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PAULINE AND JOHANNINE "NEW LIFE"

by

G. MURRAY LAKE

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FOREWORD

Because the Gospel has the power to change men into "New Beings," it is extremely relevant for any age. The New Testament has it as a central theme that men have been made "New Creatures," and have received "New Life," through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Regeneration, however, is an event which is unfortunately capable of various interpretations and is continually misunderstood. Therefore a constant re-examination of scripture's teaching on this matter is valuable. The purpose of this thesis is to bring Johannine and Pauline "New Life" understanding into juxtaposition with the hope that the documented findings herein will be helpful to whoever studies them. This thesis maintains that man makes a responsible choice as he turns to God in faith¹ but it is God that makes him a "New Creature;" that the birth of the "New Being" is not achieved by baptism used as a magical rite; that the one who receives "New Life" will realize his responsibility to live a Christ-like life through the power of the love of God working in him; that because God is righteous, his holy love must judge sinful man, and thus the acceptance of the "New Life" offered freely by the grace of God is urgent. The "New Life" is a caricature of what it should be if it means for the recipient only hope for heaven thereby or a patient wait for some cataclysmic end of the

¹ Faith includes an attitude of repentance.

world. Because eternal life begins here and now, the quality of the life should be made manifest in a noticeable degree to those who would observe. This "New Life" should be a useful life, and not one just resigned to let God undertake responsibilities which are plainly our own.

What does the church in a measure lack today? I would unhesitatingly say, a sense of urgency about its message. From my own experience in which I went from a belief in hell fire to a non-belief in hell fire, I know the anguish of the mind that begins to question if the Gospel is, after all, a really pressing matter. The answer, however, does not lie in a return to the urgency of hell fire orations. Neither is our real concern to present Christianity as a means of conserving Western civilization; or even to assure the perpetuation and prosperity of our particular denomination. But the preacher's message is urgent and he must evangelize because Jesus saw men either as "saved" or "lost;" as "born again" or "not born again."

By the self-disclosure of Himself, and by His redemptive act in history, God makes it possible for men to come into a certain experience of His love and forgiveness. This is what the preacher should earnestly desire for all to whom he preaches the Gospel. The power of sin can be observed everywhere and the preacher should assume that a soul may be irrevocably lost; possibly a personality will be disintegrated if not rescued from evil. If the proclamation of the

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Gospel can prevent this by bringing the sinner to a
"New Life," here then is where the preacher can find a
reason for a sense of urgency about his message.

Chapter 1PRELIMINARY CONCERNS

Regeneration is a subject which is right at the centre of the issues of contemporary theology. In the teaching of Paul and John we find statements which are capable of various interpretations regarding the divine initiative and man's response in the process of regeneration. Because of this, then, this first chapter attempts to do two things: first, it seems wise to discuss very briefly and unfortunately, incompletely, the Old Testament and New Testament background to the concept of the "New Life;" secondly, to approach in a somewhat speculative or philosophical manner, the possibilities in the regenerative process. Subsequent chapters will examine the Pauline and Johannine corpora.

It is only in the New Testament that the concept of regeneration for the individual is fully developed. In Ezekiel we find the essence of people becoming "New Beings," "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my

statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."¹

"Here we get, as never before, the idea of a new responsiveness of heart divinely produced--the essence of regeneration,"² but the "New Life" here has primarily a meaning for the national hopes of the nation rather than for the individual. But from the time of the prophets, the importance of each human personality began to be stressed, and after the Exile, the New Testament experience of regeneration was virtually anticipated. Psalm 51, was probably used in corporate ritual with the speaker speaking for the nation and it may be even pre-exilic, but notwithstanding this, the lofty appeal in verses 10 and 11 speak the language of the "New Life:" "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me."

Conversion is not the same thing as regeneration, or becoming a "New Creature," or "being born again," or entering into the "New Life." Conversion by itself is an incomplete process. In both the Old and the New Testaments, 'convert' is used as a synonym for 'turn,' and answers to the same originals. In Isaiah 6:10, the verb form 27W is used and is translated in the King James version: "and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed,"

¹ Ezekiel 36: 25-27

² J.V. Bartlett, "Regeneration," A Dictionary of the Bible, p. 215.

while in the Revised Standard version we read: "and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." The Revised Standard version here has the most literal translation. This passage is quoted in John 12:40 and the verb form is ἑπιστρέφω meaning to turn about or upon. The King James version translates στρέφωσιν as be converted and the Revised Standard version simply says turn. This turning must of necessity be from something to something. "It seems equally natural to make the former aspect coincide with repentance, which is turning from evil, and the latter coincide with faith, which is turning to God."¹ Conversion on its negative side is repentance and on its positive side it is faith. Expressing this same idea in purely moral terms, we can say it is turning from evil to good.

It is important to note, that this turning is almost invariably an act of man.² The following passages suggest this: "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back (. 7 2 7 W) from your evil ways;"³ "Unless you turn;"⁴ "When you have turned again;"⁵ etc. To say that man does the turning is not to

¹ J.S. Banks, "Conversion," A Dictionary of the Bible, p. 478.

² Loc. cit.

³ Ezekiel 33:11

⁴ Matthew 18:3

⁵ Luke 22:32

say that a supernatural force is thus eliminated from influencing this process. If the claim is made either that man turns solely by his own initiative, or that he is turned without any initiative on his part, is any religion left at all in the process? Sinful man then does the turning, but the power by which he is influenced to turn is ultimately that of God. As regards man's part in his conversion, this is a moral change in his nature: as regards God's part in man's regeneration, this is a matter never to be fully explained. Turning, is then, not complete in itself, for God in his mercy acts and the sinner experiences justification, forgiveness, consecration, and sanctification.¹

While turning is an act of man, it is wrong to think that a neat boundary has been set between what man does and what God does, in the act of conversion. Man is never out of relationship to God whether he has turned or not. This relationship has no boundaries which could enable some heavenly bookkeeper to say any one man was cooperating with God to the extent of say, 15%. A relationship between God and man like human relationships is creative. This creative relationship has no boundaries but is mutually interpenetrating. Jesus taught us to regard the relationship between God and man as one between a heavenly Father

¹ It is probably only accurate to suggest that sanctification is never complete in this life here on earth as we know it empirically. But this is a problem which is better left for the chapter which discusses the "New Life" and ethics.

and his child. The analogy would break down if the mind of the human child is completely dominated by the heavenly Father. For the Heavenly Father, as for the human father, the turning of the child to him in love, compelled by the creative interplay of their personalities is indeed a precious thing. There is joy then, in heaven, when the sinner turns to God in love, for that person makes his own decision compelled only by the loving relationship between two beings, God and man.

Paul's most characteristic description of the regeneration process is 'dying and rising with Christ' and with qualifications,¹ that of the Johannine writings is 'born again.' Exactly how the Christian 'dies and rises again with Christ,' or how he is 'born again' is very difficult to state precisely. Assuming that this can and does happen, we then face the problem of what is the difference between the old man and the new man. "Of all the theological ideas regeneration is probably the one which has had the most unfortunate history."² To express the complete change between the non-Christian state and that of the new Christian the figure of the "new birth" is very apt. But if this idea is to be pressed to its extreme development it can be stated that man has no more to do with this second birth than he had with his first birth. In this case, man

¹ See page 11.

