

GLORY REFLECTED ON THE FACE OF CHRIST (2 Cor 3:7—4:6) AND A PALESTINIAN JEWISH MOTIF

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ONE OF the most sublime ways in which Paul sums up the effects of the Christ-event is found in a very complicated passage in 2 Corinthians 3–4, dealing with the veil on Moses' face.¹ Anyone who has wrestled with the flow of his thought in that passage is aware of the complications that attend it. It is easy enough to explain the effect of the Christ-event itself to which Paul subordinates his discussion in that passage, but it is another matter to unravel the threads of the discussion and to appreciate the images and motifs which are involved in it. No little part of the difficulty stems from the mode of argumentation which is found in this part of the Second Letter to the Corinthians; for it is surprising that Paul,

¹ The literature on this passage is abundant. Apart from the standard commentaries on 2 Corinthians, see the following more important discussions: J.-F. Collanges, *Enigme de la deuxième épître de Paul aux Corinthiens: Etude exégétique de 2 Cor. 2:14–7:4* (SNTSMS 18; Cambridge: University Press, 1972) 42–143; J. Dupont, "Le chrétien, miroir de la gloire divine, d'après II Cor., III, 18," *RB* 56 (1949) 392–411; J. Goettsberger, "Die Hülle des Moses nach Ex 34 und 2 Kor 3," *BZ* 16 (1922–24) 1–17; A. T. Hanson, "The Midrash in II Corinthians 3: A Reconsideration," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 9 (1980) 2–28; C. J. A. Hickling, "The Sequence of Thought in II Corinthians, Chapter Three," *NTS* 21 (1974–75) 380–95; M. Hooker, "Beyond the Things That Are Written? St. Paul's Use of Scripture," *NTS* 27 (1980–81) 295–309; J. B. Nisius, "Zur Erklärung von 2 Kor 3,15 ff.," *ZKT* 40 (1916) 617–75; K. Prümm, "Der Abschnitt über die Doxa des Apostolats 2 Kor. 3, 1–4, 6 in der Deutung des hl. Chrysostomus: Eine Untersuchung zur Auslegungsgeschichte des paulinischen Pneumas," *Bib* 30 (1949) 161–96, 377–400; "Israels Kehr zum Geist: 2 Kor 3,17a im Verständnis der Erstleser," *ZKT* 72 (1950) 385–442; S. Schulz, "Die Decke des Moses: Untersuchungen zu einer vorpaulinischen Überlieferung in II Cor 3:7–18," *ZNW* 49 (1958) 1–30; H. Ulonka, "Die Doxa des Mose," *EvT* 26 (1966) 378–88; W. C. van Unnik, "With Unveiled Face: An Exegesis of 2 Corinthians iii 12–18," *NovT* 6 (1963–64) 153–69; reprinted, *Sparsa collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik: Part One* (NovTSup 29; Leiden: Brill, 1973) 194–210.

Further literature can be found in the discussions of Paul's opponents in Corinth: C. K. Barrett, "Paul's Opponents in II Corinthians," *NTS* 17 (1970–71) 233–54; G. Bornkamm, "The History of the Origin of the So-Called Second Letter to the Corinthians," *NTS* 8 (1961–62) 258–64; G. Friedrich, "Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief," *Abraham unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel: Festschrift für Otto Michel* (AGSU 5; ed. O. Betz et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1963) 181–215; D. Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief: Studien zur religiösen Propaganda in der Spätantike* (WMANT 11; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener-V., 1964) 258–82; J. J. Gunther, *St Paul's Opponents and Their Background: A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings* (NovTSup 35; Leiden: Brill, 1973); M. Rissi, *Studien zum zweiten Korintherbrief: Der alte Bund—Der Prediger—Der Tod* (ATANT 56; Zürich: Zwingli, 1969) 22–64.

in writing to such a Greek community, would indulge in the midrashic sort of argumentation that he employs there. One wonders whether the Corinthian Christians would have appreciated the subtlety of his argument, since it is so closely based on an Old Testament passage and utilizes figures and motifs that turn up in Palestinian Jewish writings.

This is, however, only a small part of the larger problem of the interpretation of the Corinthian correspondence; for it has always been a puzzle why the Aramaic acclamation *marana tha* should be preserved in 1 Cor 16:22,² or why there should be passages with a heavy midrashic element in *these* letters (e.g., 1 Cor 10:1-5; 2 Cor 3:7-4:6),³ or with testimonia-composition (2 Cor 6:14-7:1),⁴ or with allusions to Palestinian Jewish angelology (1 Cor 11:10).⁵ One would not expect such elements to be appreciated in Christian communities of such a Gentile background. Part of the answer to this puzzle has been to appeal to the broken inscription found at Corinth which mentions a [*syn*]agōgē Hebrai[ōn], "Synagogue of the Hebrews,"⁶ revealing that Jews had indeed settled in Corinth, or to appeal to the activity of Apollos in Corinth, "a Jew . . . a native of Alexandria, . . . well versed in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24; cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6), not to mention the theory of some interpreters that Hellenistic Jews of Corinth would have sent to Paul an interpretation of the veil passage from Exodus and that he would have corrected it.⁷ In any case, the very midrashic or Jewish elements which seem to be found in certain passages of the Corinthian correspondence have been part of the reason for arguing that Paul was aware of the mixed character of the Corinthian Christian community. This puzzle remains, but it provides the background for the Jewish motif which I think is present in 2 Corinthians 3-4, when considered in the light of certain Qumran texts.

