) [MPG 61: 635<sup>57</sup>.]

(23) [ὅτι οὐ μάχης ἦν τὰ ῥήματα, ἀλλ' οἰκονομίας, MPG 61: 641<sup>23f</sup>.]

Paul an opportunity to object to those who insisted on the observance of the Law for all and force them to comply with his teaching(!).(24)

### 5. Justification by faith vis-à-vis Law and Grace

In dealing with Paul's apostolic authority, and defending it against the undermining activities of the false brethren, Chrysostom repeatedly turns to the heart of the Apostle's teaching, i.e. the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ as the presupposition for man's salvation. Thus, he stresses the fact that "having initially been brought up in the Law, we left the company of this manner of conduct, and thrustured ourselves upon the faith in Christ".(25) The clear implication of this, as Chrysostom himself leads us to understand, is that the Law constitutes the food for the age of human infancy, which is not adequate for the age of maturity. This is precisely why

(24) [Ὁ Πέτρος συνυποκρίνεται, ὡς ἁμαρτάνων, ἵνα ἐν τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπιτιμήσει διορθωθῶσιν, MPG 61: 641<sub>53-55</sub>.]

(25) [ἐκ πρώτης ἡλικίας ἐντραφέντες τῷ νόμῳ τὴν σύντροφον ἀφέντες πολιτείαν, κατεφύγομεν εἰς πίστιν τὴν εἰς Χριστόν, MPG 61: 68<sub>14-17</sub>.]

the revelation in Christ was provided, offering divine sonship by adoption. Thus the Law was laid aside "not as evil, but as weak" and its place was taken by the "faith in Christ". In another place in his Commentary, Chrysostom points out that the Law, which served as a paedagogue for Christ, is empty of redemptive value, especially when it is contrasted to the Grace which springs out of Christ's perfect work of redemption which is appropriated by faith. This is why he wonders at the attitude of the Galatians and raises with them the question, "you put on Christ, you became a member of the Master, you were enrolled in the heavenly Jerusalem; then, why do you crawl after the Law, and how do you expect to gain the kingdom"?(26) On the other hand through faith man gains so many benefits. He becomes a citizen of heaven, a member of the heavenly community and partakes of the kingdom of God as a son of His by adoption. This stands in direct contrast to those who wish "to be circumcised, to fast, to keep the Sabbath, to throw themselves outside the orbit of Grace";(27) in short, to keep the Law "out of season" (ἀκαίρως), forgetting its paedagogical character and its

(26) [τὸν Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσω, μέλος ἐγένου τοῦ Δεσπότη, εἰς τὴν ἄνω πόλιν ἐνεγράφης, καὶ ἔτι περὶ τὸν νόμον ἔρπεις; καὶ πῶς ἐνι σε τῆς βασιλείας ἐπιτυχεῖν; MPG 61: 644<sub>10-14</sub>.]

ineffectiveness as regards the crucial matter of salvation. In conclusion, then, Chrysostom finds that the Law and Christ are ultimately incompatible in the sense that "to keep the former, it is necessary to disobey Christ, or obeying Christ, to become trasgressor of the Law";<sup>(28)</sup> or, as he puts it elsewhere, through the cross and the resurrection Christ "loosened the Law ... and ordered that it should be loosened".<sup>(29)</sup>

### 6. The self-negation of the Law

Chrysostom is not content merely with the identification of the contrast between the Law and Christ and its implications. He goes further, drawing out its inner logic. He does this as he points out that this contrast is endorsed by the Law itself, inasmuch as, after the coming of Christ, "he who keeps the

(27) [περιτέμνονται, νηστεύουσιν, καὶ τὸ σάββατον τηροῦσιν,, ἐξωθοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῆς χάριτος, MPG 61: 643<sub>51-54</sub>.]

(28) [τὸν νόμον φυλάξει, ἀνάγκην παρακοῦσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἢ ἀκούοντας τοῦ Χριστοῦ παραβάτας γενέσθαι τοῦ νόμου, MPG 61: 644<sub>35-36</sub>.]

(29) [MPG 61: 644<sub>39-40</sub>.]

Law also becomes a transgressor of the Law!"(30) Elsewhere he expresses it slightly differently: "the Law has ceased, and we have confessed this, and therefore we have abandoned it and turned to salvation by faith. If, then, we strive to make it stand, we become transgressors of the same, since we strive to keep what has been loosened by God".(31) The last point of the above statement suggests some kind of explanation for this "self-negation of the Law" which is connected with the Giver of the Law and his attitude to it. God has loosened it and as such, i.e. as loosened, it resists or condemns anyone who tries to make it binding again. But a closer look at Chrysostom's text indicates that there are other reasons as well pertaining to this self-negation. The most notable of these is the fact that the Law itself had predicted, through the Patriarchs and the Prophets, the coming of the new epoch, which Christ would inaugurate and which would

(30) [ὁ τηρῶν τὸν νόμον, παραβάτης καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ νόμου, MPG 61: 644<sub>53-55</sub>.]

(31) [πέπαυται ὁ νόμος, καὶ τοῦτο ὁμολογήσαμεν, δι' ὧν ἀφέντες αὐτὸν, κατεφύγομεν ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως σωτηρίαν. Ἄν τοίνυν φιλονεικήσωμεν στήσαι αὐτόν, αὐτῷ τούτῳ πασραβάται γινόμεθα, τὰ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ λυθέντα φιλονεικοῦντες τηρεῖν, MPG 61: 645<sub>1-5</sub>.]

render transitory the status of the Law. As he puts it, "What the Prophets, on the one hand, were in labour with, and the Patriarchs, on the other hand, were forecasting, while the angels were amazed watching, that everybody would confess to be the summit of God's care".<sup>(32)</sup> This implies that "death was incurred for the Law by the Law, i.e. that the Law deliberated that it should not be observed".<sup>(33)</sup>

All this, of course, has to do with the coming of Christ and especially Christ's redemptive work. This becomes apparent in Chrysostom's reference to Moses' witness in the Book of Deuteronomy, which announces in advance the coming of a Prophet greater than him, whose voice the people should obey, and whom Chrysostom identifies with Christ, following the early apostolic *kerygma*.<sup>(34)</sup> Thus Moses

(32) [ὁ προφήται μὲν ὤδινον, πατριάρχαι δὲ προὔλεγον, ἄγγελοι δὲ ἐξεπλήττοντο βλέποντες, κεφάλαιον δὲ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ κηδεμονίας παρὰ πᾶσιν ὡμολόγηται ἄν, MPG 61: 648<sub>16-19</sub>.]

(33) [ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ τοῦ νόμου τῷ νόμῳ ἀπέθανεν· τουτέστιν, αὐτὸς μὲν ὁ νόμος ἐνήγαγεν εἰς τὸ μηκέτι προσέχειν αὐτῷ, MPG 61: 645<sub>11-13</sub>.]

(34) [MPG 61: 645:15-17. Cf. Acts 3:22,23.]

who represents the Law has already specified in the Law that Christ would transcend it with his Gospel. This point is reinforced by Chrysostom by another quite different, but certainly pertinent, consideration. "The Law", he says, "commands us to observe all the things that have been written in it and to punish those who do not do them".<sup>(35)</sup> This means, as Chrysostom explains, that it is not sufficient to pay lip service to the Law nor to keep it only partially, because in either case one is condemned. The fact is, he says, "that we all have come under the condemnation of death, because nobody has been able to fulfil it [the Law]". Thus to keep certain regulations of the Law, far from being beneficial, it is in fact the basis for assured condemnation.

### 7. The saving power of Christ

We shall now attempt to summarize our above analysis by means of a systematic and comprehensive statement. There are some 46 explicit references to the term νόμος in this chapter, and only 7 references to the term χάρις. This does not mean, however, that the topic of Grace is relegated to a

(35) [MPG 61: 645<sup>20-22</sup>.]

secondary place. The reason for this preponderance of references to the Law is to be found in the original text of Paul's Letter to the Galatians. The second chapter of this Letter contains 6 references to νόμος and 2 references to χάρις.

As far as the Law is concerned we note that nothing is said here about its origin, or about its positive aspects and possibilities. What emerges as a distinctive point of discussion is the weakness of the νόμος in redeeming humanity and the negative effect of its observance within the context of the Gospel.<sup>(36)</sup> This is in effect identified as physical and psychic death.<sup>(37)</sup> Particularly interesting is the point that the weakness of the Law is declared by the Law itself and that the Law itself points to the direction of Grace!<sup>(38)</sup> i.e. the Patriarchs and the Prophets,<sup>(39)</sup> as well as the Book of Deuteronomy.<sup>(40)</sup> The particular necessity of keeping the entire Law, because of the necessity of its inner coherence, is

(36) [MPG 61: 635, 643, 644.]

(37) [MPG 61:645.]

(38) [MPG 61: 644, 645.]

(39) [MPG 61: 648.]

also noted as a contributive factor to the weakness of the Law.(41)

As regards the nuances of meaning of the term νόμος which one finds in this chapter, they seem to be the following three: a) the nuance of circumcision and the Jewish religious practices of observing fasts and keeping the sabbaths to the Lord;(42) b) the nuance of circumcision (περιτομή) -- used in the metaphorical sense of including the entire Jewish religious cult -- as contrasted to the opposite notion of uncircumcision (ἀκροβυστία) -- used in the metaphorical sense of the nations; and c) the nuance of the "Law of Grace" which is the exact opposite to the previous two nuances.(43)

Χάρις primarily denotes the beneficence which is derived from Christ's redemptive work and sacrifice.(44) As such χάρις has the possibility of providing salvation and

(40) [MPG 61: 645.]

(41) [MPG 61: 644, 645. Cf. also the extensive discussion of this point in chapter 5:1 of this Dissertation.]

(42) [MPG 61: 634, 635, 640-645, 648.]

(43) [MPG 61: 645. Cf. also chapters 5 and 6 where Chrysostom expands his views on the "law of grace".]

immortality,<sup>(45)</sup> in contrast to the Law whose provision is death. The Grace which is derived from the Cross of Christ has an objective value and embraces all humanity. It has an unlimited power to redeem, but it is not imposed on humanity, inasmuch as it requires the response of faith.<sup>(46)</sup> The "wedding", as it were, of faith and Grace takes place at baptism, when the believer is crucified and mortified with Christ as to the works of the flesh which fall under the power of the Jewish Law.<sup>(47)</sup>

Χάρις is also presented as a divine power which calls Paul to his apostolic office and directs him in his mission.<sup>(48)</sup> This point was already made in the previous chapter. Here, however, he is much more analytic and clear. Paul's visits to Jerusalem and Antioch with the view to discussing and resolving the problems of the Law, were the results of the

(44) [MPG 61: 635, 643, 647.]

(45) [MPG 61: 646.]

(46) [MPG 61: 647.]

(47) [MPG 61: 645.]

(48) [MPG 61: 633, 638.]

intervention of the Grace of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. All this means that Grace not only liberates and redeems, but also accompanies and directs the believers in their lives on earth; more importantly, it protects them from various pit-falls as those promulgated by the false teachers of Galatia.