² James Denney, "Regeneration," Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, p. 485.

is a mere passive creature who is acted upon by God and who does not cooperate with God as the change is made. Further, there is no halfway position possible in this supernatural change, and man is either reborn or he is not, and until this happens he can know nothing of Faith, Justification, etc.,¹ the marks of the "New Life." While the motive in this type of thinking is that only God can give a real basis to Faith, the extreme theology which can be developed is a delusion. If man's transformation in regeneration is a complete transmutation of nature, and as a result of an act of God only, then the psychological continuity between the old man and the new man has been destroyed. This is equivalent to claiming that the old personality has died and a new personality has been created, or that the change is completely metaphysical. In this process man has had no part in the turning and so the moral and religious nature of the experience has been successfully eliminated. Neither Pauline nor Johannine writings will support this extreme position.

¹ Norman H. Snaithe, in The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament writes: "Righteousness is a result of salvation, and not a condition of it. It is one of the fruits." p. 164. "We hold therefore most strongly that, according to both Old and New Testaments, God does not require righteousness as a condition of salvation, neither actual, nor imputed, nor imparted. He requires faith, and faith alone." p. 165. This issue will be raised again in the chapter on ethics.

Chapter 2THE CREATION OF THE "NEW LIFE"

In the Pauline writings, the Apostle Paul never speaks formally of being born again. He scarcely thinks of his own experience as being one which went from the unregenerate to the regenerate. Paul's conversion experience was so startling and the struggle so abnormal that it couldn't suggest anything so natural as being "born again."¹ It is in the Johannine writings where we read "born again." This is the language which describes the process of regeneration. But Paul's teaching is in essential harmony with John, however, for here Jesus is reported to have made the claim that no man can come to the Father except through the Son.² This is a Christ-mysticism. It was the experience of Paul, for he had died with Christ and now lived through faith in Christ. He had thus become a "New Creation" and this "New Life" was without a doubt obtained through Jesus. This is stated very clearly in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is

¹ "Conversion" or "turning" fails to describe Paul's experience unless you say he turned from the law to faith in Christ. Paul, while he had been a good Pharisee and as to righteousness under the law blameless, (Philippians 3:6) would certainly believe that he was a true worshipper of God. Therefore, it would be ridiculous to say he was converted from God to God. If Paul was under the law blameless, can we say he was converted from sin to good? Probably it would be better to say Paul was converted from reliance upon his own righteousness to reliance upon Christ.

² John 14:6

no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." While unlike John, he never speaks of being "born again," his usual expressions are in the following terms: "the old man and the new, of the natural and the spiritual, of being under law and under grace, in Adam and in Christ, or dead to sin and alive to God."¹ John while never using the term regeneration, virtually does so in the phrase $\Upsilon \epsilon \nu \nu \eta \theta \eta \nu \tau \iota \delta \nu \omega \theta \epsilon \upsilon$, which is best rendered "born anew."² "This shade of thought, while proper to the context, and while probably appropriated by St. John as the root of his own thinking on the matter, is not the one most characteristic of his own doctrine. It is not so much the fact of a new beginning in the Christian life, as the inherent nature of that life as due to its Divine origin, that occupies this writer's mind. His favorite emphasis is to be seen in the phrase 'to be begotten of God' ($\Upsilon \epsilon \nu \nu \eta \theta \eta \nu \tau \iota \epsilon \kappa \tau \omicron \upsilon \theta \epsilon \omicron \upsilon$)."³ It is then, in the sense that those who yielded themselves to God as he came to them in Jesus Christ, are "born anew," that we

¹ James Denney, op. cit., p. 487

² John 3: 3,7 This is a somewhat rare use, but if it is to be rendered "from above" i.e. from heaven, Nicodemus ought to have wondered how it was possible for anyone to be born "from heaven," but this he did not say. (c.p. J.H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 52)

³ J. V. Bartlett, op. cit., p. 219.

should understand this passage. This yielding is not to be considered a metaphysical doctrine.¹ In both Paul and John the "New Life" is something which affects the whole moral nature. "We can only say that God works in the hearts of men through Jesus Christ. In ways that are beyond our tracing, like the motions of the wind, He breathes His Spirit into them and cleanses and renews them."²

But, on the other hand, there is in John a certain elusiveness about the actual teaching of the spiritual rebirth. Nicodemus could no doubt have understood a moral change without too much incredulity. When he asked the question, "How can a man be born when he is old?"³ he must surely have had in mind that the discourse with Jesus was leading towards a doctrine which would have stopped at nothing less than a transmutation of nature. Anything produced from flesh is still flesh and there is no evolution from flesh to Spirit.⁴ Before a man can therefore hope to participate in the life from above, there must be some change in his being which brings him into affinity with the nature of spirit. We go too far, however, if we read into this a discontinuity between the old personality and the new personality. It is true that the man has been "born again," but this magical change is

¹ E.F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 280-1

² Ibid., p. 281

³ John 3:4

⁴ E.C. Hoskyns and F.N. Davey, The Fourth Gospel, p.204.

more in the nature of an addition which means he now "Possesses affinities, lacking in him before, with the supersensible world. He 'cannot see the kingdom of God,' --he has no receptivity for the life imparted through Christ, till he has undergone this essential change of nature."¹ This is not to say, however, that man cannot have a trustful experience of faith in Christ until after being "born again." Faith and the "New Life" are not separated by a time sequence but coincide as a mutually interpenetrating relationship between the Heavenly Father and his earthly child.

In the regeneration teaching of St. John and St. Paul we find a difference of emphasis. Paul thinks primarily of a regenerate man becoming a new moral creature. Through adoption (*υιοθεσια*) a transition is made from the states of serfdom, wretchedness, alienation, death, to a new status or condition² "so that the full effect of such adoption waits upon man's emancipation from 'the bondage of corruption' in 'the redemption of our body.'³"⁴ In John, the stress comes upon the intrinsic nature of the 'eternal life' and the wonder of the Divine origin.⁵ There is something infused into the

¹ E.F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 282

² Galatians 3: 3,5,7. Romans 7:24; 8:6f,14

³ Romans 8:20-23

⁴ J.V. Bartlett, *op. cit.*, p. 221

⁵ Loc. cit.

soul of man which henceforth makes his personality new, although he is still the same person. John comes nearer than Paul to losing the psychological continuity between the once born and the twice born. But Paul and John are in essential harmony, however, for we must note Paul's distinction between "in the flesh" and "in the spirit." In Romans 8:9, Paul says, "But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you." Since Paul often speaks of $\piνευμα$ as meaning the controlling element in man's nature we are apt to read this verse as still referring to man's spirit. Actually the Spirit of God ($\piνευμα θεου$) as it brings "New Life," invades the earthly spirit and transforms and changes it. Thus Paul and John really supplement each other. In the writings of Paul, however, one always has the feeling that the "you" is still definitely "you" and thus the suggestion of the metaphysical¹ change of personality is greatly lessened.

¹ This is not to suggest Paul or John were concerned with the question of "the metaphysical" as presented in this thesis. They were, however, concerned to describe their own and the community experience of the "New Life." In our attempt to interpret this in their writings, the word metaphysical is at times useful.