Even without the consideration of the Qumran material, the passage had already been regarded as a "Christian midrash" on Exodus 34. It was apparently first so characterized by H. Windisch;⁸ and others such as H.

² See further "New Testament Kyrios and Maranatha and Their Aramaic Background," in my *To Advance the Gospel: New Testament Studies* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 218-35.

³ Perhaps one should also add 1 Cor 1:19-20; 2:16; 2 Cor 6:2.

⁴ See "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1," in my *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Chapman, 1971; reprinted, Missoula, Mont: Scholars, 1974) 205-17.

⁵ See "A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of 1 Cor 11:10," *ibid.* 187-204; cf. J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *CBQ* 42 (1980) 482-500.

⁶ See A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten* (4th ed. Tübingen: Mohr, 1923) 12-13; cf. B. Powell, "Greek Inscriptions from Corinth," *AJA* 2/7 (1903) 26-71, esp. 60-61 (§40); H. N. Fowler, ed., *Corinth* (16 vols.; Athens: American School of Classical Studies, 1929-) 8/1, §111.

⁷ So S. Schulz, "Die Decke"; D. Georgi, *Die Gegner* 274-82.

⁸ *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (MeyerK 6; 9th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924) 112.

Lietzmann, C. J. A. Hickling, J. D. G. Dunn, and A. T. Hanson have repeated this characterization. I consider this assessment correct; it is one of the few passages in the New Testament which is clearly midrashic in the strict sense (others being Galatians 3-4; 1 Corinthians 10 [in part]; and Hebrews 7). But rather than ascribe it to a pre-Pauline or anti-Pauline origin, I prefer with H. Lietzmann⁹ to think that it was composed by Paul for another occasion and inserted into this place in 2 Corinthians.

A further preliminary remark should be made about the effect of the Christ-event which Paul discusses in this passage. It is not my main concern to develop the background of the image employed; but a word should be said about it, since it constitutes the major affirmation of the passage. Paul affirms that as a result of the Christ-event the person who puts faith in Christ Jesus is gradually "transformed" (*metamorphoumetha*) by degrees of glory reflected on and from the face of Christ. This effect of the Christ-event has been associated with the "new creation" in Pauline theology,¹⁰ and yet it is not the same image, nor does it share the same background. "New creation" (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17) is an image drawn from Paul's Old Testament background: what God did in the beginning as he made Adam and Eve He now does again in a new way, *creating* a new humanity in Christ Jesus. Perhaps associated with that image, but really distinct from it is another, *metamorphōsis*, the transformation of human beings in Christ Jesus. This image is found almost exclusively in 2 Cor 3:7-4:6,¹¹ especially in 3:18, where Paul says that we are all "being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" (*tēn autēn eikona metamorphoumetha apo doxēs eis doxan*). Now despite the heavy use of Old Testament and Jewish motifs in the passage, derived mostly from the Moses story in Exod 34:29-35, the image itself is taken over from the Greco-Roman world. Neither the noun *metamorphōsis* nor the verb *metamorphoun* is found in the Septuagint.¹² It is a mythological figure, taken over from Greco-Roman metamorphosis literature. Tales of transformation are as old as Homer in the Greek world (*Iliad* 2.319); and in Alexandrian times it became popular to make collections of such legends: e.g., the *Heteroioumena* of Nicander (2nd cent. B.C.), the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid (A.D. 1), or the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius (2nd cent. A.D.). Paul does not hesitate to take up such a mythological figure and apply it to the Christ-event. But, as this passage

⁹ *An die Korinther I/II* (HNT 9; 5th ed. rev. by W. G. Kümmel; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1969) 111.

¹⁰ See, e.g., H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975) 224-25.

¹¹ It does occur in the hortatory passage of Rom 12:2; and in the doubtfully Pauline letter, Eph 4:22-24.

¹² The verb does occur in Symmachus' translation of Ps 33:1.

in 2 Corinthians makes clear, he has suffused the Greco-Roman image with Jewish, Old Testament, and Palestinian motifs; he uses it with the aid of his midrashic development of the Moses story.

The main argument in support of his view of the Christ-event as a transformation of the Christian is based on the Moses story in Exodus 34, but some features of it are dependent on other literature too. Among these is not only the allusion to Gen 1:3 (in 2 Cor 4:6) but also the use of a Palestinian motif which can now be illustrated from Qumran literature. My purpose is to bring to the attention of others the latter motif. But because Paul's argument in this passage is complicated, I must set forth first the way in which I understand it as a whole; then I shall explain the bearing on it of the Qumran motif. Thus my discussion will fall into two main parts.