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## CHAPTER 3

### 1. Repentance: Return from the carnal Law to the spiritual Grace

Chrysostom expresses his great astonishment at the return of the Galatians to the condition of the Law, in spite of their adherence to Paul's preaching and their achievement of "so many and so great" things after their conversion to Christianity.<sup>(1)</sup> This astonishment is due to the fact that instead of moving from a lower condition to a higher one, i.e. instead of a progressive movement, the Galatians did the exact opposite. At first they progressed from the fleshly condition of the Law to the spiritual condition of life in the Grace of Christ; yet now they have regressed from the higher spiritual condition which they reached to the lower fleshly condition of the Law and its observances; and all this because

(1) [οἱ μετὰ τοσαῦτα καὶ τηλικαῦτα, ὡς οὐδενὸς γενομένου, τῶν προτέρων ἐχόμενοι, MPG 61: 647<sub>45</sub>-48.]

of the "evil eye" (βασκανία) of the false teachers!(2) The fact was that the Galatians did not just formally believe the truth of the Gospel and were incorporated into the body of the Church through baptism, but they had made significant progress in Grace, so as to suffer persecution for Christ's sake, to perform miracles and to grow constantly in "the Grace of the Holy Spirit".(3) Indeed to emphasize the spiritual gifts which the Grace of the Spirit supplies to the believers, Chrysostom recalls Paul's words: "You received the Holy Spirit, he says, you worked out many powerful deeds, you wrought many signs, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, prophesying, speaking in tongues. Did the Law give you such and so great a power? But, of course, you did not do anything like this previously. But the faith?".(4)

All the above leads to the conclusion that this new spiritual condition is not a static event but a dynamic one, inasmuch as it has to do with man's effort to be formed into

(2) [εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἀπὸ σαρκικῶν ἤρξασθε, ἔδει εἰς τὰ πνευματικὰ προκόψαι· νῦν δὲ ἀπὸ πνευματικῶν ἀρξάμενοι, εἰς τὰ σαρκικά καταλύσατε, MPG 61: 649<sub>52-55</sub>.]

(3) [MPG 61: 653, Cf. also Πνεῦμα ἔλαβον, καὶ σημεῖα εἰργάσατο, καὶ ὁμολογηταὶ ἐγένοντο, μυρίους διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ὑπομήναντες κινδύνους καὶ διωγμούς, MPG 61: 650<sub>17-20</sub>.]

a "perfect man in Christ" (Eph. 4:13) according to and with the influence of God's Grace. Chrysostom has no doubt at all as to man's contribution to the realization of this spiritual condition of Grace. He brings this out most clearly in a comment on Gal. 3:27 in his Commentary on the Psalms, when he says: "for it is not only by Grace that we are saved, but there is also need of faith and of virtue which follows after faith".<sup>(5)</sup> Here Chrysostom says, that there is need for man to accept gratefully the gift of the Saviour's Grace, because "Grace does not reach the ungrateful and objectional person".<sup>(6)</sup> This means that man has the capacity both to go ahead in the condition of Grace or to fall away from it, like

(4) [ἐλάβετε Πνεῦμα, ἅγιον, φησὶν, εἰργάσασθαι δυνάμεις πολλὰς, ἐπετελέσατε σημεῖα, νεκροὺς ἐγείροντες, λεπροὺς καθαίροντες, προφητεύοντες, γλώσσας λαλοῦντες. Ταύτην οὖν τὴν τοσαύτην ἰσχὺν ὑμῖν ἔδωκε ὁ νόμος; Καὶ μὴν οὐδὲν πρότερον ἐποιεῖτε τοιοῦτον. Ἄλλ' ἡ πίστις; MPG 61: 649<sub>36-39</sub>.]

(5) [οὐ γὰρ ἐκ χάριτός ἐστι σωθῆναι μόνον, ἀλλὰ χρεῖα καὶ πίστεως καὶ μετὰ τὴν πίστιν καὶ ἀρετῆς, *On Psalm XLIV*, MPG 55: 199]

(6) [ἀδύνατον εἰς ἀχάριστον καὶ προσκεκροκότα ἐλθεῖν, MPG 61: 653]

the Galatians who "ἐξέπεσαν τῆς χάριτος".<sup>(7)</sup> It is particularly interesting that Chrysostom understands this capacity to go ahead in the condition of Grace, i.e. in salvation, in close relation to the notion of "repentance" (μετάνοια).<sup>(8)</sup> Thus he can say, "you can, if you want, regain yourselves".<sup>(9)</sup> Chrysostom does not understand this to be a momentary event but a constant vigilance and catharsis from sinful senses<sup>(10)</sup> and this is why he refers to repentance. Both repentance and faith imply man's free consent to the entry of God's Grace within him and to the operation of its saving effects.

## 2. Possibilities and Limits of the Law

Expounding Gal. 3:17 Chrysostom exposes the limits of the Law arguing that it does not have the capacity to annul the covenant of Grace which God granted to humanity through the promise he gave before hand to Abraham.<sup>(11)</sup> Pursuing

(7) [MPG 61: 650<sub>20-21</sub>.]

(8) [MPG 61:650<sub>16</sub>.]

(9) [δύνασθε ἑαυτοὺς ἀνακτίσασθαι, MPG 61:650<sub>21-22</sub>.]

(10) [MPG 61: 648<sub>37-38</sub>.]

the same theme in his discussion of Gal. 3:19-20, Chrysostom stresses both, the priority of Christ in comparison to the Law, and the fact that it was Christ who actually gave the Law and has, therefore, the authority to annul it, as, in fact he did.<sup>(12)</sup> This means, however, that, although it no longer applies, the Law had had a divine origin and had been given for a specific purpose and as such is not deprived of specific value. This is particularly brought out in Chrysostom's discussion of the complex verse Gal. 3:19. He does not simply reproduce it in its Pauline form: "What, then, about the Law?" (Τὶ οὖν ὁ νόμος;), but in the form: "On whose account did he give the Law?" (Τίνος οὖν ἕνεκεν τὸν νόμον ἔδωκεν;). The reply which Paul gives: "On account of the transgressions" (τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν) -- an expression which is regarded as highly controversial by H. Schlier, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Brescia 1966, p. 158 -- shows, according to Chrysostom, that the Law is not deprived of meaning and value. As he puts it, "It was not given by chance, but for a

(11) [MPG. 61:654<sub>14-15</sub>.]

(12) [Μεσίτην ἐνταῦθα (Gal. 3: 19) τὸν Χριστὸν φησὶν, δεικνύς ὅτι προῆν καὶ τὸν νόμον αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν.. κύριος ἂν εἶη καὶ λύσαι πάλιν, MPG 61: 654-655.]

very useful purpose".<sup>(13)</sup> In the same connection he also says that the Law was given as a sort of bridle, "to train, to regulate, to prevent transgression, even if not of all, at least of one of the commandments; Thus the value of (or, gain from) the Law is not a small one".<sup>(14)</sup> That the Law prevented the transgression of some, if not all, of the regulations, was a widely held interpretation in ancient times.<sup>(15)</sup> It ultimately meant that the Law had a paedagogical character and was aimed at the prevention of transgressions to the extent that this was possible for each case.

There was, however, according to Chrysostom, yet another reason why the Law was given. It was given so that the awareness of weakness and sinfulness might be preserved alive and as a result the need for healing or re-establishing the broken relation of man with God might be fully realized.<sup>(16)</sup> At the same time Chrysostom recognizes the positive

(13) [οὐκ εἰκῆ, ἀλλὰ πάνυ χρησίμως ἐδόθη, MPG 61:654].

(14) [παιδεύων, ρυθμίζων, κωλύων παραβαίνειν, εἰ καὶ μὴ πάσας, ἀλλ' ὅμως κἂν ἐκ μιᾶς τῶν ἐντολῶν. Ὡστε οὐ μικρὸν τὸ κέρδος τοῦ νόμου. MPG 61: 654.]

(15) [Cf. H. Schlier, *ibid.*].

character of the Law and specifies its limit as he expounds further the meaning of Gal. 3:19 and particularly of the phrase "until the seed of the promise comes" (ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ὃ ἐπήγγελται), which he renders as "if then, it is until the advent (parousia) of Christ that it has been given" (εἰ τοίνυν μέχρι τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας δέδοται).<sup>(17)</sup> This shows that the possibilities of the Law reach their limit with the coming of the Son of God on the earth.

### 3. The Law as presupposition of the Grace of Christ

The Law, then, does not contradict the promises of God, but was given in order to uncover or expose human sin. This means that far from constituting an obstacle to the work of Grace, it does in fact contribute to this end. This is why for Chrysostom "the Law is not an opponent of Grace but a cooperator".<sup>(18)</sup>

This is further confirmed by the observation that, since

(16) [ἔδωκεν τὸν νόμον ἐλέγχοντα τὰ τραύματα, ἵνα ποθήσωσιν τὸν ἰατρόν, MPG 61: 655.]

(17) [MPG 61: 654. Cf. also *Expositio in Psalmum xlix:1*, MPG 55: 242; and *Ad Johann. Evangelium*, MPG 59: 75.]

the Jews were not conscious of their sins and, as a consequence, they did not desire redemption, the Law was introduced in order to reveal their wounds and make them desire the interference of the healing doctor who is none other than Christ himself.(19)

Thus it is obvious that in Chrysostom's thought the Law has a propaedeutic function in relation to the mission of the Saviour and to the epoch of Grace, which is aimed at the awakening in man of the awareness of sinning and of the condition of sin which is created by it, as well as of the promotion of the desire for redemption. As Chrysostom expresses it, had the Law not been given, all would have been abandoned to their evil ways and no one would have been able to accept the epoch of Grace. "Indeed whoever did not believe in the Law, did not believe at all, because they did not come to realize their own sins".(20)

(18) [ὁ νόμος οὐκ ἐνάντιος τῆς χάριτος ἀλλὰ καὶ συνεργός, MPG 61: 656.]

(19) [ἔδωκεν τὸν νόμον ἐλέγχοντα τὰ τραύματα, ἵνα ποθήσωσιν τὸν ἰατρόν, MPG 61: 655<sup>35-36</sup>.]

(20) [Οἱ γοῦν μὴ πιστεύσαντες αὐτῷ, ἐκ τοῦ μὴ καταγνῶναι τῶν οἰκείων ἁμαρτημάτων, οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν, MPG 61: 655.]

We must note here, by way of a necessary, as it were, digression, that Chrysostom often refers to "faith" not in the sense of man's free acceptance of the Grace which is in Christ, but in the objective sense of the redemptive presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Grace which is thereby derived. Thus he may state: "for the faith is efficacious, when the [requirements] of the Law are not added .. for those who are justified in the Law, have fallen out of Grace";<sup>(21)</sup> or again, "As for the Law, it is younger and temporary, and given to be such, in order that it may become forerunner of the faith", i.e. to prepare the coming of Christ.<sup>(22)</sup>

The paedagogical character of the Law is particularly stressed by Chrysostom in his exposition of Gal. 3:24 where Paul presents the Law under the form of a paedagogue. The Law, says the holy commentator, does not stand in contrast to the teacher, but cooperates with him, keeping the youth who is under instruction free from every evil and forming in him

(21) [ἡ γὰρ πίστις τότε ἰσχύει, ὅταν μὴ προστεθῆ τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου,.. ὅσοι γὰρ ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦνται τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσαν, MPG 61: 650.]

(22) [ὁ δὲ νόμος νεώτερός τε καὶ πρόσκαιρος, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο δεδομένος, ἵνα προοδοποιήσῃ τῇ πίστει, MPG 61: 653.]

a good disposition towards the teacher.(23)

#### 4. The impotence of the Law and the potency of Grace

God's mercy and compassion is one of the essential characteristics of God and it is only from this perspective that the wonderful events of the Old Testament can be properly understood according to St Paul. Both Paul and Chrysostom oppose the observers of the Law by drawing arguments from the Old Testament itself.