Chapter 3REGENERATION AND BAPTISM

Does the rite of baptism in the Christian religion perform the same function as one or other of the various rites in pagan mysticism? If the "New Life" comes through a sacrament then it is a metaphysical change with the moral element eliminated, and this is what happens in the mystery religion rites. That is not to say that moral goodness is not a result or aim of the mystery religions. In the Orphic religion, for example, the initiation rite marked the formal entrance upon a new way of living. "Following the initiatory rites was the rigid discipline of a life-long asceticism that included purgations, fastings, and freedom from bodily contamination, as well as certain elementary moral requirements."¹ In this case, the change as it finally came to be was accomplished by both an initiatory rite and an acceptable life until finally the Orphic became "God from man."² In the rites of the Great Mother a man could be taken all the way until, "He himself became Attis, a god, mystically united as a divine love to the Great Goddess."³ These changes are certainly metaphysical.

Since both Paul and John connect the "New Life" with

¹ H.R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration, (The University of Chicago Press, 1929) p. 108

² Loc. cit.

³ Ibid., p. 129

baptism¹ some scholars assume that the rite of baptism fulfills the same function as the rites of the Graeco-Roman mystery religions. This is the position which Morgan takes respecting Paul: "And in the Mysteries, as in Paul, the result of the experience was a radical transformation; the believer died to his mortal life and was reborn as a child of eternity. In both cases, moreover, the experience stood in close connection with a sacrament-- in the one case with the sacrament of initiation, in the other with that of baptism (Romans 6:3ff.) These are no casual resemblances; and it is impossible to resist the conclusion that in this matter the Apostle was a debtor to the pagan religion of his time."² Albert Schweitzer holds that baptism according to Paul had the mysterious power of allowing the believer to enter the "Community of God."³ But strangely enough, Schweitzer denies that Paul is influenced to any great extent by Hellenism. Schweitzer is thus in the strange position of having made a sacramentalist out of Paul and yet unlike Morgan he does not find the root idea of baptism's regenerative powers in paganism.

Schweitzer attempts to bolster his argument by claiming that baptism must be efficacious in the way he claims because

¹ Romans 6:2ff, Colossians 2:12, John 3:5

² W. Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul, p. 141.

³ A. Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, p. 116.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:29 "...If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?" What actually could happen in the case of vicarious baptism of a dead person is difficult to state. Does Paul mean that the rite changes the status of the dead person in some manner? It seems more reasonable here to advance the theory that Paul is not in anyway approving of the practice of baptizing dead people. But since his opponents in the controversy do this,¹ Paul does not hesitate to remind them of their very own actions to win his point. So we should be careful not to assume that Paul approves or thinks that baptizing the dead has any value. Possibly some concept of Hebrew corporate personality may be involved here where the member belongs to the body of the elect whether dead or alive. That it proves, however, that one dies and is raised with Christ through baptism is doubtful.

The question should now be faced. What then did Paul think happened in baptism? It was the Church of course, not Paul, that first began to offer salvation through the sacraments. By becoming a sacramental mystery cult,²

¹ At least their approval of this is implied in Paul's question: "Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?" (1 Corinthians 15:29)

² Possibly Christianity developed this feature from within itself. But who can estimate precisely the formative influences which worked upon the early Christian mind. If the Pagan religions were part of the environment, they might well be expected to contribute.

Christianity borrowed from the Pagan mystery religions. But it is not proper to say that Paul himself was in any way a borrower from the mystery cults. When Paul spoke of baptism as involving men in the death and resurrection of Jesus¹ he did not mean that the effects were produced opus operatum.² For Paul the precondition of baptism was for the recipient to confess his sins and to accept the love of Christ. In Colossians he says about this ordinance, "you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith...." Faith is the key word here. Because the church then, made baptism operate in a manner of a pagan sacrament, is no reason to read this into Paul. As Anderson Scott says, "The whole character of Christianity, the Christianity of Paul, would be falsified if the salvation which he proclaimed were a salvation to be obtained in the same way as salvation through the mysteries, through the valid celebration of a rite and not through the joyful self-committal of the whole personality to God in Christ, which is 'faith.' And it is difficult to resist the conclusion that some scholars have allowed themselves to be persuaded that this change took place in the mind of Paul on evidence which in any other connection they would

¹ Romans 6: 3-4

² James Denney, op. cit., p. 487

³ Colossians 2:12

have pronounced to be insufficient."¹ Dr. Scott concludes about this matter: "The influence of Hellenistic thought upon St. Paul's interpretation of Christianity was negligible. So far as the content of his teaching was not due to the fact of Christ, its content and also its forms were derived almost exclusively from Judaism."²

As Bultmann so clearly puts the question, "If baptism grants participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus, does it do so in another way than the word proclaimed and heard in faith?"³ Bultmann feels that Paul failed to free himself completely from the mystery-conception of sacrament as having a magical effect, because he does not contest the practice of baptizing the dead.⁴ "Nevertheless, he by no means unconditionally attributes magic influence to baptism as if receiving it guaranteed salvation."⁵ Baptized Christians are warned: "Therefore let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."⁶ But baptism is subordinate to the preaching of the word, for Paul says: "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel."⁷ But Bultmann does

¹ Charles A. Anderson Scott, Christianity According to St. Paul, p. vii. Quoted in Rolston, Consider Paul.

² Ibid., p. 14

³ R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 311

⁴ See page 15.

⁵ R. Bultmann, op. cit., p. 312

⁶ 1 Corinthians 10: 1-12

⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:17

see something objectively happen in Paul's conception of baptism, and "as acceptance of the word in faith is the acknowledgment of the Lord who is speaking in it, so baptism also brings a man under the domination of the Lord."¹ This sounds very much like a statement which claims that the "word" is equalled by baptism as a vehicle of salvation. The following sentence about baptism suggests this even more strongly: "But the appropriation on his part is the same as the appropriation of the salvation-occurrence when it comes through the preached word."² It can be clearly perceived in theory, that as a man appropriates, or accepts the "Word," God by the Holy Spirit makes that being a "New Creation." But to suggest that the same thing can happen with baptism, seems to overlook the fact that baptism can mean nothing without the meaning which the "word" gives to it. In this case, the appropriation is always of the word; not of the baptism. If this distinction is not made, then it would seem that the reformer's effort to proclaim God's working through his "word" as a greater miracle than the sacraments of the Roman Church, has failed. Bultmann claims, then, something objectively done for the one being baptized. "Baptism certifies to him participation in the salvation-occurrence, the death and resurrection of Jesus. It, then, makes the salvation-

¹ R. Bultmann, op. cit., p. 312.

² Loc. Cit.

occurrence present for him just as the proclaiming word also does, only this time with special reference to him, the one being baptized, as valid for him."¹ Actually these claims of the objectivity of baptism are irrelevant, if we believe that faith in the specific sense in which St. Paul ascribes to it saving quality, is evoked by preaching, by the proclamation of Christ and of Him as crucified.²

We have been trying to answer the question, what did Paul think happened in baptism? The answer thus far has been given in a purely negative manner. Perhaps the question would be more profitable if reworded as follows: What for Paul, was the purpose of baptism? The opening verses of the sixth chapter of Romans give a good discussion of this question. Bishop Nygren interprets Paul here to say that "In Adam" we are all members of that great organism, the one body of humanity.³ "But now, through baptism, we have been incorporated into Christ."⁴ "We died to sin," says Paul (verse 2). When and how did that take place? It happened in and through baptism according to the apostle. Therein the Christian died with Christ, and was buried with Him; and furthermore, he therein arose with Him."⁵ Nygren maintains that Paul means that what baptism symbolizes actually happens, "and precisely through baptism."⁶ By this

1 R. Bultmann, op. cit., p. 312

2 C.A.A. Scott, op. cit., p. 29.

3 Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), pp. 232,3.