THE PAULINE ARGUMENT IN 2 COR 3:7—4:6

The section of the letter in which this paragraph appears seeks to express Paul's reconciliation with the Corinthian community in spite of the troubles that he has had because of opponents who have spoken against him there. This part of the letter is not easy to understand, because many details in it refer to Paul's personal experience and are only vaguely presented. For instance, why should Paul bring up the matter of a letter of recommendation, the topic with which chap. 3 begins? Was there some earlier difficulty about a letter of recommendation? Was he challenged to produce one? If he had been, it is at best a conjecture made today, since the facts escape us. In any case, the context into which he fits his midrashic interpretation of Exodus 34 is one in which he disclaims the need for a letter written on his behalf to the Corinthian community. His initial acceptance there and his preaching to the Corinthians have already produced self-vindicating results, as is attested by the experience of the Corinthians themselves.

¹ Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? ²You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all; ³ and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, ⁶who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendor that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness,

fading as this was, ⁸will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendor? ⁹For if there was splendor in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of righteousness must far exceed it in splendor. ¹⁰Indeed, in this case, what once had splendor has come to have no splendor at all, because of the splendor that surpasses it. ¹¹For if what faded away came with splendor, what is permanent must have much more splendor.

¹²Since, then, we have such a hope, we are very bold, ¹³not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendor. ¹⁴But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; ¹⁶but when one turns to the Lord the veil is removed. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

^{4:1} Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart . . . ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. ⁵For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (*RSV*, slightly adapted)

The puzzling element in this passage is how Paul can begin with such a trivial matter as a letter of recommendation and pass from it to the involved discussion about the veil on Moses' face, and from that to the sublime theology of the glory of the creator-God reflected on the face of Christ. What is operative here, and what is perhaps not often enough noted, is the free association of ideas which runs through the entire passage. The association is caused by catchword bonding, in which one sense of a term suggests another, and so the argument proceeds. To a modern reader, accustomed (at least implicitly) to a mode of reasoning which is either Aristotelian or related to it, the argument used by Paul does not proceed logically; it uses neither syllogism nor enthymeme. His argument seems to involve more than three terms, and the "supposition" of the second or third term often shifts, implying a multiplicity of nuances which amount to new terms. Paul's mode of argumentation has sometimes been called "rabbinic logic," and has been compared loosely to the principle of *gēzērāh šāwāh* or "inference by analogy." But, though Paul is not explaining one pentateuchal passage by another in which the same word occurs, the association involved in such analogical inference is not far removed from the free association in which he here indulges.¹³ In any

¹³ See further H. L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (New York: Atheneum, 1969) 94.

case, his mode of argumentation cannot be subjected to syllogistic analysis. Once this is realized, it is possible to set forth schematically six sets of association which are at work in the passage.

1) The argument begins with the mention of no need of *systatikai epistolai*, "letters of recommendation,"¹⁴ for the Corinthians themselves are his *epistolē*, "letter," written on your hearts (3:2). The addition of the last phrase (*engegrammenē en tais kardiais*) begins to change the sense of *epistolē*. This enables Paul to forget completely the idea of letters of recommendation written on papyrus or skin and to pass on to the nuance of something written on the heart. In using this phrase, Paul makes his first allusion to the Old Testament, either to Jer 31:33, where the prophet speaks of God's new covenant with Israel and of his law written on their hearts, or possibly to Ezek 11:19 or 36:26, where this prophet promises that God will put a new spirit into his people and give them a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone. Both prophetic passages themselves allude to the giving of the law to Moses written on "tablets of stone" (Exod 24:12). This allusion enables Paul to play upon the nuance of something "written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (3:3). Thus Paul presents himself as God's messenger and representative, justifying his apostolate and his ministry of a universal gospel. Such is his qualification. But it is only the beginning of the free associations.

2) The second association begins with the idea of something written, something having letters; this is no longer "letter" in the sense of *epistolē*, but "letter" as *gramma(ta)*. The Mosaic law was written on tablets of stone in Hebrew letters (*grammata*); and they are for Paul lifeless letters, the symbol of the "old covenant" (3:14)—indeed, the letter that kills.¹⁵ With them he compares the life-giving Spirit, the bringer of the "new dispensation." God has made him the competent dispenser of the "new covenant" of the Spirit (3:6); he is the new runner who carries a letter written by Christ on human hearts through the Spirit. What began as a letter of recommendation "delivered by us" (*diakonētheisa hyph' hēmōn*) has now become Paul himself, "a dispenser of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit" (*diakonos kainēs diathēkēs, ou grammatos, alla pneumatos*, 3:6). This contrast is not one of polemics, as it is sometimes understood, but results from a shift in Paul's thinking. And the free association does not stop there.