The holy father observes that God chose the righteous Abraham and made him father of the elect people of God, out of whom the Saviour of the world was to proceed.(24) The epigrammatic statement of Habakkuk 2:4, [*The righteous shall live by faith*] repeated by St Paul in Gal. 3:11, reveals that no one ever fulfilled the regulations of the Law and that only Grace through faith has the potency to justify.(25) This

(23) [ὁ δὲ παιδαγωγὸς οὐκ ἐναντιοῦται τῷ διδασκάλῳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ συμπράττει, πάσης κακίας ἀπαλλάττωντὸν νέον καὶ μετὰ πάσης σχολῆς τὰ μαθήματα παρὰ τοῦ διδασκάλου δέχεσθαι παρασκευάζων· ἀλλ' ὅταν ἐν ἔξει γένηται, ἀφίστασθαι λοιπὸν ὁ παιδαγωγός, MPG 61: 656.]

(24) [MPG 61:644.]

prophetic verse along with Chrysostom's scholia shows not only that justification is from faith, but also that the Law is ontologically impotent to supply salvation. Chrysostom goes deeper into the meaning of this when he says, that the Law "does not only seek faith but also, works; whereas Grace saves and justifies by faith";<sup>(26)</sup> and that, because "the Law was impotent for leading man to righteousness, faith was found to be the remedy, and not a small one, turning the impotence of the Law into potency through itself".<sup>(27)</sup> What we need to clarify in this connection is the meaning of the term "works" (ἔργα) which is mentioned above. The opposition of works to faith in the above statement in no way implies that Chrysostom negates the particular participation of each person in the work of Grace through particular works. This is seen in another Chrysostomian text

(25) [τὸν νόμον οὐδεὶς ἐπλήρωσεν, καὶ ὅτι ἡ πίστις δικαιοῖ, MPG 61: 652.]

(26) [οὐ γὰρ πίστιν ἐπιζητεῖ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔργα· ἡ δὲ χάρις ἀπὸ πίστεως σώζει καὶ δικαιοῖ, MPG 61: 652<sup>24-25</sup>.]

(27) [ὁ νόμος ἠσθένη πρὸς δικαιοσύνητων ἀνδρα ἀγαγεῖν, εὐρέθη φάρμακον οὐ μικρὸν ἢ πίστις, τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου ποιοῦσα δυνατὸν δι' αὐτῆς, MPG 61:652.]

which stresses that, "it is not only by Grace that we are saved, but there is also need of faith and of virtue which follows after faith".(28) There is no contradiction here because the "saving" works of this statement are not the same with the "works" of the previous statement which refer to the ordinances of the Law. In other words there is no contradiction between the rejection of the works of the Law as means of salvation and the acceptance of the works of the faith, as fruit of the faith, or expressions of the real involvement and responsibility of each human being in the salvation which is offered in Christ by Grace.

In this light one can understand the emphasis on the redemptive work of Christ and especially his crucifixion and resurrection as the fulfilment of the prophecy which goes beyond the Law. "Christ, then, redeemed us from the curse of the Law, becoming himself a curse (Gal. 3:13), and as a result we can now "enjoy Grace and Truth (*ibid.*)."(29) There are many Chrysostomian texts which explain how this actually takes place through baptism.(30)

(28) [οὐ γὰρ ἐκ χάριτος ἐστὶ σωθῆναι μόνον, ἀλλὰ χρεῖα καὶ πίστεως καὶ μετὰ τὴν πίστιν καὶ ἀρετῆς, MPG 55: 199.]

(29) [Cf. MPG 59: 96.]

On the whole there are 55 occurrences of the term νόμος and 10 of the term χάρις in this chapter. Yet we observe that these occurrences are in reverse analogy to the value or importance which is attributed to them! We may conjecture various reasons that seem to govern this: a) There is the reason that he may be simply imitating Paul who follows a similar pattern in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians. He makes explicit mention of the "Law" some 16 times and no explicit reference to "Grace" at all. b) There is the reason that the notion of χάρις is closely associated with other notions which do appear in chapter three -- e.g. the "cross" (about 8 times), the "faith" (about 60 times, although only some of these have the sense of "Grace"), etc. c) There is the reason that Chrysostom's heightened sense of piety and humility make him less ready to talk about the divine energies which are connected with God's Grace, i.e. the "spiritual things" of the faith, than about the "corporeal things" of the Law. d) Finally there is the reason that Chrysostom, like Paul, deliberately chooses to concentrate more on the Law, because there lies the problem with the

(30) [Cf. MPG 52: 769 and the reference to Gal. 3:27; or the following cases: MPG 61: 656<sup>41-44</sup>, MPG 49: 225 and MPG 50: 438.]

Galatians. The point is, however, that there is clear teaching about both Law and Grace in this chapter which can be summarized as follows:

Both the Law and Grace have a common source, namely Jesus Christ. Since Christ is the mediator between God and men, Law and Grace are ultimately derived from God the Father through the mediator.

In the case of the Law it is Christ himself who delivered it to men in order to keep them aware of the necessity of virtue and to make them turn to him for justification, after realizing the impossibility of fulfilling the entire Law. This means that the main function of the Law was preventative, diagnostic and propaedeutic.

The origin and the function of the Law lead to the conclusion that the Law is a sort of Grace! Thus both Paul and Chrysostom make the unequivocal statement that the Law was given "for the sake of (χάριν) human beings". The fact, however, is that for both, the Apostle and the Father, the positive evaluation of the Law depends on the exact specification of its temporal framework. As long as this framework is observed Chrysostom would not hesitate to use the term [Law] to denote the evangelical love for the neighbour which was taught by Christ, i.e. to speak about the

"Law of Christ".<sup>(31)</sup> As a matter of fact the term "Law" appears to assume different nuances of meaning or content according to varying circumstances. In this chapter it denotes either the "ordinance of circumcision",<sup>(32)</sup> or the entire historical period between "four hundred and thirty years after Abraham" and the coming of Christ.<sup>(33)</sup>

The term χάρις also seems to have two main nuances of meaning: it is either the "Grace of the Son", or the "Grace of the Holy Spirit". According to Chrysostom's teaching the Grace of the Son is primarily connected with the redemptive work of Christ and especially with his self-offering on the cross whereby the curse of the Law was annulled. This Grace, flowing from the cross of Christ has an objective soteriological value and meaning and specifies the free divine gift of salvation irrespective of any human response. It has to do with justification, which is primarily the free gift of Christ, but which is appropriated through faith. When this appropriation occurs, then man becomes worthy of divine

(31) [Cf. MPG 61: 647.]

(32) [MPG 61: 649, 654],

(33) [MPG 61: 654]

adoption and receives the Grace of the Holy Spirit. As Chrysostom puts it in a nutshell: "The Cross annulled the curse; faith introduced righteousness; and righteousness gained the Grace of the Spirit".<sup>(34)</sup> All this of course is interrelated with the notions of repentance and baptism which specify the concrete steps whereby Grace is given and received.

(34) [ὁ μὲν σταυρὸς τὴν κατάραν ἔλυσεν· ἡ δὲ πίστις τὴν δικαιοσύνην εἰσήγαγεν· ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη τὴν χάριν τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐπεσπάσατο, MPG 61: 653<sub>30-32</sub>.]

## CHAPTER 4

### 1. Grace as substitute of the natural and the mosaic Law

In the fourth chapter of his Commentary Chrysostom stresses the point that everyone, Jews as well as Gentiles, suffer under the weight of slavery and deceit. The universal sway of this situation becomes obvious, according to the holy father, when one considers the "idolatry", or the "observation of days", or the "fabrication of new gods", which prevailed at that time.<sup>(1)</sup> The result of all these was that people were "living in darkness and were lying on the ground through deceit".<sup>(2)</sup> As for the Jews, "they proclaimed the necessity not only of circumcision, but also of the feasts and the moon days"<sup>(3)</sup> and thereby were led to live under the "curse of the

(1) [MPG 61: 657<sub>33-36</sub>.]

(2) [ἔσκοτισμένοι καὶ ἐν τῇ πλάνῃ χαμαί, MPG 61:688<sub>3-4</sub>.]

Law". This is why the holy father commenting on Gal. 4:28 in his Commentary on the Epistle to Titus regards "both Greeks and Jews as wild and deceitful"<sup>(4)</sup> and thus reaffirms his views that both of them were in a terrible situation. What Chrysostom has in mind here is that both of them were slaves to the Law, the Greeks to the "weak and poor elements" (τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα)<sup>(5)</sup> of the natural Law and the Jews to the mosaic one. Indeed, in a statement addressed to both directly, he says, "for you will not find God through your labours, since you live in deceit; rather he has removed you from it".<sup>(6)</sup> The conclusion, then, is clear: neither the natural Law of the Greeks nor the mosaic Law of the Jews "has any power"<sup>(7)</sup> any longer, since, that is, the time when

(3) [οὐ μόνον περιτομῆν.. ἐκήρυττον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑορτὰς καὶ τὰς νεομηνίας, MPG 61:688<sub>13-15</sub>.]

(4) [Hom. V, ch. 3, MPG 62: 691.]

(5) [MPG 61:658<sub>10</sub>.]

(6) [οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑμεῖς καμύοντες εὑρετε τὸν θεόν, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς ἐν τῇ πλάνῃ διατρίβετε, αὐτὸς δὲ ὑμᾶς ἐπεσπάσατο, MPG 61: 668<sub>7-9</sub>.]

(7) [MPG 61: 658<sub>10-11</sub>.]

God revealed himself to them and made them communicants of his glory.<sup>(8)</sup> This last text suggests the importance of the revelation of God in Christ which replaces everything that went before and which was brought about through the incarnation. In this connection Chrysostom speaks about the incarnation as having "two causes and two achievements, i.e. deliverance from slavery and donation of goods, something which could not possibly have been achieved by anyone else except by him alone".<sup>(9)</sup> In other words the incarnation had had both negative and positive results; negatively, it negated sin and redeemed man who was under the slavery of sin; positively, it gave man the gift of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of sonship through which all kinds of other gifts were added, depending on man's appropriation of this gift or positive response to it.

(8) [νῦν δέ, ἔγνωτε τὸν Θεὸν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγνώσθητε παρ' αὐτοῦ, MPG 61: 658<sub>4-5</sub>.]

(9) [δύο ἐνταῦθα αἰτίας καὶ κατορθώματα τῆς σαρκώσεως, καὶ ἀπαλλαγῆν, καὶ ἀγαθῶν χορηγίαν, ἅπερ οὐδενὶ δυνατὸν ἦν, ἢ αὐτῷ κατορθῶσαι μόνῳ, MPG 61: 657<sub>24-27</sub>.]

## 2. Grace as adoption to divine sonship and emancipation from the slavery of the natural and mosaic Law

Chrysostom stresses here the redemptive work of Christ and the results of the gift of Christ's Grace on human beings. As he puts it, "Grace turned us from being slaves to being freemen, from being infants to being perfect, from being aliens to being inheritors and sons".<sup>(10)</sup> In view of this it is curious that the Galatians who had been pagans and who had been welcomed into the freedom of Christ's Grace, were so readily prepared to move back to the slavery of the Law. Thus Chrysostom confronts them with the question: "Who deceived you and persuaded you to be differently disposed towards us?"<sup>(11)</sup> Whereas in the beginning they were so excited by the Gospel that even their eyes they were prepared to pluck out for the sake of it (Gal. 4:15), now they were easily disposed towards accepting the partial suggestions of the Judaizers which led them away from Grace

(10) [ἀντι δούλων ἐλευθέρους, ἀντι νηπίων τελείους, ἀντι ἄλλοτριῶν κληρονόμους ἐποίησεν καὶ υἱοὺς ἡ Χάρις, MPG 61:657<sub>43-45</sub>.]