4 Ibid., p. 233

5 Ibid., p. 234

6 Ibid., p. 233.

Christians become a member in Christ's body "and henceforth belong inseparably with the Head."¹

In no uncertain terms, Nygren has described a magical rite. Something has objectively happened through the sacrament of baptism. Professor Burrows, however, comes to an opposite conclusion which is much more congenial to the position of this thesis. After pointing out that the language of Paul here suggests initiation rites of the mystery cults, Burrows says: "Since Paul elsewhere lays no stress on baptism,² it is difficult to believe that he thought of the experience of union with Christ as bound up with the rite of baptism. To judge by the narrative in Acts 9: 1-18, it had not been so in his own case. It is possible, indeed, that in Romans 6:3ff. Paul refers to the inner experience of "baptism into death" and not at all to the ceremony. In any case what Paul says repeatedly about circumcision (see especially Galatians 5: 2-12) applies with equal force to baptism as a condition of salvation."³ This is well said, but unlike the contribution of Bishop Nygren, has nothing to say about the purpose of baptism for Paul.

For Paul, as for all early Christian teachers, the purpose of baptism could be explained as the initiation into the body of Christ. "The question of the validity of baptism apart from the conscious assent of the baptized person does not arise. Nor would it have been natural for

¹ A. Nygren, op. cit., p. 234

² cp. 1 Corinthians 1: 13-17

³ Millar Burrows, An Outline of Biblical Theology (The Westminster Press, 1946) p. 240.

Paul or any contemporary to consider the question whether faith without baptism made a man a member of Christ's Body, while the case of a person seeking baptism without faith (however rudimentary) would have seemed too abnormal to deserve notice."¹ The fact that a person has submitted to baptism would in a way be a public profession of faith. In this case, it would be perfectly logical for Paul to remind them that, when they stood up to receive this sacrament it was an acknowledgement that henceforth they would live a "New Life." Actually, the whole matter of baptism in Romans, Chapter 6, has been introduced while answering those who feel "sinning greatly" might give grace, its greater work to the greater glory of God, or by presuming that grace had already performed its perfect work and that there was no further need to be concerned about strict moral living.² Paul uses much the same tactics when he writes to Galatians regarding their attitude to the law in the light of faith. "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."³ Here there can be no doubt that the way one became a son of God is through faith. By the fact that they had sought baptism is visible proof to all who would observe, that they had clothed themselves in Christ. Thus "baptism with water into the name of the father and of

¹ C.H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934) p. 86.

² Elias Andrews, The Meaning of Christ for Paul, p. 89.

³ Galatians 3: 26,27.

the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the sacrament by which are signified and sealed our union to Christ...."¹

Major Protestant denominations today baptize in infancy. But upon joining the church, those who were thus previously baptized, have now taken a step which should be significant for the "New Life." After public profession of faith, they have definitely committed themselves, and the member and non-member of the church alike, expect to see some evidence of the "New Life." Would it be taking too great a liberty to paraphrase the words of Paul² to apply to this modern situation? "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as have been received into church membership (gave evidence that you) have put on Christ." Since faith for Paul, as one becomes a son of God includes dying and rising with Christ, this should also be an expression of the meaning of joining the church--even as the rite of baptism is the genuine expression of life "in Christ." If this is true, those baptized in infancy who profess faith when joining the church must recover in the present, the full significance of a baptism in their childhood. That is why "the church is under the most solemn obligation to provide for their Christian instruction."³

When we turn to the fourth gospel we find teaching

¹ United Church Manual, Article XVI, 1, p. 18.

² Galatians 3:26, 27.

³ United Church Manual, Article XVI, 1, p. 18.

that is sometimes interpreted as a thoroughly sacramental view of baptism. Regeneration seems to depend upon both the water and the spirit.¹ But the teaching here must be considered in the light of the relation between Jesus and John the Baptist. "A certain value is granted to the baptism of John, although its formal, inadequate character is duly emphasized."² The water baptism is actually contrasted with the true baptism of the spirit. In both Paul and John we must remember that their baptism passages did not refer to infant baptism but to penitent and believing Christians. Under these circumstances both writers saw baptism as an ordinance which gathered into it the whole meaning of Christianity. For John it could be truly thought of as faith confessing itself, but that any objective value is thus shown to be in the rite, is dubious. John here accepts the ordinary Church doctrine which maintains the efficacy of the rite of baptism, but he attempts to give baptism a spiritual meaning. "By attaching the profoundest Christian ideas to a formal ordinance, he invested the ordinance itself with a new value, so that faith, in increasing measure, came to centre upon it."³ That John meant to stress that the spirit is the important matter, rather than water, can be gathered from the fact that closely following verses in this passage mention only the spirit: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;"⁴ "so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."⁵ The following quotation from Hoskyns and Davey verifies the conclusion reached regard-

¹ John 3:5

² E.F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 129

³ *Ibid.*, p. 132. ⁴ John 3:6

⁵ John 3:9

ing John: "The Evangelist is, therefore, not introducing the language of regeneration in order to accommodate Christianity to the soil of Hellenism, where immortality was supposed to be conferred by sacramental regeneration; he is rather confronting the visible Christian practice and experience of baptism with that invisible and spiritual baptism which is the miracle of God."¹

¹ E.C. Hoskyns and F.N. Davey, op. cit., p. 214.

Chapter 4MYSTICISMMysticism and Hellenism

Words are inadequate to describe the type of religious experience which lies at the heart of the Christian experience. The one word which comes closest to describing this is mysticism.¹ Unfortunately mysticism means something other than Christianity to some who associate this word with only the classical pagan mystic. What, then, is the relation between Paul's mysticism and that of the mystery religions? Paul's mysticism stands by itself and differs from that of the mystery religions in two important aspects: "first, as regards the human factor, there is a conspicuous absence of any idea of absorption in the deity. The will is a factor as potent as emotion. Paul's 'life hid with Christ in God' is a life of active fellowship with Christ. Secondly, as regards the Divine factor, in the mystic fellowship the faith-mysticism of Paul is faith grounded on an historic Personality to whose love faith is the necessary response. The Christian who is 'in Christ' finds himself in fellowship with a Person, and is not lost, as in the mysticism of Philo or Neo-Platonism, in the ocean of the Absolute, nor,

¹ F.C. Grant, An Introduction to New Testament Thought, p. 251.

as in the Mysteries, does he undergo divinization. He becomes like Christ, but never Christ."¹

If Paul's doctrine is not mystical in the Hellenistic mystery religion sense, we may well ask the question, is it mystical at all? Adolf Deissman has something to say about this which is helpful. He names two types of mystics: the one type is the mystic who reacts in response to the action of God; the other type is the mystic who by his own action endeavours to produce divine reaction.² Paul he feels, is a reacting mystic who answered two questions for himself: "What has God done? and, What have I experienced?"³ Dr. Deissman believes the religion of Paul is thus quite simple. It amounts to communion with Christ and in Christ the unfathomable mysteries of God's mercy become clear to him: "that is his experience of salvation. In Christ, he comes to an entirely different judgment of himself, and that is the 'New Creation'."⁴

We cannot think of the mystical union of Paul with Christ without acknowledging that this is inextricably part of the faith of Paul. Paul was a mystic in the sense that he experienced a divine presence in his soul. But this experience was not peculiarly his own, for it was the prerogative of the entire Christian community.⁵ "The mystical presence of Christ in the individual believer, and in the community of believers, is but his developed doctrine of the Spirit."⁶ It is not a pantheistic absorp-

¹ S. Angus, The Mystery-Religions and Christianity, (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925) p. 296 Quoted in Rolston, op.cit.