¹⁴ See W. Baird, "Letters of Recommendation: A Study of II Cor 3:1-3," *JBL* 80 (1961) 166-72.

¹⁵ See further B. Cohen, "Note on Letter and Spirit in the New Testament," *HTR* 47 (1954) 197-203; B. Schneider, "The Meaning of St. Paul's Antithesis 'the Letter and the Spirit,'" *CBQ* 15 (1953) 163-207; H. Liese, "De spiritu et littera," *VD* 11 (1931) 225-29.

3) With a sort of *qal wa-hōmer* argument,¹⁶ Paul now begins to contrast the “splendor” or “glory” (*doxa*) which attended the giving of the law to Moses with the glory attending the giving of the Spirit. With pejorative and unflattering terms he refers to the promulgation of the Mosaic law as a “dispensation of death” and “of curse” (*diakonia tou thanatou* [3:7]; *diakonia tēs katakriseōs* [3:9]), because it had been encoded in letters that kill and engraved on lifeless tablets of stone. Yet it was accompanied by such *doxa*! Here we must recall the details of Exod 34:27–35, which from this point on (3:7) becomes the basis of the midrash that Paul now develops; his allusions to this passage are quite formal and cannot be mistaken. The text of Exodus begins with God’s command to Moses to make a second pair of stone tablets and continues:

²⁷ The Lord said to Moses, “Write these words: in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” ²⁸He was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in his hand, as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone (*dedoxastai hē opis tou chrōmatos tou prosōpou*) because he had been talking with God. ³⁰When Aaron and all the people of Israel looked at Moses, the skin of his face suddenly shone, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. ³²Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil (*kalymma*) on his face; ³⁴but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, ³⁵the people of Israel saw Moses’ face, that the skin of it shone (*dedoxastai*). Then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him. (*RSV*, slightly adapted)

Against the background of this story Paul finds the *doxa* attending the “new covenant” to be “surpassing” (*hyperballousa*), because it is “the dispensation of the Spirit,” not of the letter. This *diakonia tou pneumatos* carries all the associations of his argument thus far, but the allusion to Exod 34:27–35 has now introduced the further nuance of *doxa*, which becomes the springboard for still other associations.

4) “Splendor” has nothing to do with a letter of recommendation or even with the letter/spirit contrast which Paul uses elsewhere in his letters (e.g., Rom 2:27–29). It is seen as something sacred or divine which was associated with the giving of the Mosaic law in letters on tablets of stone—the very law which Paul in Romans admits was “good, just, and holy” (7:12), indeed, even “spiritual” (Rom 7:14).¹⁷ There is, then, no

¹⁶ I.e., *a minori ad maius*; see H. L. Strack, *Introduction* (n. 13 above) 94.

¹⁷ See further “Paul and the Law,” in *To Advance the Gospel* (n. 2 above), 186–201.

difficulty in his saying here that it was attended with *doxa* (3:7). Yet that *doxa* assumes another role, for it is something that frightens the Israelites, since the skin of Moses' face shone as a result of exposure to it. In this Paul follows the detail of Exod 34:30, asserting that the law came with such glory that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness (*dia tēn doxan*, 3:7). Thus the *doxa* which attended the giving of the law by the Lord has moved to the *doxa* reflected on Moses' face, and it frightens the Israelites.

Paul moves a step further, adding an element of his own, "the glory that was fading away" (*hē doxa hē katargoumenē*). This detail is not found in the story in Exodus, but it enables Paul to introduce the idea of the "surpassing glory" of the new covenant. The free association has thus moved from Yahweh's glory attending the giving of the Torah, to the frightening glory reflected on Moses' face, to the glory fading away from that face, to the glory attending the new dispensation of the Spirit. So runs the concatenation of associations involving *doxa*.

5) The frightening glory introduced the need of a veil, and the next set of (involved) associations has to do with it. When Moses descended from Mt. Sinai, he put a veil on his face. Exod 34:30 explained its purpose: lest the reflected glory continue to frighten the Israelites. In 3:7 Paul does not explain this use of the veil explicitly, being content merely to allude to it. Thus the first use of the veil for him is to hide the reflected glory of Yahweh lest it cause fright. The second use of the veil is derived from Paul's addition to the Exodus story: it is used to conceal from the Israelites the fact that the *doxa* that once attended the giving of the law was fading: "so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading glory" (3:13)—or possibly, according to some commentators, "the goal" (*telos*) of the fading glory, that it had to fade in order to be surpassed.

But now a peculiar shift in Paul's thinking introduces a third use of the veil: it serves to hide Moses himself from the Israelites. Here the association implies that a veil, hanging before the face of someone, conceals that person from others. Thus Moses becomes hidden from the people. Fast upon the heels of this association, Paul adds yet a fourth use: those who gaze upon someone veiled do not see the hidden person, and so they are themselves like blind people. "For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted. . . . Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over *their* minds" (3:14-15). Here the associations tumble fast one upon the other. What began as an instrument to conceal the glory of Yahweh from frightened Israelites has become an instrument which prevents Israelites from understanding Moses, as they read him.