(11) [τίς γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐξηπάτησε, καὶ ἐπεισεν ἑτέρως διατεθῆναι πρὸς ἡμᾶς, MPG 61: 659<sub>47-49</sub>.]

and brought them back to the slavery of the Law.(12) The sad result of all this, says Chrysostom, is that they corrupted the "image", lost the "congeniality", changed the "form" and from being "children" they were transformed into "abortive distortions" (ἀμβλωθρίδια.. ἐκτρόματα).(13)

Whereas they were in an advantageous position they became worthy of punishment because "their sin was not a casual one".(14) They were filled with benefits and, besides, they had the very image of Christ inside them, so that they enjoyed the status of sons of God by virtue of divine adoption. The consequences of their return to the *status quo* of the Law were quite tragic, because this meant separation from God and return to a condition of slavery. Most important, however, in this connection, was the point that the second corruption of the image of God implied greater responsibility and incurred greater consequences, because it was a sin against greater benefits since those bearing it were not simply human beings but divine sons by adoption.

(12) [MPG 61:657<sub>16-17</sub>.]

(13) [MPG 61: 660<sub>34-37</sub>.]

(14) [τὸ ἁμαρτηθὲν οὐ τὸ τυχόν, MPG 61: 660<sub>45</sub>.]

### 3. Demonstration of the superiority of Grace over the Law

Dealing next with the superiority of the Grace of Christ in comparison with the Law, Chrysostom makes use of two particular devices. In the first instance he puts forward the personal example of St Paul who, being first an "excessive" (μεθ' ὑπερβολῆς) defender of Judaism,(15) had no hesitation at all in turning away "from that way of life".(16) In the second instance he draws attention to the witness of the Law itself about the transitory character of its authority,(17) Indeed, by claiming that "even the present state of affairs was prefigured in it",(18) he reflects upon the Old Testament story of Abraham's wives Hagar and Sarah as a way of exposing, by some sort of typological methodology, the impotency of the Law and the infinite potency of the

(15) [MPG 61:668<sub>38-39</sub>.]

(16) [ἐκ τῆς πολιτείας ἐκείνης, MPG 61: 668<sub>37</sub>.]

(17) [it is all epitomized in the following statement: αὐτὸς ὁ νόμος οὐ βούλεται ἑαυτὸν φυλάττεσθαι, MPG 61: 661<sub>26-27</sub>.]

(18) [καὶ τὰ παρόντα ἐν αὐτῷ ἐζωγραφεῖτο, MPG 61: 661<sub>45-46</sub>.]



Grace of Christ. St Paul calls this story "an allegory", but Chrysostom notes that "it is by convention that he uses here the name of allegory instead of the name of type".<sup>(19)</sup> More specifically Chrysostom claims that Paul made reference to this story in order to suggest that the whole matter concerning Christ's Grace and the Law was not "a recent event, but had been outlined from above many years earlier"<sup>(20)</sup> and rested on God's eternal character and his providence for mankind's salvation.

In his comments on the same biblical story Chrysostom identifies Ishmael and Isaac, the sons of Hagar and Sarah, with the sons who are under the Law and the sons who are under the Grace of Christ and are saved by faith. He also emphasizes the superiority of the latter over the former: "The sons of the Patriarch did not enjoy the same value, since the one was from a slave and the other from a free woman, and thus it is indicated that they were not just sons, but such and such sons, one of them being free and noble. This is indeed

(19) [καταχρηστικῶς τὸν τύπον ἀλληγορίαν ἐκάλεσεν, MPG 61:662<sup>20-21</sup>.]

(20) [ὅτι τὸ γενόμενον οὐ πρόσφατον ἦν, ἀλλ' ἄνωθεν καὶ πρὸ πολλῶν διειτυπούτο χρόνων, MPG 61: 664<sup>36-37</sup>.]

the power of the faith".(21)

It is clear that the reference to this story was intentionally made in order to bring out the impotence of those who remained under the Law for achieving righteousness and becoming God's sons, as it happened with Hagar's son "who was born in accordance with the bonds of nature and with the custom of marriage"(22) and was firstborn, and yet "was thrown out of his father's house",(23) and the potentiality of those who stood on the ground of Grace, like "Isaac, who was born according to the promise",(24) and was made "son" and "free" and "lord of all".(25)

The conclusion drawn from all this is that the election of

(21) [οὐ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀξίας ἦσαν οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ Πατριάρχου, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς δούλης, ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρου, δείκνυσιν λοιπὸν, ὅτι οὐ μόνον υἱοί, ἀλλὰ οὕτως υἱοί, ὡς ὁ ἐλεύθερος καὶ εὐγενής. Τοσαύτη ἡ δύναμις τῆς πίστεως, MPG 61: 66147-51.]

(22) [τοῖς τῆς φύσεως δεσμοῖς καὶ τῇ τοῦ γάμου συνηθείᾳ τίκεται, MPG 61: 6626-8.]

(23) [ἐξεβάλλετο τῆς πατρῶας οἰκίας, MPG 61: 66217-18.]

(24) [κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν τεχθεὶς Ἰσαάκ, MPG 61: 66218.]

(25) [MPG 61:66219]

the Jews, or -- to put it differently -- of "that Israel who is according to the flesh"(26) did not imply any exclusiveness, i.e. any rejection of the other nations. The value of Abraham's faith in God's promises could not be revoked by the Law of Moses which was brought in much later. Even Isaac's election to be "lord of all", including Hagar's son <sup>h</sup>Ismael, expresses the priority of the God's will and Grace for the salvation of human beings.

#### 4. Man's incorporation into the Church through the grace of Baptism

In line with the above, Chrysostom reassures those who deny the Law and the earthly Jerusalem for the sake of that other Jerusalem which is "above" by insisting that "no one should be disturbed for not having being born according to the flesh; since it is for this reason that they are in fact regarded to be his relatives, because they were not born according to the flesh".(27) The reason which Chrysostom gives for this claim is expressly stated in the following text: "because the birth which is not according to the flesh and is

(26) [τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα Ἰσραήλ, MPG 61: 662<sub>16</sub>.]

more spiritual is far more wonderful, as it appears from what was said above".(28) Isaac was born from a "frozen" (κατεψυγμένην) womb (i.e. physically, or fleshly, impotent), but in a spiritual manner. Or, as he puts it elsewhere, "For just as the Grace operated there, likewise he came forth here from a frozen womb. You came up from frozen waters· thus, as the womb in his case, so the font of waters in yours. Did you see the congeniality of birth? did you see the harmony of Grace?(29)

In this connection Chysostom's words have an obvious ecclesiastical reference. This is particularly seen in his

(27) [μη θορυβείτω τοίνυν τὸ μὴ κατὰ σάρκα γεγενῆσθαι· διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο μάλιστα αὐτοῦ συγγενεῖς, ὅτι οὐ κατὰ σάρκα ἐγεννήθητε, MPG 61: 662<sub>9-12</sub>.]

(28) [θαυμασιώτερος γὰρ ὁ τόκος ὁ μὴ κατὰ σάρκα καὶ πνευματικότερος· καὶ δῆλον ἐκ τῶν ἄνωθεν λεχθέντων, MPG 61: 662<sub>13-15</sub>.]

(29) [Ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ἡ χάρις εἰργάσατο· οὕτω καὶ ἐνταῦθα προῆλθεν ἐκεῖνος ἀπὸ μήτρας κατεψυγμένης. Ἀνέβης σὺ ἀπὸ ὑδάτων ψυχρῶν· ὅπερ οὖν ἐκεῖνῳ ἡ μήτρα, τοῦτο σοι, ἡ κολυμβήθρα ἐγένετο τῶν ὑδάτων. Εἶδες τόκου συγγένειαν; εἶδες χάριτος συμφωνίαν; Gal. 4:28 "Πρὸς τοὺς ἐγκαλέσαντας ὑπὲρ τοῦ μήκουσ τῶν προσιμίων.. καὶ εἰς τὸ ῥητὸν Σαῦλε Σαῦλε, τί με διώκει; MPG 51: 131.]

statement that those who enter into the "font of the waters" become members of the Church by freely accepting the Grace of Christ through which salvation is obtained. The "formation" (διάπλασις) and "regeneration" (ἀναγέννησις) which takes place in baptism, is common to all people, Jews and Gentiles, who "as though passing through a womb",<sup>(30)</sup> are purified from their previous condition and thus enter into that other Jerusalem which is "above", the "mother of us all", the Church.<sup>(31)</sup>

In this chapter Chrysostom uses the terms νόμος and the χάρις 8 and 4 times respectively. Νόμος is associated with the following nuances: a) the sense of the "natural Law", which was given to the nations and which appears only once;<sup>(32)</sup> b) the sense of certain Jewish religious practices, including circumcision, religious festivals, moon days and marriage;<sup>(33)</sup>

(30) [καθάπερ ἐν νηδύϊ τινί, MPG 61: 663<sup>26-28</sup>.]

(31) [εἰπὼν γὰρ ἡ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ μήτηρ ἡμῶν ἐστὶ, καὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν οὕτω καλέσας, MPG 61: 662<sup>54-55</sup>.]

(32) [MPG 61: 657, 658.]

(33) [MPG 61: 661, 668.]

c) the sense of the entire collection of the books of the Old Testament;<sup>(34)</sup> d) the sense of the new epoch of freedom and Grace in Christ, i.e. the epoch of the New Testament.<sup>(35)</sup>

Since this chapter, like chapters 1 and 2, is devoted to Paul's views on the false teachers of Galatia,<sup>(36)</sup> who were trying to restore Judaism, Chrysostom restricts himself to the task of exposing the weakness of the Law and its negative consequences in the whole affair of man's redemption. These consequences comprise the loss of sonship and the darkening of the Grace of being in God's image and likeness.<sup>(37)</sup> In the course of doing this, Chrysostom points to the inner witness of the Law itself,<sup>(38)</sup> to the example of Paul's transposition from Judaism to Christianity,<sup>(39)</sup> c) to the biblical example of Abraham's two women, Sarah and Hagar, and their two sons,

(34) [MPG 61: 661.]

(35) [MPG 61: 662.]

(36) [MPG 61: 659-660.]

(37) [MPG 61: 660.]

(38) [MPG 61: 661.]

Isaac and Ishmael, which is taken to symbolize those who are free by God's Grace and those who are slaves under the Law.(40)

As regards the exposition of χάρις in this chapter, it is linked with the sacrifice of Christ and is said to constitute the presupposition for the divine adoption of humanity. This divine adoption is achieved through the Grace of the Spirit of adoption, namely, the Holy Spirit,(41) and is sealed and confirmed, as it were, through the mystery of Baptism.(42)

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(39) [MPG 61: 668.]

(40) [MPG 61: 661, 662, 664.]

(41) [MPG 61: 657.]

(42) [MPG 51: 131.]