² A. Deissman, The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul, p. 196.

³ Ibid., p. 223

⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵ E. Andrews, op. cit., pp. 83-7

⁶ Ibid., p. 83

tion which Paul has experienced, however, for where he comes closest to allowing this interpretation, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me,"¹ is immediately followed by words "which exclude any pantheistic interpretation, and reveal an experience still grounded in historic fact."²

Albert Schweitzer while maintaining that Paul was not influenced by the Hellenistic mystery religions feels that his doctrine of union with Christ, prepared the way for the Hellenization of Christianity. He surprisingly finds that John shows the influence of Hellenism because unlike Paul's Christ-mysticism, John has a God-mysticism.³ "This is most clearly seen in 1 John iii. 2, which expresses the idea of deification through the vision of God, even though it stands here in an eschatological context."⁴ The Fourth Gospel is also quoted to show this: "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."⁵ Here the "being in Christ," is also a "being in God." But Howard believes that Schweitzer puts an impossible strain on the text.⁶

In view of the fact that the Fourth Gospel opens with

¹ Galatians 2:20

² E. Andrews, op. cit., p. 87

³ W.F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation p. 163. Commenting upon Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus (1930).

⁴ Ibid., p. 163

⁵ John 17:21

⁶ W.F. Howard, op. cit., p. 234.

the great thesis, "In Him was life," and closes with the emphatic statement, "That believing, ye may have life through His name,"¹ it does not seem necessary to take Schweitzer's charge of God-mysticism as contrasted to Christ-mysticism too seriously.² Therefore, the Hellenizing influence which has been assumed because of this should be discounted.

The Christian and the Suffering of Christ

If the Christian dies with Christ and is raised with Christ, should he participate in any way in the suffering of Christ? Paul apparently thought so when he wrote: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what remains of Christ's afflictions..."³ Paul does not mean to say that the suffering of Christ was not sufficient to bring salvation to men. Rather, the mystical union with Christ will bring with it a sharing of the sufferings of Christ. Paul rejoices in this, because this brings him closer to the ideal of a life completely conformed to Christ. But Paul does not look upon asceticism in itself as being in any way valuable. Suffering is only meaningful as a sharing of the experience of Christ.

Mysticism and the Church

Paul's mysticism involves more than "that of personal

¹ E.F. Scott, op. cit., p. 234

²,¹ John 4:15 gives grounds for the charge of God-mysticism. But this should not be surprising when after all the mystery of the Trinity is involved here.

³ 1 Colossians 1:24

fellowship constituted by man's response of obedient faith."¹ In Paul's Christ-mysticism, the believer has the mind of Christ and he is in Christ. There is nothing quasi-physical in this, however, and the one in Christ is this in more than a local way.² The "New Creature" has been transplanted into a new sphere where God, the Spirit, Christ, the Church, all express the reality of the world of the spirit.³ "The disciple is a new man because his life is made up of these new relations, new loyalties, and new powers, which come to him in this sphere."⁴ This does not mean that this mystical union is of the metaphysical kind⁵ but one in which the relationship is both mystical and ethical.⁶ "For that reason the union must be renewed day by day in a continuing attitude of faith in which man trusts in God and so receives the grace of God in living fellowship,"⁷ which means at the same time, fellowship with the Christian community.

Paul's Christ-mysticism in its community aspect is yet another difference from that of the mystic. It was usually a solitary way that the mystic trod but for Paul, his experiences were to be shared by all who would accept

¹ H.F. Rall, According to Paul. p. 72

² E. Andrews, op. cit., p. 83.

³ H.F. Rall, op. cit., p. 73.

⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

⁵ Ibid., p. 80.

⁶ Ibid., p. 81.

⁷ Loc. cit.

the life in Christ.¹ This means that the meaning of Christ is a shared meaning--"the basis of that particular koinonia, or community, which is the church."² Albert Schweitzer interpreted Paul to say that the experience was one of entering into the corporeity of the Elect. "The Elect share with one another and with Christ a corporeity which is in a special way susceptible to the action of the powers of death and resurrection, and in consequence capable of acquiring the resurrection state of existence before the general resurrection of the dead take place."³ This is in keeping with the Hebrew conception of corporate personality where easy transition between a state of life and death is made. One still belongs to the body of the elect even after death.

John Knox holds much the same view about the Christian community as does Schweitzer. He claims that when Paul "speaks of himself as 'a man in Christ,' he refers to the fact that he has, by God's grace, been made a part of that ultimate, eschatological order, that divine community of love, which in the Gospels is called the kingdom of God, and which is already proleptically and partially present among us as the church, whose "spirit" (that is, the inner

¹ S. Cave, *The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*. p. 64.

² J. Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul*. p. 112.

³ A. Schweitzer, op. cit., p. 116

principle which constitutes and distinguishes it) authenticates itself both as the Spirit of God and as the continuing reality and presence of Christ."¹

It is customary to interpret the Gospel of John as the work of a Christian mystic. Indeed, this doctrine of a mystical union with Christ which allows a direct flow of the higher life to the believer, is the central and characteristic thought of the Fourth Gospel.² Jesus requires that his followers should abide in him permanently, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."³ This is certainly a mystical relationship of the very closest nature. It means that all believers are also closely bound together through Christ. In view of this, it does not seem possible that the Counsellor which Jesus says, "I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth,"⁴ can be other than the direct communication of himself. It is to the everlasting credit of John that he points the Church back to the source of its faith, the very life of Jesus, so that we must not think of John's teaching as mystical imaginations. "The inward experience, the historical reminiscence, these two are equally necessary, and explain and complete one another."⁵

¹ J. Knox, op. cit., p. 113.

² E.F. Scott, op. cit., p. 289.

³ John 15:5

⁴ John 15:26

⁵ E.F. Scott, op. cit., p. 299

A summary of what happens to the one who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, is found in the First Epistle of John: "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God."¹ "So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."² Here it is plain that the love which we learn about is not the love which we had in the first place, but the love which comes from God. These two verses of scripture demonstrate clearly how the earthly Jesus is the outward experience which results in a mystical union with God, and is then an inward experience. The final validity of our religious experience is to live in love, because this means to live in union with God.³ It is in the church community that this life is most perfectly exemplified, because to live in union with God also means to live in union with the people of God.

Mysticism and the Eucharist

In the Fourth Gospel, the passage which may refer to the eucharist sacrament suggests mysticism. "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him."⁴ If this is true it is the climax of John's sacramentalism. The disciple in this way attains to a mystic union and it is the life which elsewhere followed from faith.⁵ It seems

¹ John 4:15.

² 1 John 4:16

³ C.H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles, p. 117.