6) Lastly, the sense of Moses has changed in the passage. It began with Moses, the intermediary in the promulgation of the law (see Gal 3:20), as in Exodus 34; it ends with him denoting the biblical writings ascribed to

him. As in Acts 15:21, "Moses" is read.

Now this elaborate build-up of free associations enables Paul to make his real points, and they are three: (a) The veil is lifted or removed only through Christ (3:14). (b) Playing on the idea of Moses' removal of the veil whenever he would turn to "the Lord" (viz., Yahweh, Exod 34:34-35), Paul bluntly says, "But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed" (3:17). Here, in my opinion, "the Lord" is clearly the risen Christ, whom he even calls "the Spirit," a formulation not unrelated to 1 Cor 15:45; Rom 1:4.¹⁸ "Now the Lord is the Spirit." (c) The person who turns to the Lord in faith and accepts him as such gazes with unveiled face upon the glory of the risen Christ. This glory surpasses that of the old dispensation, because it succeeds in transforming the person so confronted into a Christian: "And we all, with unveiled face gazing on the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (3:18).

Thus Paul has suffused the Greco-Roman image of *metamorphōsis* with details of a thoroughly Jewish, midrashic interpretation of Exod 34:27-35. But in chap. 3 he has not yet explained the origin of the *doxa*; for this we pass to chap. 4.

The first few verses of chap. 4 do not concern us; they are something of a digression (picking up on 3:6). The origin of the *doxa kyriou* is explained in vv. 3-6:

³ Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. ⁵For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord. . . . ⁶For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

¹⁸ We cannot enter here into the detailed exegesis of this assertion. For some of the more recent literature on the problem, see M. Dibelius, "Der Herr und der Geist bei Paulus," *Botschaft und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze 2* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1956) 128-33; J. D. G. Dunn, "2 Corinthians iii. 17—"The Lord Is the Spirit,"" *JTS* 21 (1970) 309-20; A. Feuillet, "Le Seigneur qui est l'Esprit et le Christ, miroir et image de Dieu (2 Co. III, 17-18; cf. IV, 4-6)," *Le Christ, sagesse de Dieu d'après les épîtres pauliniennes* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1966) 113-61; P. Galetto, "'Dominus autem Spiritus est,'" *RivB* 5 (1957) 254-81; A. Giglioli, "'Il Signore è lo Spirito,'" *RivB* 20 (1972) 263-76; D. Greenwood, "The Lord is the Spirit: Some Considerations of 2 Cor 3:17," *CBQ* 34 (1972) 467-72; I. Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma: Studien zur Christologie der paulinischen Hauptbriefe* (SANT 2; Munich: Kösel, 1961) 38-56; E. Larsson, *Christus als Vorbild: Eine Untersuchung zu den paulinischen Tauf- und Eikontexten* (ASNU 23; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962) 275-93; S. Lyonnet, "S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie et 2 Cor 3,17," *Bib* 32 (1951) 25-31; C. F. D. Moule, "2 Cor 3.18^b *kathaper apo kyriou pneumatōs*," *Neues Testament und Geschichte: Historisches Geschehen und Deutung im Neuen Testament: Oscar Cullmann zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. Baltensweiler and B. Reicke; Zurich: Theologischer-V., Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1972) 231-37.

Here Paul treats his gospel somewhat like the second sense of "Moses," which we have just considered. It is something veiled only to those who may read it but who are affected by "the god of this world," who blinds them. They stand in contrast to the persons who are influenced by the creator-God, the source of all light and glory, who is even the source of the glory of the risen Christ himself. Now *doxa* is understood as something that has its ultimate source in the creator of Genesis. Paul alludes to Gen 1:3, as he paraphrases, "Let light shine out of darkness," and refers to the creator as the source of the *doxa* that shines on the face of Christ as on a mirror.¹⁹ Christ is thus the *eikōn*, the "likeness" of the creator, and in turn reflects the same *doxa* on the faces of those who turn to him, with unveiled faces. As one ray of glory after another is thus reflected first on the face of Christ and then on the face of the Christian, he/she is transformed by degrees. All this comes from the glory of the Father, who first brought forth light from darkness. The intermediary is now Christ, the image of the Father, the creator-God.

This metamorphosis is thus achieved through the *doxa kyriou*. In Rom 6:4 Paul has said that "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," and in Phil 3:10 he speaks of his longing to "know him (i.e., Christ) and the power of his resurrection." In the latter passage the "power" is not limited simply to the effect of the risen Christ on the believer, but means ultimately that power which brought about the resurrection of Jesus himself, which is nothing else but the "glory of the Father."²⁰ It is the same power with which Jesus is constituted as Son of God as of the resurrection (Rom 1:4). All these passages reveal that for Paul the *dynamis* and *doxa* of the Father are the source of the risen life, the dynamo of Christian living. These are the undercurrents of his discussion in 3:18.