## CHAPTER 5

## 1. The internal coherence of the different parts of the Law

The Law ceases to be enforced from the moment when humanity enters into the state of Grace because its application becomes outmoded and untimely.<sup>(1)</sup>

Had the Law remained necessary for salvation even after the introduction of Grace, it would have been necessary in its entirety<sup>(2)</sup> and not only in one or more parts of it. This is because in Chrysostom's observation the Law presents an internal organic unity and coherence<sup>(3)</sup> which does not leave any room for radical distinctions among the various regulations.

To present his doctrine on this point more vividly Chrysostom uses certain similitudes. The first one has to do

(1) [Gal. 5:4, Cf. also Chrysostom's treatise *Against the Jews* II:7, MPG 48: 914.]

(2) [μη μέρος πληρώση ἀλλὰ τὸ πᾶν, MPG 61: 665<sup>51-52</sup>.]

(3) [ἀλλήλων γὰρ ἔχεται τὰ νόμιμα, MPG 61: 653<sup>35</sup>.]

with a person who, being in a state of freedom, passes to a state of slavery, as a result of which he cannot decide freely, but is bound up by all the regulations of slavery.<sup>(4)</sup> The second similitude is the case of an inheritance, from all the obligations of which one is free as long as he does not accept it, whereas he who accepts it is bound to observe every minute point of it, including the necessary responsibilities. There is something similar that takes place in the case of the Law, because of the internal cohesion of all its parts, e.g. of the circumcision, the sacrifices, the observance of days, the innumerable purifications, etc, etc.<sup>(5)</sup>

Consequently, it is both the total demand of the Law and the weakness of man to respond to it fully, that exposed man's weakness and sinfulness and thereby made his life more tyrannical and cursed.

(4) [καὶ καθάπερ ὁ ἀπογραψάμενος εἶναι δοῦλος ἐξ ἐλευθέρου, οὐκέτι ποιεῖ ὃ βούλεται, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι τοῖς τῆς δουλείας κατέχεται νόμοις· οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ νόμου ὅταν ἀναδέξηται μικρὸν τι τοῦ νόμου, καὶ ὑπάγῃ σεαυτὸν τὸν ζυγόν, ὅλην ἐφειλκύσῃ τὴν δεσποτείαν, MPG 61: 665<sup>23-28</sup>.]

(5) [Οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐξωθεν κληρονομίας.. οὐ τοῖς προσήκουσι δε θεσμοῖς καθαρθεῖς, πάντα οἴχεται, ἐκεῖνα..., MPG 61: 665<sup>28-49</sup>.]

## 2. The freedom of Grace is incompatible with the slavery of the Law

In view of the above it is clear that the Law does not have any power, contrary to Christ who does through the "scandal of the Cross", to "redeem" and "free" humanity from the curse of the Law.<sup>(6)</sup> Freedom, as a product of the Grace of the Cross constitutes the pivotal gift of the divine revelation. Those, however who, according to Chrysostom, are not in a position to appreciate the value of this gift on account of their unbelief, are both removed from the realm of Grace and deprived of the freedom which flows out of it.<sup>(7)</sup>

The unbeliever who returns to the Law, is not only deprived of any gain, but by this attitude "places himself once more under the curse, imposing this curse on himself and rejecting the freedom which is derived from faith".<sup>(8)</sup>

(6) [MPG 61: 66637-38.]

(7) [ὁ περιτεμνόμενος, ὡς νόον δεδοικῶς περιτέμνεται· ὁ δὲ δεδοικῶς, ἀπιστεῖ τῇ δυνάμει τῆς χάριτος· ὁ δὲ ἀπιστῶν οὐδὲν κερδαίνει παρὰ τῆς ἀπιστουμένης, MPG 61: 6652-4.]

According to Chrysostom those who abandon the freedom which is derived from Grace in order to return to the Law lose every possibility of being saved.<sup>(9)</sup>

Thus the notions of Grace and Law cannot fall in line as regards the entire matter of man's redemption and salvation, because "he who strives to be justified by works of the Law has nothing in common with Grace".<sup>(10)</sup>

### 3. The freedom of Grace is above the Law

Chrysostom understands freedom specifically in terms of "free choice", which can be either good or evil,<sup>(11)</sup> or more generally in terms of the power of "self-determination"

(8) [πάλιν ὑπὸ τὴν ἀρὰν ἑαυτὸν τίθησιν· ὑποβάλων δὲ ἑαυτὸν τῇ ἀρᾷ, καὶ διακρουσόμενος τὴν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐλευθερίαν, MPG 61: 665<sub>9-11</sub>.]

(9) [μήτε ἐκεῖθεν δύνηται σώζεσθαι, MPG 61: 665<sub>56-57</sub>.]

(10) [ὁ γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νομικῶν σωθῆναι φιλονικῶν, οὐδὲν ἔχει κοινὸν πρὸς τὴν χάριν, (Gal. 5:2), *Against the Jews* II:2, MPG 48: 858.]

(11) [περὶ προαιρέσεως μοχθηρᾶς καὶ οὐ τοιαύτης, MPG 61: 673<sub>35-36</sub>.]

(αὐτεξούσιον). He also believes that this freedom has been restored to mankind through the redemptive work of Christ. As he puts it, "Christ liberated us from the yoke of slavery and left it to us to do what we want".(12)

This restoration of human freedom in and by Christ should not be understood as a beginning of abuses or licentiousness, but as the beginning of a life which proceeds beyond evil to higher and more spiritual plains. He liberated us "not in order that we may use the authority given for evil, but in order that we may use it as a pretext for receiving a greater reward, through our rising to a higher philosophy".(13) To explain further this understanding, Chrysostom introduces the example of two diametrically opposite manners of existence: the manner of existence of the person who fornicates and the manner of existence of the person who lives in a state of virginity. Both of them, says Chrysostom, transcend the limits of the Law, but in completely different ways. The former

(12) [ἀπήλλαξεν ἡμᾶς ὁ Χριστὸς τοῦ ζυγοῦ τῆς δουλείας, κυρίου ἀφῆκεν τοῦ πράττειν ὅτι βουλόμεθα, MPG 61: 669<sub>45-46</sub>.]

(13) [οὐχ ἵνα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ πρὸς κακίαν χρησώμεθα, ἀλλ' ἵνα μείζονος λάβωμεν μισθοῦ πρόφασιν, ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν μείζονα ἀνιόντες, MPG 61: 669<sub>55-58</sub>.]

does so, by way of falling from a certain evil to another which is worse, whereas the latter does so by way of transposing himself from a certain good estate to another which is higher. "Since it is time and again that he calls the Law a yoke of slavery and Grace a deliverance from the curse, and in order that no one may suppose that he commands a departure from the Law on this account, namely, in order that one may live in lawlessness from now on, he corrects the supposition by saying, not in order that life might become lawless, but in order that philosophy might go beyond the Law; for the bonds of the Law have been undone. And I say this, not that we may become more debased, but that we may rise higher. For both, the one who fornicates and the one who lives in virginity have gone beyond the limits, but not in the same way, since the one has transgressed the Law whereas the other has transcended it".(14)

#### **4. Free acceptance of Grace as presupposition of salvation**

It is obvious that since the Grace which is given in Christ is the basis of human freedom, man's most important task can be none other than his effort to appropriate and preserve this

Grace to himself. To remain in the condition of Grace and not to fall away from it is entirely determined by man and his free choice. Man's choice must be always courageous and should never fall into a compromise (έν μέδω),(15) because, according to Chrysostom "there are two considerations (λογισμοί) operating within man, which oppose each other (ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκεινται) and which lead to either "virtue" (ἀρετή) or "vice" (κακία).(16)

Chrysostom's primary intention in this connection is to stress the importance and value of man's will and to specify the precise role of man *vis-à-vis* divine Grace, which

(14) [ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἄνω καὶ κάτω ζυγὸν δουλείας καλεῖ τὸν νόμον καὶ τὴν χάριν κατάρας ἀπαλλαγὴν· ἵνα μὴ τις ὑποπτεύσῃ, ὅτι διὰ τοῦτο κελεύει ἀποστῆναι, ἵνα ἐξῆ παρανόμως ζῆν, διορθοῦται τὴν ὑπόνοιαν λέγων, οὐχ ἵνα παρανόμως γένηται ἡ πολιτεία, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑπὲρ νόμον ἡ φιλοσοφία· ἐλύθη γὰρ τοῦ νόμου τὰ δεσμά. Καὶ ἐγὼ τοῦτο λέγω, οὐχ ἵνα ταπεινότεροι, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑψηλότεροι γενώμεθα. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ πορνεύων καὶ ὁ παρθενεύων ἀμφοτέροι τοῦ νόμου τὰ μέτρα ἐξέβησαν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν παραβάς, ὁ δὲ ὑπερβάς τὸν νόμον, MPG 61: 669<sub>49</sub>-61.]

(15) [MPG 61: 673.]

(16) [MPG 61: 672<sub>24</sub>-25.]

Chrysostom calls "alliance" (συμμαχία) and which is essential to man's salvation.<sup>(17)</sup> This is why he admonishes "that they should contribute their own diligence, since we cannot enjoy even one of the benefits that come from God, unless we also contribute what it is up to us to provide".<sup>(18)</sup>

It is the human nature in its entirety that enters into "the port of Grace" (τοῦ λιμένος τῆς χάριτος)<sup>(19)</sup> after the accomplishment of the redemptive work of Christ. But for the particular man's participation in this Grace there is a need of free affirmative response. Such a response is materialized, as it were, by faith. "Faith suffices for supplying to us the Spirit", says Chrysostom.<sup>(20)</sup> So what the free affirmation of faith does is to let the Spirit come in, who, as sanctifying power, vivifies and justifies the whole man granting him the many and great benefits of Grace.<sup>(21)</sup>

(17) [MPG 61:667<sup>7</sup>.]

(18) [τὴν παρ' ἑαυτῶν σπουδὴν εἰσενεγκεῖν, ὡς οὐκ ἐνδὸς τῶν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τυχεῖν, ἂν μὴ καὶ τὰ παρ' ἡμῶν εἰσφέρηται, MPG 61: 667<sup>15-17</sup>.]

(19) [MPG 61: 666<sup>6</sup>.]

(20) [ἄρκει ἡ πίστις ἡμῖν Πνεῦμα παρασχεῖν, MPG 61: 666<sup>11</sup>.]

### 5. Love as the gift of Grace and *vice versa*

Love is one of the greatest benefits which the Spirit supplies "by the Grace and philanthropy of the Lord Jesus Christ".(22) It is the sanctifying gift of the Spirit which takes the place of the Law and becomes, as it were, the new "yoke" of Grace. Love is a lighter and sweeter yoke which far from depriving, actually confirms human freedom. As Chrysostom puts it, "In order that the believers might not fall away, he gives them another yoke, that of love, which is stronger than the previous one [of the Law], as well as lighter and much sweeter".(23)

Thus, whoever becomes the recipient of the Grace of the Holy Spirit and comes under the yoke of love is strengthened

(21) [παρασχεῖν δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὰ πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἀγαθὰ, MPG 61: 666<sup>12-13</sup>.]

(22) [Cf. Homily 10:4 *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, MPG 60:400.]