⁴ John 6:56

⁵ John 6:40, 47: 3-15, 16, 36.

more reasonable, however, to assume that the emphasis is still on faith in the Person of Christ, and the thought is that his flesh and blood are organs of his spirit,¹ and as such are important for humanity. This is suggested by verse 63 of this same chapter: "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."² As Hoskyns and Davey say: "There is no evidence that the author of the Fourth Gospel has in mind a contrast between a spiritual religion of the Word and a material sacramental religion. Everything points in an opposite direction. Christianity is the spiritual religion not because it is divorced from the physical world, but because the Flesh has been submitted to the Spirit, and thereby vivified. The body of the Christ and the bodies of those who believe in Him are Living Flesh; and water, bread, and wine have been vivified as the means by which this transformation may be effected."³ "He spoke the creative words which called men from death to life; He made bread and wine to be His flesh and Blood. He is, in fact, the Word incarnate. Verse 63 is the expression of all this, and must be applied to the discourse as a whole, not merely to one section of it, and also to the whole of the Lord's teaching."⁴ Here then, there is no conceivable

¹ This is a probable explanation why John may have transferred these events from the Last Supper.

² John 6:63

³ E.C. Hoskyns and F.N. Davey, op. cit., p. 304

⁴ Ibid., p. 305.

contrast between discourse and eucharist,¹ "any more than there should be to those who today at a rite that is at once liturgical and sacrificial hear the reading of the Gospel, await the words of consecration, and feed sacramentally upon the Body and Blood of the Lord."² Patristic exegesis of the Sixth Chapter do not refer it exclusively to either teaching or sacrament, and hence is often more satisfactory.³

Mysticism and Eschatology

As we can experience in a measure at least, the "New Life" now, this means it is known in the time setting of what is often called realized eschatology. Paul himself,

1 This may seem to be an opposite conclusion to that reached regarding the distinction between the Word and baptism. But the point at issue there was the objectivity of the power of baptism. (See page 21) Here the issue is simply whether, for the one who has received the "New Life," the discourse or the eucharist supplies spiritual food. Both must do this, but like the conclusion reached regarding baptism, only the appropriation of the Word gives any meaning to the sacrament. As for baptism, it would be irrelevant to claim objective power for the eucharist on this basis.

2 E.C. Hoskyns and F.N. Davey, op. cit., p. 305.

3 Ibid., p. 305.

fully expected a drastic fulfillment of the apocalyptic end of the present order, for he wrote, "then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord."¹ Paul was confident for most of his earthly existence² that he would not experience an earthly death. But for Paul the resurrection of Christ itself, was an eschatological event. "When Christ was raised by God from death he became life giving spirit and was given the supreme title of Lord, a new creation was brought into being which can be compared only to God's calling of light out of darkness in the beginning, or to his making the first man a living soul."³ With the resurrection of Christ the age to come has already begun.

If for Paul, Christ became Lord at the resurrection, this was not necessary for John. The acts and life of Christ themselves showed that Jesus was the Divine Logos. The chief significance of the resurrection for John was that it marked the beginning of a wider sphere of influence. No longer would Jesus be limited by a physical nature which had restricted him. He could come to his disciples now, no

¹ 1 Thessalonians 4:17

² That is, this is true from the time he became a Christian.

³ Frank C. Porter, Apocalyptical Conceptions of Paul, Journal of Biblical Literature, 1922 (XLI) p. 289 in T.S. Kepler Contemporary Thinking about Paul.

longer restricted by material obstacles. In John, the resurrection, the ascension, and the parousia, all are parts of the same movement. When Mary attempted to touch Jesus she was told she must not as he had not yet ascended to the Father.¹ That very same evening he no longer forbids his disciples to touch him. The ascension had been accomplished and the parousia was the return. Thus the parousia is separated from the resurrection by a scarcely perceptible interval.²

For the purpose of this work, it is not necessary to consider in great detail the various theories regarding Pauline and Johannine eschatology. It is sufficient to recognize that Paul was fully aware of the present existence of the "New Life" and that the "New Creation" was here even if Christ did not return in the manner of the primitive expectation. It must also be admitted that John sometimes falls back upon the tradition of primitive eschatology. "For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."³ While both Paul and John were emphatic that the "New Life" had begun, they both looked forward to some future suprahistorical goal.

¹ John 20:17

² E.F. Scott, op. cit., p. 308

³ John 6:40

Chapter 5THE "NEW CREATION" AND ETHICS

If the "New Being" in Christ had become metaphysically a new personality, we would not expect to find this creature capable of sin. "The "New Creature" in Christ in this case, should be a completely perfected Christian. But, as has been pointed out in a previous chapter, while something happens metaphysically as God acts to raise a man in newness of life, the "you" still remains "you" in the Pauline concept of "New Life." While the Christian had died to the flesh, characterized and dominated by all its lusts, and was henceforth to be aware of a new power enabling him to live to the spirit; somehow he still was troubled in varying degrees with many of the old passions and evil desires. Paul faced this problem when he advised the Colossians, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God¹.....Put to death therefore what is earthly in you....."² While Paul would speak absolutely about being raised with Christ he would not allow the religious emphasis to submerge the ethical and he called Christians to be moral. He called upon Christians to become in fact what they were ideally. Thus the new man is one who is

¹ Colossians 3:1

² Colossians 3:5

made over in spirit and in character and despite the fact that he may still sin he has come under the power of the goodness of God and because he has the power of the Holy Spirit, he has the spirit of holiness and love.

By the impartation of the spirit of the risen Lord a new life had begun, "yet that was not all. His life must conform to his new exalted status of being "in Christ" (ev Xpistw) i.e., mystically and intimately united with Christ. By this union he was assured a place in the eternal destiny of the world, in the new age soon to be ushered in. Death, should that come before the dawn of the new age, would have no effect save that of bringing the Christian into an even closer union freed from any danger of relapse into sin."¹ But since Paul is an ethical anarchist in theory when he says "All things are lawful for me,"² is it possible for any ethical test to indicate whether he is conforming to this exalted status of being "in Christ." If all things were truly lawful for the Christian it would be impossible for him to relapse into sin, hence, his "New Life" would be absolute even before the "new age." "When he says, 'All things are allowable,' he really means it. There is a 'but', of course, there always is; only he was trying to make it an inner tendency, not an external compulsion."³

¹ Mortson S. Enslin, *The Ethics of Paul*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930.) pp. 63-78 (Kepler, p. 302)

² 1 Corinthians 6:12

³ Francis C. Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings*, (London: University of London Press, 1924.) pp. 106-34 (Kepler, p. 310)

It is inconceivable that we can interpret Paul here as saying that the choice of right and wrong ceases to be necessary for the "New Creature" in Christ. Paul was talking about an attitude regarding the law, most likely the Ten Commandments.¹ "What he was not prepared to admit was that any rule was of obligation in itself, i.e. as binding between God and himself qua rule. If the thing was right in itself you spontaneously should do it, otherwise mere outward conformity was real rebellion. But on the other hand there is no reason why you should not obey the law if you wanted to do so."² The motivation of the "New Life" was then everything for Paul, and if the convert's living was done in slavish obedience to the law, he was still in his sins.

The Christian has been set free from the law and henceforth will serve in the spirit, for Paul says, "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the "New Life" of the Spirit."³ "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death."⁴ Christ has made the "New Creation" free and from now on who shall bring any charge against God's elect?⁵ The man who has received the "New Life"

¹ F.C. Burkitt, op. cit., p. 310.