With this we may pass to the second main point of this paper.

A PALESTINIAN JEWISH MOTIF PARALLEL TO THE ARGUMENT IN 2 CORINTHIANS 3-4

We have seen how Paul has suffused a Greco-Roman motif of metamorphosis with a midrashic development of the Moses story of Exodus 34 and with an allusion to Genesis 1. Another motif may well have colored his thinking. For the idea of God's glory shining on the face of the risen Christ and in turn being reflected on the face of those who turn to him finds a certain counterpart in some Qumran literature. Here we read

¹⁹ See J. Dupont, "Le chrétien" (n. 1 above); N. Hagedé, *La métaphore du miroir dans les épîtres de saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1957) 25-33, 64.

²⁰ See further " 'To Know Him and the Power of His Resurrection' (Phil 3:10)," *To Advance the Gospel* (n. 2 above) 202-17.

about God illumining the face of the Teacher of Righteousness or of the priests of the community, and about him/them—in turn—illumining the face of the Many. The medium of illumination is, indeed, not the glory of God, as it is in 2 Corinthians 3–4, but some of the details provide an interesting parallel to Paul's argument. Four main passages may be considered:

1) 1QH 4:5–6. The Hebrew of this text reads as follows:

⁵*'ōdēkā 'ādōnāy kī' hā'irōtāh pānay libritēkāh ūm[in] ⁶[] 'ādōršēkāh wēkaššahar nākōn lē'ō[rtay]m hōpa'tah lī,*²¹

⁵ I praise you, Lord, for you have illumined my face with your covenant and f[rom] ⁶[] I will seek you; like the true dawn of morning, you have appeared to me for enlightenment.

A very fragmentary text (1QH 3:3) resembles the foregoing:

[] *lī hā'irōtāh pānay[]*,²²
[] You have illumined my face for me. . .

2) 1QH 4:27–29. This text supplies the counterpart of the foregoing:

²⁷ *ūbī hā'irōtāh pēnē rabbīm wattigbar 'ad lē'ēn mispār kī hōda'tanī bērāzē pil'ākāh ūbēsōd pil'ākāh higbartāh 'immādī wēhaplī' lēneged rabbīm ba'ābūr kēbōdēkāh ūlēhōdīa '29lēkōl haḥayyim gēbūrōtēkāh,*²³

²⁷ Through me you have illumined the faces of many and you have shown yourself immeasurably strong. For you have given me knowledge through your wondrous mysteries,²⁸ and through your wondrous secret you have manifested your might with (i.e.) me; you have done wonders before many for the sake of your glory and to make known²⁹ your mighty acts to all the living.

3) 1Qsb 4:24–28. In the second appendix to the *Manual of Discipline* one finds a Blessing of the Priests, part of which reads:

²⁴ . . . *wē'attāh ²⁵kēmal'ak pānīm bimē'ōn qōdes likēbōd 'ēlōhē šebā'fōt ta'ābōd lē'ōlām wēti]hyeh sūbīb mēšārēt bēhēkal ²⁶malkūt ūmappil gōrāl 'im mal'ākē pānīm wa'asat yaḥad ['im qēdōšim] lē'ēt 'ōlām ūlēkōl qiššē nēšaḥ kī' ²⁷['emet kōl mi]špātāyw wišimēkāh qōd[eš] bē'ammo ūlēmā'ōr [gādōl lē'ōr] lētēbēl bēda'at ūlēhā'ir pēnē rabbīm ²⁸[bēsēkel ḥayyim wišimēkāh] nēzer lēqōdes qōdāšim, kī' ²⁹['attāh tēquddaš lō ūtēkabbed šēmō wēqōdašyw.*²⁴

²⁴ . . . and as for you, ²⁵[may you serve forever] like an angel of the Presence in the

²¹ See E. L. Sukenik *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1955) pl. 38. Sukenik read *l'w[rtw]m*; others prefer *l'w[rty]m*, a dual of fem, 'wrh, "light of day."

²² *Ibid.*, pl. 37.

²³ *Ibid.*, pl. 38.

²⁴ See D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave I* (DJD 1; Oxford Clarendon, 1955) 126 (= 1Q28b).

holy abode of the glory of the God of Hos[ts; and may you (ever)] be ministering about in (his) royal ²⁶palace, casting (your) lot with the angels of the Presence and (giving) counsel together with the Holy Ones for time everlasting and for all ages in perpetuity. For ²⁷[truth (characterizes) all] his [judg]ments, and may he make you a holy thing[g] among his people and a [great] luminary [for the light] of the world in knowledge, to shine upon the face of many ²⁸[with the insight of life]. [May he make you] something vowed to infinite holiness, for [you are conse]crated to him, and you will glorify his name and his Holy Ones!