(23) [Cf. Matth. 11:30; ἵνα μὴ ἀποσκιρτησωσιν (οἱ πιστοί), ἕτερον αὐτοῖς ἐπιτίθησιν ζυγὸν τὸν τῆς ἀγάπης, ἰσχυρότερον μὲν ἐκείνου, κουφότερον δὲ καὶ ἡδίω πολλῶ, MPG 61: 670<sup>25-27</sup>.]

in his struggle against evil desire and is led to make good free choices.(24)

Love draws its spiritual superiority from the power of the Holy Spirit, because as John Chrysostom points out, "nothing makes them so loving, as their being spiritual".(25) It is by the Grace of the Holy Spirit that man is strengthened and becomes worthy of a further endowment of Grace within him.(26) As Chrysostom puts it elsewhere, it is "because love supplies the gift of Grace, and Grace the gift of peace, in a manner of sequence".(27) Indeed the role of the Holy Spirit is to revivify and renew the good disposition of human freedom which is rewarded by the achievement of the final aim of peace in the future kingdom. "The fruit of the Spirit

(24) [διὰ τούτου σβέννυσιν ἅπασαν πονηρὰν ἐπιθυμίαν, ὁ δὲ τούτων ἀπαλλαγείς, οὐ δεῖται τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου βοηθείας, ὑψηλότερος πολλῶ τῆς ἐκείνου παραγγελίας γενόμενος, MPG 61: 67235-36.]

(25) [οὐδὲν οὕτω ἀγαπητικούς ποιεῖ, ὡς τὸ Πνευματικούς εἶναι, MPG 61: 6713.]

(26) [οὕτω πείθει παραμένειν ἡμῖν τὸ Πνεῦμα, ὡς ἡ τῆς ἀγάπης ἰσχὺς, MPG 61: 6714-5.]

(27) [Gal. 5:22, MPG 60: 400.]

is love, joy, peace. Let us therefore increase this fruit among us, so that we may enjoy the joy of the present and achieve the future kingdom".(28)

In this fifth chapter of his Commentary Chrysostom explicitly refers to the Law about 20 times, without however, ever referring to its origin. This is because he has already discussed this matter in some fullness, especially in his third chapter. Here he has a lot to say about the content of the Law and the variety of its content. In some cases it seems to denote: a) the traditional (lit. "paternal") customs (πατρῶα ἔθιμα), which include that of "circumcision";(29) b) that of the decalogue of the ten commandments(30) and, implicitly, c) the entire Old Testament.(31)

As regards the place which the Law occupies in God's

(28) [ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ Πνεύματος, ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη. Τοῦτον οὖν τὸν καρπὸν τρέφωμεν παρ' ἑαυτοῖς, ἵνα καὶ τῆς ἐνταῦθα χαρᾶς ἀπολαύσωμεν, καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἐπιτύχωμεν βασιλείας, Gal. 5:22, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Hom. 10:4, MPG 60:400.]

(29) [MPG 61: 667<sup>39</sup>, and 665<sup>28-49</sup>.]

(30) [MPG 61: 672<sup>36-39</sup>.]

(31) [MPG 61: 667<sup>27-29</sup>.]

plan for man's salvation, this chapter offers very little positive teaching. What is rather stressed is the negative character of the Law in the case of its enforcement after the coming of Christ.(32)

There are 8 references to the term χάρις in this chapter and in other places which deal with Gal. 5. Though there is no explicit differentiation between the notion of the Grace of Christ and the notion of the Grace of the Spirit, it is not difficult to discern which of the two notions Chrysostom has in mind in these cases. Whenever Grace is connected with the event of the Cross, and is presented in terms either of undoing the bonds of the Law, or of being related to Christ and his redemptive offering, this is a case of the Grace of the Son which has objective soteriological value, irrespectively of any human response or contribution.(33) Likewise whenever man becomes worthy of God's Grace through faith and love,(34) or of the various charisms of this Grace(35) it

(32) [Cf. Gal. 5:4, MPG 61: 665ff and also *Against the Jews* 2:2, MPG 48: 858.]

(33) [MPG 48: 914, 60: 400, 61: 665, 666, 669.]

(34) [MPG 60:400.]

is said that this has to do with the Grace of the Spirit.<sup>(36)</sup>

Another important aspect of Chrysostom's doctrine in this chapter is human freedom and particularly its relation to Grace. He teaches that through the Grace of the cross and generally the redemptive work of Christ man's freedom is restored.<sup>(37)</sup> This enables man to make right choices through faith and love (Gal 5:6) and thereby appropriate to himself the sanctifying Grace of the Holy Spirit.<sup>(38)</sup> This means that Grace both precedes and follows human freedom.<sup>(39)</sup> It also means that justification is principally the work of divine Grace, and that human freedom also plays an important and, indeed, crucial role as regards the subjective appropriation of salvation through faith and love.<sup>(40)</sup> Although he sees the priority of God's Grace in all this as a

(35) [MPG 60: 400, 61: 666.]

(36) [MPG 61: 666, MPG 61: 671.]

(37) [MPG 61: 666, 669.]

(38) [MPG 61: 665, 666, 671, and 60: 400.]

(39) [For a full discussion of this very point see the thesis of Stoyan Gosevitch, *Divine Grace according to John Chrysostom* (in Greek), Athens 1956, especially p. 61f.]

matter of objective reality, Chrysostom never underestimates or undermines the human factor,(41) and, thus, he can speak of a divine-human alliance (συμμοχία) between divine Grace and human freedom.(42)

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(40) [MPG 61: 667<sub>7</sub>, 667<sub>15-17</sub>, 669.]

(41) [This seems to have been the case with Augustine in his over-reaction against Pelagius who over-estimated the role of human freedom to the extent of undermining not only the priority of grace but also the true character of Christ's redemptive work. Cf. Christos ANDROUTSOS, *Dogmatics* (in Greek), Athens 1956, p. 155, 221; J. GROSS, *Die Entstehungsgeschichte des Erbündendogmas von der Bibel bis Augustinus*, München 1960, p. 319; S. LOLIS, *Historical Introduction to the Problem of Sin* (in Greek), Athens 1954, p 59; P. BRATSIOTIS, "St Paul and the Orthodox Church" (in Greek), *Theologia*, vol. 25:1 (Athens 1954), p. 65.]

(42) [MPG 61: 667<sub>7</sub>.]

## CHAPTER 6

## 1) The Grace of the cross as expression of God's love

Chrysostom places special emphasis on the event of Christ's advent into the world and especially on what seems to be its highest point, Christ's sacrifice on the cross, which, as he repeatedly points out, was derived from God's love for sinful humanity. Both Paul and Chrysostom underline the fact that "Christ took up the form of the servant and suffered what he suffered" and so much "he loved us that he delivered himself to the curse".<sup>(1)</sup> The result of his sacrifice on the cross, the extremity of his philanthropy and love for mankind, was the liberation of sinful humanity from the bondage of sin and slavery to the Law.<sup>(2)</sup> This incurred the abolition of death through the Grace of Christ which constitutes God's greatest demonstration of his love for man. As Chrysostom puts it, "The Cross tore apart the record of our

(1) [δούλου μορφήν ανέλαβε καὶ ἔπαθεν ὅπερ ἔπαθεν.. ἠγάπησεν, ὡς καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἐκδοῦναι ἁρᾶ, MPG 61: 679<sub>3-5</sub>.]

(2) [MPG 61:679<sub>16</sub>.]

condemnation, and rendered useless the prison of death; the Cross is the demonstration of God's love".(3)

God's love for the world, revealed on the cross, established a new reality, a sort of new philosophy, the "philosophy of Grace" (τὴν τῆς χάριτος φιλοσοφίαν), as Chrysostom calls it, which ultimately implies the duty of the Christians to pursue a double mortification.(4) He discusses this matter in connection with the moral teaching of chapter six of the Epistle to the Galatians, and especially the command to Christians to keep the Law of Christ which consists in the pursuit of love and virtue (Gal. 6:2; cf. also I Cor. 9:21, Rom. 3:27, 8:2). As he explains, to keep the philosophy of Grace is to imitate the example of the cross as a sort of demonstration of our love towards God. He bases his explanation on Gal. 6:14: "Through which [the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ] the world is crucified to me and I to the world]", which seems to be central to Chrysostom's thought, as he quotes it on 17 occasions in his writings.

(3) [ὁ σταυρὸς τὸ χειρόγραφον ἡμῶν διέρρηξε, τοῦ θανάτου τὸ δεσμοτήριον ἄχρηστον ἐποίησεν, σταυρὸς τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγάπης ἢ ἀπόδειξις, *On Gal. 6:14*, MPG 51: 35.]

(4) [MPG 61: 677<sup>52</sup>.]

According to this verse the imitation of the Cross of Christ implies a double mortification. The Apostle "implies a double mortification, because these things are dead to me, and I to them, and neither can they draw me out or lead me astray, for they are dead for ever, nor can I desire them, for I too am dead to them".(5)

## 2) The two mortifications of the philosophy of Grace

The first mortification, which has to do with sins "already committed" (γεγενημένα) and the resulting "oldness of sin" (τὸ γήρας τῆς ἀμαρτίας),(6) is achieved through baptism. Baptism enables the believer to enter "the body of the Church" (σῶμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας),(7) or be incorporated into "Christ's building" (οἰκοδομὴ Χριστοῦ)(8) and to commence a new journey which leads to the kingdom of heaven. "For our

(5) [διπλὴν τὴν νέκρωσιν αἰνιττόμενος, ὅτι καὶ ἐκεῖνα ἐμοὶ νεκρά, καὶ ἐγὼ ἐκείνοις, καὶ οὔτε αὐτὰ ἐλεῖν με δύνανται καὶ χειρώσασθαι, νεκρὰ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἅπαξ, οὔτε ἐγὼ ἐπιθυμῆσαι αἰτῶν, νεκρὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς εἰμὶ καὶ ἐγώ, MPG 61: 679<sup>27-31</sup>.]

(6) [MPG 61: 679<sup>47</sup>.]

(7) [MPG 61: 674<sup>55</sup>.]

soul, which had become old through the oldness of sin, was all at once renewed through Baptism, as if it were recreated once again; hence it is a new and heavenly manner of life that is required of us; and this is also the case on account of what is to happen, for heaven and earth and the whole of creation will be transposed to immortality, together with our bodies".(9) Through faith and the seal of Baptism a new life is inaugurated for the believer, for the baptised is mortified as to the works of the flesh, which are under the might of the Law, and is justified through the Grace which is in Christ. Partaking of Baptism results in renewal for all those who receive the Grace of the Divine revelation. "Indeed, to receive the Spirit is not the result of the poverty of the Law, but of the righteousness which is according to faith and to be made worthy to receive is not the result of circumcision, but, once more, of Grace.(10)

(8) [MPG 61: 674<sub>51</sub>.]

(9) [ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ ἡμῶν παλαιωθείσα τῷ γήραος τῆς ἁμαρτίας, ἀθρόως διὰ τοῦ Βαπτίσματος ἀνενεώθη, ὡσανεὶ ἀνακτισθεῖσα πάλιν διὰ καινὴν καὶ οὐρανίαν ἀπαιτούμεθα πολιτείαν· διὰ τὰ ἐσόμενα δὲ ὅτι καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καὶ πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν μεταστήσεται μετὰ τῶν σωμάτων τῶν ἡμετέρων, MPG 61: 679<sub>48-54</sub>.]