² Ibid., p. 314

³ Romans 7:6

⁴ Romans 8:1,2

⁵ Romans 8:33

is judged by none, and now can be the judge of all things because the mind of Christ now controls his mind. Paul, however, realized the danger in his emphasis in freedom from the law. The pneumatikoi at Corinth were a distressing example of what came from any teaching detached from moral requirements. Even Paul himself found that he too still did evil and this must be explained: "For I do not the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me."¹ He is not responsible for this sin, however, for it has taken possession of the flesh, but his mind is free to obey God's law, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"² But for all those who think the Christian's responsibility to the law ceases he assures them, "I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin."³ The "New Creature" then has still the responsibility to live according to the spirit, "for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live."⁴ If then the Spirit fully controlled his mind he should not submit to any earthly condemnation, because from all human judgements he could appeal to the mind of Christ. "There can, indeed, be no true liberty which is

¹ Romans 7:19

² Romans 8:25

³ Romans 8:25

⁴ Romans 8:13

not founded on Paul's conception of man as a spiritual being, who lives in this material world but is subject to another, and who cannot therefore, accept any earthly authority as final."¹

If no earthly authority can be accepted as final, what is the criterion for the Christian life? Ramsey claims that "divine origin of either a written law or of the natural law (the suggestions of conscience) was not decisive for Paul."² The solution seems to be found in faith working through love,³ "In place of rules for conduct, instead of "the law" which Christianity entirely finishes...."⁴ Two things should be said about this view: in the first place, "love" still has to be interpreted which Paul himself did so nobly,⁵ and this does not finish the law of God but fulfills it;⁶ and secondly, the best way of interpreting love is by man's experience of God through the law, prophets, and Christ. "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it,...."⁷ In Judaism religion and morals were essentially identified and the great requirement was conformity to God.⁸ "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am

¹ E.F. Scott, Varieties of New Testament Religion, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943.) pp 108-20 (Kepler, p.358)

² P. Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.) p. 84.

³ Ibid., p. 78

⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 13:

⁶ Romans 13:8, Galatians 5:14

⁷ Romans 3:21

⁸ M. Enslin, op. cit., p. 304.

holy."¹ "He was a God of righteousness and of holiness; and holiness--at least in the days of Judaism--signified moral purity."² In the life of Jesus was made manifest, then, the righteousness of God, and Jesus was of spotless character and revealed the love of God perfectly.³ If then the Christian is to be in mystic union with Christ, and this lay at the bottom of Paul's thinking,⁴ then the same strict moral requirements as revealed by Christ, were binding upon the believer. "Anything that would tend to sully Christ, to join him to a harlot, to defile the body which was his holy temple, was an abomination and to be shunned resolutely."⁵

While Christ revealed the righteousness of God in a personal way, Paul found that even this was not enough to keep the "New Creature" living properly. He then was forced to give ethical exhortation. But this is not all, for after naming all the earthy things in Colossians, chapter three, he concludes by telling them that a reward is involved in right living, and also punishment for wrong living, regardless of whether you are a believer or not. "Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your

¹ Leviticus 19:2

² M. Enslin, op. cit., p. 304 (i.e. Kepler)

³ D.M. Baillie, writing in God was in Christ, claims that because Barth repudiates this "Jesus Cult" thinking, he fails to take the incarnation quite seriously. "The word became flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1:14) According to the view of Barth it seems that only the "word" is revelation and in this case "Christ lived for nothing, and the word was made flesh in vain." pp 53,54.

⁴ M. Enslin, op. cit., p. 305

⁵ Ibid., p. 305

reward; you are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality."¹

In the Johannine writings we find much the same approach to ethics as attempted by Paul. The guiding principle was to be love, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."² As in Paul, love is equated with the commandments: "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."³ This passage is from the vine analogy, which pictures the disciple of Christ in a very close mystical union: "He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."⁴ This mystical relationship means that the "New Creature" will henceforth share the love which abides in him, and therefore the experience is then one with the community of believers. The love which Jesus revealed is to be the example for his followers. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."⁵ All this is in very close agreement with the Pauline ethic.

In the Johannine writings, as in Paul, we face the problem of dealing with ethical anarchists. The First Epistle of John is aimed at an early form of gnostic that bore the

¹ Colossians 3:23-25

² John 13:24

³ John 15:10

⁴ John 15:5

⁵ John 15:12

wrong kind of fruit and so failed to prove discipleship.¹ This is the reason for the apparently contradictory statements which appear in this epistle. We read: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."² If we can accept this we will have difficulty with: "No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God."³ If the second statement were true it would solve most of our difficulties in Christian ethics--indeed it would solve them all. But it does not bring us any closer to solution than Paul's "All things are lawful for me."⁴ Both statements give the extreme position of the ethical anarchist. The writer of the First Epistle of John had in mind a specific situation, however, where the gnostics believed that when they attained to the higher gnosis their evil bodies did not matter, and the sin which their bodies committed did in no way affect the gnosis. So long as they had this right knowledge they were immune from sinning, regardless of what they did. This is a delusion according to the writer of the Epistle, and they are to face up to the fact that they do sin. Then to further emphasize his point, he tells them that if they have been

¹ While John 15:8 is not directed towards the gnostic menace, the words are useful to describe the situation.

² 1 John 1:8

³ 1 John 3:9

⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:12

born of God they cannot sin. This can only mean that they cannot sin with impunity but should be motivated to live in purity by their experience of Christ. In this same Epistle, appears three tests for Christian faith: (1) "And by this we may be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments."¹ (2) "By this you know the Spirit of God; every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God."² (3) "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love."³ By these tests the Christian must not only have made the right confession but must keep the commandments and also be motivated by a love which is of God, and this understanding comes through the Son. "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true;..."⁴

In both Paul and John, we find that the "New Creature" is dependent upon God for the good that is in him. "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I but the grace of God which is with me."⁵ In John, Jesus is reported to have said, "apart from me you can do nothing."⁶ Yet, "Never is human action more

¹ 1 John 2:3

² 1 John 4:2

³ 1 John 4:7,8

⁴ 1 John 5:20

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:10

⁶ John 15:5

truly and fully personal, never does the agent feel more perfectly free, than in those moments of which he can say as a Christian that whatever good was in them was not his but God's."¹ It is not right to think, however, that because God's grace is prevenient the Christian is not responsible for his actions. Unless the process of becoming a "New Creature" means a complete metaphysical change, the "New Being" must still be responsible for his actions. But the man who has experienced the "New Life" also knows that the love of Christ controls him.² This is indeed a paradox and can no more be explained than God's mysterious action of making a man a "New Creation." "It is false to this paradox to think of the area of God's action and the area of our action being delimited, each by the other, and distinguished from each other by a boundary, so that the more of God's grace there is in an action, the less is it my own personal action."³ The "New Creation" has entered into a new relationship which has no boundaries between God and man, but is creative because it is interpenetrating as man responds to the love that was first God's "We love, because he first loved us. If any one says, "I love God; and hates his brother, he is a liar..."⁴ This love is also for the neighbor and should result in the "New Creation's"

¹ D.M. Baillie, God Was In Christ, p. 114

² 2 Corinthians 5:14

³ D.M. Baillie, op. cit., p. 116

⁴ 1 John 4:19,20.

concern for the very salvation of his neighbor. Here is an example from Paul, of the creative interpenetrating love as the love of Christ controls us,¹ for, "Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation.'"²

In both John and Paul, we see that the proper result of receiving the "New Life" is righteousness. But as Snaith says, God does not require ethical righteousness as a condition of salvation.³ God requires faith but this does not mean that the sinner is ethically righteous. The "New Creature" in Christ will grow in righteousness as he learns true repentance with years of Christian experience. "We hold therefore most strongly that, according to both Old and New Testaments, God does not require righteousness as a condition of salvation, neither actual, nor imputed, nor imparted. He requires faith and faith alone."⁴ "And to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness."⁵ While the statement that faith is reckoned as righteousness, recurs frequently in this chapter of Paul's writings, this should not be thought of as giving the one who has faith a fictional ethical righteousness. Because God requires only faith does not mean that God is not concerned about sin.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:14

² 2 Corinthians 6:1,2

³ N. Snaith, op. cit., p. 164. See also page nine of this thesis.