4) 1QS 2:2-4. The *Manual of Discipline* instructs the priests of the community to bless all those of God's lot who walk perfectly in all his ways:

² . . . yebābrekēkāh bēkōl ³tōb wēyīšmōrēkāh mikkōl ra' wēyā'ir libbēkāh bēsēkel ḥayyim wīḥunnēkāh bēda'at 'ōlāmīm 'wēyīssā' pēnē ḥāsādāyw lēkāh lišlōm 'ōlāmīm,²⁵

² . . . May (God) bless you with everything ³good and keep you from all evil; may he illumine your mind with the insight of life and grace you with the knowledge of eternity! ⁴May he lift up his gracious countenance toward you for everlasting peace!

The specific image that Paul uses, that of the face of Christ as the reflecting mirror, is not found in these Qumran passages, but there are several features in them that share a similarity and provide a Palestinian background for the image that he is using. First, there is the action of God causing light to shine on the face either of the Teacher of Righteousness in the *Thanksgiving Psalms* (if that is the person who speaks in the first person) or of the priests who are blessed. The same function is further attributed to the Teacher or the priests who light up the faces of the Many (i.e., the members of the community). Second, the last passage speaks of the illumination of the heart rather than the face, because much of the phrasology used there occurs in other passages; but it also reveals that its literary origin is the blessing of the sons of Aaron in Num 6:24-26: yēbārekēkā Yahweh wēyīšmōrēkā / yā'er Yahweh pān-āyw 'elēkā wīḥunnēkā / yīssā' Yahweh pānāyw 'elēkā wēyāsēm lēkā šālōm, "May the Lord bless you and keep you; / may the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; / may the Lord lift up his face to you and give you peace." The face of God shining on his people is also found in Ps 31:17; 67:2. These are the Old Testament sources of the Qumran expressions. Third, it is precisely in the *Thanksgiving Psalms*, col. 4, where the two aspects of the illumination are joined. G. Jeremias, in his monograph *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit*, has made out a good

²⁵ M. Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery* 2/2 (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1951) pl. 2. Cf. 1 Enoch 38:4; R. Harris, "Enoch and 2 Corinthians," *ExpTim* 33 (1921-22) 423-34.

case for the authorship of several of the psalms by the Teacher of Righteousness. He considers seven of the psalms to be the work of this teacher: 1QH 7:6-25; 2:1-19; 2:31-39; 4:5-5:4; 5:5-19; 5:20-7:5; 8:4-40.²⁶ The two first main passages quoted come from one of these. Thus the Teacher of Righteousness would consider his own countenance illumined by the light coming from God and understands his own countenance in turn illumining the countenances of the Many.²⁷

Fourth, it is interesting to note in *Thanksgiving Psalm* 4:5 that the purpose of God's illumination of the countenance of the Teacher is *librîtēkāh*, "with your covenant." The context is unfortunately damaged, and we cannot be certain about the nuance associated with this illumination. But it is well known that the community considered itself as living in a new sense the *bērît 'El* (1QS 5:8; CD 5:1); in fact, Jeremiah's expression "new covenant" (*bērît hādāsāh*, 31:31 [LXX 38:31, *diathēkē kainē*]) is picked up and used expressly in CD 6:19 (cf. also 1QpHab 2: [3]). This was clearly a renewed understanding of the Mosaic covenant of old (see 1QS 5:7-9), to which the Pauline passage is not unrelated. It is one of the few places in his writings in which he alludes to the Mosaic covenant. True, he speaks here of "the old covenant" (3:14), and of it as a dispensation of death (3:7) or a dispensation of curse (3:9). They are scarcely terms that the members of the Qumran community would care to hear about; but it also reveals Paul's attempt to move beyond the more or less contemporary understanding of the "new covenant" to a form which is associated with the illumination of those who accept the gospel of Christ which he preaches (4:4). This is the illumination which comes from the dispensation that "surpasses" (3:10), the gospel of the glory of Christ, the "new covenant" of the Spirit, of which he has become the *diakonos* (3:6). Fifth, there is also the mention of "glory" in two of the Qumran passages: *ba'ābūr kēbōdēkāh*, "for the sake of your glory" (1QH 4:28); *bimē'ōn qōdeš likēbōd 'ēlōhē šēbā' [ōt]*, "in the holy abode of the glory of the God of Hos[ts]." This, however, is merely incidental, since there is no relation between the *kābōd* and the illumination. The latter is not attributed to the former. It does not even function as does the "splendor" in Exodus 34. In the Qumran context the illumination is rather suggested as coming from "a great luminary" (*mā'ōr gādōl*), an expression that may recall Gen 1:16; but it is not the same allusion to Genesis that Paul makes in 2 Cor 4:6, "Let light shine out of darkness" (cf. Gen 1:3). Finally, the phrase in 1QS 2:3, *wēyā'ir libbēkāh bēsēkel ḥayyīm*, "may he (God) illumine your heart with the insight of life," has an interesting

²⁶ SUNT 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963.