The second mortification, which comes after the first, is achieved by the faithful as follows: As Christ was crucified out of incalculable love for man, likewise man is obliged out of incalculable love for God to be crucified, i.e. to be mortified as to sins so that being free from the old [things of sin] he might now seek only the things of Christ.(11) Mortification as to sins is actually achieved when one follows the Law of Christ, as contrasted to the mosaic Law. The Law of Christ requires of believers that they may bear each other's weaknesses in a spirit of "charity",<sup>(12)</sup> and "humility".<sup>(13)</sup> It is by expressing such a love towards his fellow human beings that a believer demonstrates his faith in practice, i.e. his love for Christ, and as a result he participates in Christ's body in common with his fellows.<sup>(14)</sup>

(10) [τὸ τὲ Πνεῦμα λαβεῖν, οὐ τῆς νομικῆς ἢν πτωχείας, ἀλλὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν πίστιν δικαιοσύνης· τὸ κατασχεῖν λαβόντας, οὐκ ἀπὸ περιτομῆς, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ χάριτος ἐγένετο πάλιν, MPG 61: 680<sup>54-57</sup>.]

(11) [MPG 61: 679<sup>57</sup>.]

(12) [MPG 61: 677<sup>53</sup>.]

(13) [MPG 61: 676<sup>22</sup>.]

### 3. The Grace of the Spirit and the Christian love

A life in accordance with Christ's Law of love incurs the strengthening of the Holy Spirit whose Grace is granted to such an extent that the works of love are considered to be a "spiritual charism" (πνευματικὸν χάρισμα).<sup>(15)</sup> Consequently, the Holy Spirit carries to completion that which the Only-begotten achieved through the cross out of extreme love and philanthropy.

Chrysostom likens this contest of the believer to sowing and reaping. If he sows sins, he will reap punishment, but if he lives according to the Holy Spirit sowing good works, he will reap the reward of the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever sows in the flesh greed, drunkenness, indecent desire, will reap what will come out of them; And what are these? Torment, punishment, shame, ridicule, corruption. The things of the Spirit, however, are not such, but the exact opposites. Watch then. Did you sow charity? heavens' treasures and

(14) [δι' ἀλλήλων κοινῇ πληρώσατε τὸν νόμον, MPG 61: 675<sub>12</sub>.]

(15) [δηλῶν ὅτι καὶ τῷ Πνεύματι ταῦτα δοκεῖ, καὶ τὸ δύνασθαι μετ' ἐπιεικείας διορθοῦν τοὺς ἀμαρτάνοντας, χάρισματος ἐστὶ πνευματικοῦ, MPG 61: 673<sub>50-53</sub>.]

glory shall await you; did you sow prudence? honour and reward and angels' praises, as well as the crowns of the organizer of the contest [shall be yours]".<sup>(16)</sup> Such a contest can be undertaken only within the framework of this life and is, therefore, something urgent which should be done in good time and without any delay or postponement, because "when we are led away from here, even if we wished it a thousand times, we will not be able to carry out anything at all".<sup>(17)</sup>

#### 4. Recapitulations and conclusions

In this Chapter of his Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Chrysostom makes six explicit references to νόμος

(16) [ὁ καταβαλὼν εἰς τὴν σάρκα τρυφήν, μέθην, ἐπιθυμίαν ἄτοπον, τὰ ἐκ ταύτης ἀμήσει. Τίνα δὲ ἐστὶ ταῦτα; Κόλασις, τιμωρία, αἰσχύνη, γέλως, φθορά. Τὰ δὲ τοῦ Πνεύματος οὐ τοιαῦτα, ἀλλ' ἀπ' ἐναντίας ἅπαντα τούτοις. Σκόπει δέ. Ἐσπειρας ἐλεημοσύνης, ἀναμένουσιν σε οἱ τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυροὶ καὶ δόξα αἰώνιος· ἔσπειρας σωφροσύνην, τιμὴ καὶ βραβεῖον καὶ αἱ παρ' ἀγγέλων εὐφημῖαι καὶ ἡ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγνωσθέντος στέφανοι, MPG 61: 676<sub>61</sub>-677<sub>8</sub>.]

(17) [ὅταν ἐντεῦθεν ἀπενεχθῶμεν, κἂν μυριάκις βουλευθῶμεν, οὐδὲν περανοῦμεν πλέον, MPG 61: 677<sub>37-39</sub>.]

and also as many to χάρις. Here too, as in the previous chapter, he is not primarily interested in the origin of the Law, although he does suggest this theme whenever he speaks of the "Law of Christ". This "Law of Christ", however, has nothing to do with the Mosaic Law, but refers to a new Law, the Law of the New Covenant.<sup>(18)</sup> As already in Chapter Five, so here, Chrysostom understands this Law of Christ, or yoke of Grace, expounding it in terms of love, but in this Sixth Chapter he advances deeper into its meaning. Here he explains why this Law is lighter and sweeter than that of the Old Covenant. The Old one included many and various ordinances which had to be observed individually. The New one has only one ordinance which is required of all people together, the ordinance of love.<sup>(19)</sup>

(18) [There are actually three instances where this usage of the term "law" occurs: MPG 61: 675<sub>14</sub>, 676<sub>4</sub>, 680<sub>14</sub>.]

(19) [οὐ παρὰ πάντων πάντα ζητούμεν.. ἀλλά.. δι' ἀλλήλων κοινῇ πληρώσατε τὸν νόμον, MPG 61: 675. This point is reminiscent of similar ones made by earlier Christian authors, most notably by Ignatius of Antioch: πάντας βάσταζε ὡς καὶ σὲ ὁ Κύριος, καὶ πάντων τὰς νόσους βάσταζε (*To Polycarp* ch. 1). Cf. also *The Letter to Diognetus*, ch. 10: ὅστις τὸ τοῦ πλησίον ἀποδέχεται βάρος..]

As regards the use of the word χάρις in this Chapter, it is primarily connected with Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for the sake of humanity and also with the new philosophy, the "philosophy of Grace" (ἡ τῆς χάριτος φιλοσοφία) which came to light through it. This philosophy consists in the imitation of the Cross of Christ and implies a twofold mortification: the mortification of the sins of the flesh already achieved through the bath of Baptismal cleansing and regeneration, and the mortification of the self-sacrifice of love for God which is the core as it were of this philosophy. Inasmuch as the inner core of this philosophy is God's "love" for mankind, χάρις is here associated, or even equated, with this love.<sup>(20)</sup> But it is also connected with man's love for God which is demonstrated horizontally by what one does for the brethren, i.e. the Church, the Body of Christ. Lastly it is the Holy Spirit which brings about the link and completion of God's love for man and man's love for God and, therefore, Grace is ultimately the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

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(20) [Cf. in this connection Ch. ANDROUTSOS, *Dogmatics...*, *op. cit.*, p. 219; and B. IOANNIDES, "The New Testament doctrine of grace", *THEOLOGIA*, 1 (1940) 197-257.]

## RECAPITULATION OF CHRYSOSTOM'S POSITION

The topic of Grace and the Law occupies a prominent position in Chrysostom's Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. It is worth noting that there are 145 explicit references to the Law and 44 to Grace.

In our study of this Commentary we found out that the term Law acquires different nuances of meaning according to each case. Thus, it denotes a) the various Jewish religious customs (circumcision, moon festivals, sabbaths, fasts), b) the ten commandments, c) the whole of the Old Testament, d) the period of time from Abraham to the coming of the God-man and, implicitly, e) the people of Israel. In spite of this variety of specific nuances of meaning, Chrysostom generally uses the term "law" in his interpretation of Paul synecdochically with reference to the first phase of the plan of the Divine Economy and to the means given to the people of Israel by way of preparing them to receive the Revelation in Christ. It is fair to say here that Chrysostom, at least implicitly, also includes in the above meaning the notion of the 'unwritten' natural law of the Nations, which does not

cease to have the same origin and to serve the same purpose as the Mosaic law.

Already in the first chapter of his Commentary Chrysostom clarifies the Trinitarian Divine origin of the Law. Consequently he teaches that the Law is neither evil, nor dangerous, nor useless. On the contrary its value, in all its forms, is considerable and constitutes a gift of the free initiative of God to sinful humanity.

More specifically, the Law acquires an immense value for the following three reasons: a) because it was used, as Chrysostom observes, "instead of a bridle", so that it may curtail man's engagement with sin; b) because it exposed the sinful condition of human beings and their inability to be emancipated from it by their own efforts, inasmuch as the law reveals and limits human sin but does not supply the power required for uprooting it -- and it is in this sense and, especially, on account of human inability to fulfil it, that it becomes a sort of "curse" and "yoke of slavery"; and c) because it leads humanity to lay its trust on the one who can "cure" the curse and condemnation to spiritual and physical death, namely, the coming Messiah and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, it is with good reason that Chrysostom sees the Law as "co-operator" (*συνεργόν*) with Grace in the

salvation of humanity, for he fully expounds both its preventive-diagnostic function as far as human sin is concerned and its preparatory-propedeutic function as regards the coming of the Grace of the Gospel.

It is precisely all this, however, that makes obvious the passing image and the temporally limited power of the Law, as it is amply stressed both by St Paul himself and St John Chrysostom, his great interpreter. Indeed it is the latter who expounded this point most eloquently by elaborating the full extent of the double problem which arose in Galatia: a) the problem, on the one hand, of misunderstanding the real purpose of the Law and its usefulness on the part of the Jews, which led to rendering absolute and eternal authority to it and turning its observance into an end in itself; b) the problem, on the other hand, of the deliberate propaganda exercised by the Jews through certain secret agents (pseudo-teachers and pseudo-brethren) among the Christian communities newly founded through Paul's missionary efforts, whereby the necessary observance of certain regulations of the Law (circumcision, sabbaths, moon-festivals, etc.) threatened the integrity of the Gospel and the reality of salvation by Grace. The Galatian problem was, in the last analysis, a fall from the condition of Grace to the tyranny of sin and yoke

of the Law, since the teaching of the false-apostles reduced in a blasphemous and anti-Christian way the unlimited saving power of the death of Christ by linking to it as a necessary supplement the observance of the "carnal" Law. The manner of life, however, promoted by Judaism and its followers, in which the Law is the dominant factor, was doomed with abolition even by the Law's own witness; for the Law, which was good and useful as a gift from God granted for a specific purpose, was to be rendered useless and even hostile if it continued its function beyond its proper time (*ἀκαίρως*).

In distinction from the Law, Grace is connected with the second phase in the divine plan for the salvation of mankind, which is directly connected with the coming of the God-man into the world. The Grace which is established by the God-man constitutes the highest expression of God's love for mankind because it concerns mankind's salvation. This Grace of salvation, centred around the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, has its origin in the one will of the Father and the Son. As second phase of the Divine Economy, Grace is the development and fulfilment of the first phase, the Law. In Chrysostom's teaching the former is the scope of the latter, and the latter, the presupposition of the former. Yet, in the last analysis, it is Grace that supersedes the strict and narrow

confines of the Law. According to Chrysostom it is the Grace of Christ which reconciled humanity to the Father since it delivered it from sin and at the same time created the objective conditions for its delivery from the "curse" and for securing for it an eternal future. Chrysostom's Commentary shows that: a) Grace is absolutely necessary for salvation, inasmuch as human beings are not able to fulfil the law by their own efforts and thereby acquire salvation; b) Grace seen in the person of Jesus Christ has a catholic (universal) range and value, but it does not operate irresistibly, since it is freely offered to all without exception and is freely appropriated and not by necessity by those who are saved and who may still freely reject it after appropriating it.

As we noted in our exposition, St Chrysostom was a "moral" preacher who was concerned with salvation. Thus it is no surprise that the main purpose of his Homilies was to exalt the importance of the human volition and the operations which follow therefrom. This is because human volition, free will ( $\alpha\upsilon\tau\epsilon\chi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\omicron\nu$ ), acquires new dimensions when it is baptised into the Grace of Christ. Grace strengthens it by opening to it the options which allow it to appropriate this Grace freely and to acquire salvation. Thus Grace works both before and after someone's free decision; before, as free

offering, and after, as free companionship with the Holy Spirit. Grace, then, is not barren. It strengthens human effort towards faith and virtue. In the case of Paul, it is grace that led him and strengthened him in his apostolic mission. Hence, Paul's assurance that what he did and said were according to God's will. The proper function of human freedom in Christ is one of the most characteristic features of Divine redemption. This is because Redemption entails the restoration of human volition, through faith and through the seal of Baptism. All those who believe in Jesus Christ, Jews or Gentiles, find themselves in a new relation to God, a relation of divine sonship, which is accomplished through the Grace of the sacrifice on the Cross of the God-man. The believer is made worthy by faith of the gifts of the Grace of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit appears both during the birth of faith and at the sealing of it. The sealing of the faith of the Christians is officially declared through Baptism. The new life of the believer issuing forth from his/her baptism means crucifixion and resurrection with Christ, according to the example of Paul. Thus the believer becomes dead for the works of the flesh which are performed under the authority of the Jewish Law and lives as redeemed, as a new creation, through the Grace of the Risen Christ (Cf. M. Siotis,

*Prolegomena, op. cit., p. 23).*

Departure from the world through faith and baptism and incorporation into the Saviour is always accompanied by love, i.e. "faith operating through love". Indeed, faith and love are inseparable, since they are genuine expressions of the good function of free volition. This is the point in Chrysostom's teaching which made him a preacher of a Christian Gospel which is not merely a theological scheme but a manner of life and action. Thus, for Chrysostom, salvation is the result of an "alliance", involving the human factor of human freedom and the Grace of God, on the condition, of course, that the latter precedes as call and as guide, and the former freely obeys and follows.

## APPENDIX

## O E C O N O M Y

The term οἰκονομία has been already used in the New Testament to express the divine plan for the salvation of mankind.(1) In the present Commentary it occurs about 18 times and carries various nuances of meaning. According to Professor Theodore Zeses of the University of Thessalonica, Chrysostom saw God as having nothing in common with the world as far as his being (οὐσία) is concerned, but as being related with it through his energies, or through his "oeconomy".(2) Actually Chrysostom often uses the term οἰκονομία in the plural,(3) or in the singular but with a plural meaning,(4) to denote God's energies.(5)

Here, as we have already pointed out, Chrysostom uses the term οἰκονομία with reference to the divine plan for the salvation of mankind, which reached its highest point in the

(1) [I Cor. 9:17, Eph. 1:10, 3:2,9, Col. 1:25, I Tit. 1:4.]

(2) [Th. N. ZESSES, *Man and World in God's Oeconomy according to St John Chrysostom* (in Greek), Thessalonica 1971, p. 66.]

"incarnate oeconomy" (τὴν κατὰ σάρκα οἰκονομίαν).<sup>(6)</sup> Thus, commenting on Gal. 1:1, Chrysostom presents the incarnation in terms of οἰκονομία, laying particular stress on the sacrifice on the cross, as he expounds Paul's attempt to explain to the Galatians God's beneficence towards them. This incarnate oeconomy, he says, is concerned with humanity as a whole and with each human being in particular, and demonstrates

(3) [κηδεμονίαι, προστασίαι, διορθώσεις, συμβουλαί, παραινήσεις, διδασκαλίαι, μυρίων οἰκονομίαι πραγμάτων, *On Gal. 1:18.. When Peter came to Antioch and Paul opposed him to his face, and showed that there was no opposition but what was done was a matter of oeconomy*, MPG 51:377ff.]

(4) [διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο προσέθηκεν καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν, ἵνα μηδὲ πρὸ τῆς λύσεως τοῦ ζητήματος καταγνώσῃ αὐτοῦ τινὰ ἄγνοιαν, εἰδὼς ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρώπινον ἦν τὸ γενόμενον, ἀλλὰ θεία τις οἰκονομία, πολλὰ προορωμένη καὶ τῶν παρόντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, *On Galatians ch. 2*, MPG 61:633.]

(5) ["Chrysostom, however, stresses the fact that Scripture does not describe all the oeconomies or energies of God, but the ones that are necessary", P. N. CHRISTOU, *John Chrysostom: On the Incomprehensibility of God* (in Greek), Athens 1953, p. 38, ft 1]

(6) [τῆς κατὰ σάρκα οἰκονομίας μέμνησαι, σταυρὸν εἰς μέσον φέρων καὶ νέκρωσιν; ναί φησίν, *On Galatians ch. 1*, MPG 61:615.]

God's love towards them.(7) Given this general understanding of the term there are also other particular nuances of meaning to oeconomy which can be identified as follows:

Oeconomy as God's action is particularly revealed in the case of Paul. Interpreting Gal. 1:15-16, Chrysostom notes that, although Paul had been chosen "from his mother's womb", "his calling to his apostolic office had been postponed for some unknown oeconomy".(8) It is also revealed in Paul's journey to Jerusalem which was undertaken by him "according to divine revelation" ( κατ' ἀποκάλυψιν, Gal. 2:1).(9)

(7) [καὶ χωρὶς δὲ τούτων δεικνύς ὅτι ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τοσαύτην δίκαιος ὀφείλειν τῷ Χριστῷ χάριν, ὅσην ἂν εἰ καὶ δι' αὐτὸν μόνον ἦλθεν. Οὐ γὰρ ἂν παρητήσατο καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐνὸς τοσαύτην οἰκονομίαν ἐπιδείξασθαι· οὕτως ἕκαστον ἄνθρωπον τοσοῦτῳ μέτρῳ ἀγάπης φιλεῖ, ὅσῳ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἅπασαν, *On Galatians* ch. 2, MPG 61: 647]

(8) [ὄρα τί σπουδάζει ἐνταῦθα δεῖξαι, ὅτι καὶ τὸν χρόνον, ὃν ἐγκατελείφθη, διὰ τινὰ οἰκονομίαν ἀπόρρητον ἀφείθη, MPG 61: 627]

(9) [διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο προσέθηκε καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ κατ' ἀποκάλυψιν, ἵνα μὴδὲ πρὸ τῆς λύσεως τοῦ ζητήματος καταγνῶς αὐτοῦ τινὰ ἄγνοιαν, εἰδὼς ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρώπινον ἦν τὸ γενόμενον, ἀλλὰ τις οἰκονομία πολλὰ προορωμένη καὶ τῶν παρόντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, MPG 61: 633]

Chrysostom also employs the same term in connection with the attitude of the Apostles to the problem of circumcision.<sup>(10)</sup> He actually discusses two cases: that of Peter in Antioch (Gal. 2:11) and that of Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 16:3). As far as the case of Peter is concerned, Chrysostom says that the latter accepted circumcision in order to give Paul the opportunity to repudiate it!<sup>(11)</sup> This interpretation, which seems to go back to Origen,<sup>(12)</sup> was vigorously opposed by Augustine in a lively exchange of letters with Jerome.<sup>(13)</sup> Chrysostom provided a fuller exposition of it in a particular Homily.<sup>(14)</sup> In Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (p. 943) this is called "pious deception", but this is unjustifiable if evaluated in the light of the following Chrysostomian text:

πολλὴ γὰρ ἡ τῆς ἀπάτης ἰσχύς· μόνον μὴ μετὰ δολερὰς

(10) [ὅτι συγκαταβάσεως ἕνεκεν καὶ οἰκονομίας τοῦτο ἐποίουν οἱ ἀπόστολοι, MPG 61: 636.]

(11) [.. καὶ τὸ μὴ σκανδαλίσαι τοὺς ἐξ Ἰουδαίων, καὶ τὸ παρασχεῖν τῷ Παύλῳ εὐλογον τῆς ἐπιτιμήσεως πρόφασιν, MPG 61: 640-641]

(12) [*Ep.* 75:6, GSEL 34: 289-290]

(13) [P. AUVRAU, in *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 29 (1939) pp. 594-610]

προσαγέσθω τῆς προαιρέσεως. Μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ ἀπάτη τὸ τοιοῦτιον δεῖ καλεῖν, ἀλλ' οἰκονομίαν τινα καὶ σοφίαν καὶ τέχνην ἱκανὴν πολλοὺς πόρους ἐν τοῖς ἀπόροις εὐρεῖν, καὶ πλημμελείας ἐπανορθῶσαι ψυχῆς.(15)

As far as the case of Paul's imposition of circumcision on Timothy is concerned, Chrysostom says that "it was purposefully done and purposefully undisclosed with the view to abolishing circumcision by circumcision"!(16) Particularly interesting here is the point that the particular application of oeconomy should be undisclosed to the person who undergoes it, if it is to produce positive results.(17)

At this point it is important to note that Chrysostom does not make a radical distinction between the "divine oeconomy"

(14) [MPG 51: 371-388, and REUMANN, J., "Οἰκονομία as Ethical accommodation in the Fathers and its pagan backgrounds", *Studia Patristica* (Berlin), 3 (1961) p. 370]

(15) ["Περὶ Ἱερωσύνης Λόγος α', κεφ. η', MPG 48: 631]

(16) [Δεῖ γὰρ τῆς οἰκονομίας ἀγνοεῖν τὴν αἰτίαν τοὺς μέλλοντας τι καρποῦσθαι παρ' αὐτῆς χρήσιμον· εἰ γὰρ φανεῖται τῶν γινομένων ἢ πρόφασις, τὸ πᾶν οἰχθήσεται, MPG 61: 636; Cf. also 60: 247, 61: 183f and 62: 46.]

(17) [Cf. here the parallel text of 61: 632]

exercised by God in Christ and the "apostolic oeconomy" exercised by the Apostles in their evangelical missionary activity which is obviously related to the so-called "ecclesiastical oeconomy". Rather, he is prone to emphasize the inter-related-ness of these two notions, tracing it to Christ's will. This is explicitly brought out in the following text: οὕτως ἠθέλησεν [ὁ Χριστὸς] αὐτοῦ ἀπελθόντος, ἡμᾶς διαδέξασθαι τὴν οἰκονομίαν, ἵνα μὴ ὡς ἐγκαταλελειμμένοι διακαίησθε· αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ παθὼν, αὐτὸς ὁ πρεσβεύων.(18)

Finally we should point out the close connection, or identification, of the notion of "condescension" (συγκατάβασις) -- which appears 9 times in this Commentary -- with the notion of "oeconomy" (οἰκονομία) in the thought of John Chrysostom.(19) Sergio Zincone analyses these notions separately, but finally admits that they <sup>are</sup> closely connected and form a sort of *hendiadys*.(20)

(18) [MPG 62: 327. Cf. here what Patriarch Nicholas the Mystic says in his *Epistola* 32 [MPG 111: 213] about the ecclesiastical oeconomy being an imitation of the divine oeconomy; also MOURATIDES, K. D., *The Essence and Policy of the Church according to the teaching of St John Chrysostom* (in Greek), Athens, 1958]

(19) [MPG 61: 636, 638. Cf. also Nicholas Mysticus *Epistola* 32, MPG 111: 212]

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