²⁷ See the discussion of "the Many" as a designation for "all the members" of the community by J. Jeremias, *TDNT*, 6, 538.

parallel in 2 Cor 4:6, "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our *hearts* to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God that is on the face of Christ." The illumination that is given affects the heart and imparts knowledge of some sort. The Pauline expression is obviously more Christian in its connotation, but the association of the illumination of the heart with knowledge with that in the Qumran text is not to be missed.

We have, then, in these Qumran texts a motif of illumination, more specifically a motif of the divine illumination of the face or the heart of members of the community. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 3-4 we have a developed form of such illumination, which Paul has filled out with the midrashic treatment of the Moses story of Exodus 34 and used to present an effect of the Christ-event as *metamorphōsis*. The difference between the two uses of illumination is obvious. For Paul the crucial factor in the development is Christ as the image or mirror of the glory of the creator-God. In the Qumran literature the crucial factor is the Mosaic law, for that is what illumines the face of the Teacher of Righteousness or of the priests and which is the means by which he or they illumine the faces of the Many, i.e., with his or their esoteric interpretation of it.²⁸ Paul is reacting against the law, which has become for him "the written code" that kills, but in the Qumran community it brings the illumination; it is the source of "the insight of life" (1QS 2:3) or of "knowledge" (1QS 2:3; 1QSb 4:27).²⁹

In an article on this Pauline passage, W. C. van Unnik once noted that vv. 17-18 have been "considered as one of the clearest expressions of Paul's mysticism, which according to many scholars was steeped in hellenistic terminology and experience: transfiguration by vision. There is no other Pauline text which so clearly reveals his deepest experience and—according to some—his non-Jewish mode of thinking."³⁰ That it is

²⁸ See 1QpHab 7:1-5 for an explanation of the source of the esoteric interpretation of the law given to the Teacher of Righteousness. Cf. CD 13:2; 14:6-8.

²⁹ The motif of illumination is found also in a paraphrase of Deut 33:10a (MT "they will teach Jacob your ordinances, and Israel your law") used in 4QTestimonia 17-18: *wēyā'irū mišpātēkā lēYa'āqōb, tōrātēkāh lēYisrā'el*, "they (the Levitical priests) shall make your ordinances shine for Jacob, your law for Israel" (see J.M. Allegro, *Qumrān Cave 4: I (4Q158-4Q186)* [DJD 5; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968] 58). Commenting on this text, T. H. Gaster related it to 1QH 4:6,23 and explained the illumination as "spiritual enlightenment," comparing Sir 45:17 (where to "enlighten" is parallel to "teach") and 2 Kgs 12:3; 17:28; Deut 17:11 (where Hebrew *yrh* is rendered by Greek *phōtizein*). He found all this, as well as the New Testament references to "enlightenment" (Jn 1:9; Eph 1:18; 3:9; Heb 6:4; 10:22; 2 Cor 4:4,6) to be influenced by contemporary Hellenistic exegesis derived from the mystery cults (see VT 8 [1958] 217-19, esp. 218-19). Cf., however, G. Vermes, VT 8 [1958] 436-38, for further references to the Old Testament (Prov 6:23; Isa 51:4; Hos 6:5; Zeph 3:5; Ps 43:2; 119:105) and less pertinent ones from later rabbinic literature.

³⁰ See " 'With Unveiled Face' " (n. 1 above) 195.

an expression of Paul's mysticism can easily be admitted; that it is "clear" is another matter, as I have been trying to make out. But that it is steeped solely in "hellenistic terminology" needs considerable qualification. The motif of metamorphosis may be such; but the motif of what van Unnik calls "transfiguration by vision" is rooted rather in Palestinian Jewish motifs. At least, so I should prefer to explain it.

One last comment is in order. If Paul does make use of the mythical figure of metamorphosis, it is not to be crudely understood. The person who turns to the Lord with unveiled face and accepts the gospel of the glory of Christ is conceived of by Paul as being transformed by one degree of glory of the creator-God reflected on the face of Christ, the "image" of the Father, after another. Paul never so expresses it that that person is transformed *into* Christ himself, as the pagan myths might suggest; rather, through that constant subjection to the reflected glory the person is gradually being transformed into a likeness of him. One may wonder how this image of the Christ-event fits in with other ideas of Paul about the union of the Christian and Christ ("in Christ," or "Christ lives in me," etc.). It may be that this image of transformation cannot be easily put together with the other ways of expressing such union; but that is in the long run part of the wealth of Pauline thinking.³¹ They constitute different ways of conceiving what van Unnik and others have called "Paul's mysticism."³²

³¹ This Pauline notion helped Greek patristic writers to develop their ideas on the progressive divinization (*theōsis*) of the Christian.

³² An earlier form of this paper was delivered as one of the Speaker's Lectures at Oxford University in May 1975; in its present form it was used at a plenary session of the forty-fourth annual meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association, Seattle University, Seattle, Wash., on August 24, 1981.