⁴ Ibid., p. 165

⁵ Romans 4:5

"He is concerned about it, and that in part is why He is Saviour."¹ When the sinner comes to him in faith, he will be enabled to accomplish ethical righteousness² through the love of Christ working in him which in his own strength he was unable to do.

¹ N. Snaith, op. cit., p. 171

² Righteousness is a word which requires extensive study. For the purposes of this thesis, however, most difficulties will be resolved by discussing two meanings of righteousness in its biblical use. Righteousness primarily is a religious word rather than an ethical word. In Paul, it may be used only in its religious, or salvation sense, but never only in its ethical sense. Therefore, to be accounted as righteous is to be accepted by God. Here the meaning is purely religious. Most apparent contradictions which are usually presented by the use of the word righteousness can be resolved when its primary meaning is not overlooked.

Chapter 6FAITH AND THE WORK OF CHRIST

Men are required to make a decision about Jesus Christ that ultimately affects their salvation. "'The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."¹ In these verses, Paul requires men to confess to certain beliefs about the Lord Jesus Christ, and bluntly seems to state that such belief is a condition of salvation. By the very attitude that men take toward Christ, men are judged. But this is not peculiar to the theology of Paul, for John also requires belief in Jesus as necessary for life in his name: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."² He who does not believe is condemned already, and the judgement is that men prefer darkness rather than light.³ Mere belief, we shall see, does not exhaust the content of faith for either Paul or John. It is impossible, however, to have faith without having some knowledge about what you have "faith in," and

¹ Romans 10:8,9

² John 20:31

³ John 3:18,19.

the two passages just quoted show that the Christian's faith must be "in Jesus Christ." For Paul, the belief must not only be in the Person of Christ, but in the resurrection of Christ. The Johannine passage, on the other hand, in its context has possibly special reference to the signs which Jesus did during his post resurrection appearances, but these along with his whole life work warrant the belief that Jesus is the Christ.

In these two contrasted passages the essential differences between the conception of $\tau\omicron\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\nu$ for Paul and John can be distinguished. For Paul, the prominent element is the grace of God toward sinners as manifested and pledged as God was in Christ. It is the death and resurrection of Jesus which reveals fully this grace and this is to be laid hold of by faith.¹ But for John, it is the necessity of a belief in the metaphysical relationship of Christ with God which has his main concern.² Moreover, $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu$ as used by John may mean the first stirrings of faith or any further development up to the fullest assurance;³ even to the belief that Jesus was raised from the dead.⁴ While it may appear that the act of belief is placed at the beginning, in reality it is the end of a religious experience.⁵ "John himself appears to set out with the thesis that Jesus was the incarnate Logos,

¹ Romans 3:25; 4:24; 10:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

² Paul, of course, also affirmed this.

³ John 11:15; 13:19; 19:35, 20:31.

⁴ John 20:8, 25, 29

⁵ E.F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel. p. 268.

and to deduce from this assumption the whole story of His life and work. But the speculative idea,....was an after-thought."¹ "The 'belief' is no mere formal act, but the outcome of a deep inward conviction, and only as such does it have validity and meaning."²

Paul asks: "And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?"³ John we have noted, used the practical solution of writing so that they might believe.⁴ So did Paul of course, but in his epistles he introduces the preacher as the means of proclaiming: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."⁵ Paul is not relying upon a merely a human voice as the means of generating faith. Where the gospel is preached God is active: "it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe."⁶ And what is this folly that was preached? "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."⁷ That faith comes through the power of God and not only through the human presentation of the message, is shown in 1 Corinthians 2:4,5: "...my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." But God will

¹ E.F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p. 268

² Loc. cit.

³ Romans 10:14

⁴ John 20:31

⁵ Romans 10:17

⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:21

⁷ 1 Corthinthians 1:18

not force men to have faith in the message of Christ, but in a very real way each man makes his own decision: "...but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing."¹

While for Paul the word of the gospel with power has the means of bringing forth faith, the words spoken by Jesus as reported in John have yet an additional function. Those who already believe in Jesus must still respond to his words: "Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed on him, 'If you continue in my word, you are my disciples,'"² While some modern scholars find logos teaching in these sentences, the most general interpretation is that "Jesus manifested Himself, like any other great teacher, in the truths concerning God and human duty to which He gave utterance, and that we receive Him, His essential mind and spirit, in the believing apprehension of His words."³ In addition to this, however, we must recognize that in the Old Testament usage, a divine word is a vehicle through which God communicates part of Himself. When Jesus says, "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life,"⁴

¹ 2 Corinthians 4:2,3

² John 8:31 (also v.24, 6:63, 6:68, 17:8, 15:7)

³ E.F. Scott, op. cit., p. 284 (see also p. 285)

⁴ John 6:63

a communication from God is meant. In chapter 15, of John, the effect of the words of Jesus can mean a "New Life" of mystical union, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you...."¹ Here belief has blossomed into the richer relationship of a trusting faith that means obedience, and complete reliance upon the source of the "New Life."

Paul does not stress the words and signs of the pre-resurrection Jesus as the means of bringing forth the response of faith. Rather is it to the foot of the cross, that Paul leads, where men are judged as they accept or reject the grace of God. Why in this act of the cross did God take the initiative? Christ died because between God and sinful man there was enmity. Two verses show this: "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,..."² "As regards the gospel they are enemies of God....."³ The word *ἐχθροί* used in both these sentences is used in the passive sense of objects of wrath.⁴ Sinners are here the objects of God's wrath and it seems only reasonable to assume that God in this situation needs a measure of reconciling.⁵ It is not suggested, however, that it is man that is capable of doing the reconciling work, for the

¹ John 15:7

² Romans 5:10

³ Romans 11:28

⁴ Compare in latter passage, the contrast with ἀγαπητοί 'beloved'.

⁵ The New Testament never specifically states this.

Gospel message is that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."¹ The phrase "not counting their trespasses against them...."² strongly suggests a measure of reconciliation taking place in the mind of God. Does this phrase mean that God can view the sinner more favorably because of the cross? The answer must be conditional: only if the sinner responds in faith to this love of God as shown on the cross can reconciliation take place. Otherwise Paul would not have needed to beseech men on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God.³

It seems reasonable to assume that if God is God he must hate sin and a measure of reconciliation is needed on His side as well as on that of man. The alternative to this is to regard the holy love of God as something which means that he is a Supreme Being who shows no passion at all. By this view God is denied the privilege of having feelings which are in accord with the very character of holy love--to show righteous indignation at the rebellion of man the sinner. This is not to say that holy love has not the power to love the unlovable person--it has. But God cannot do anything contrary to his nature and therefore he must be a just God and this means his wrath is turned against all unrighteousness. Because there was 'enmity'

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:19

² 2 Corinthians 5:19

³ 2 Corinthians 5:20

on God's side also, did not cause St. Paul to doubt the love of God in any way, but "the crowning proof of God's love is just this fact that Christ died for us. (Romans 5:9)"¹

So there is no suggestion in Paul that it is an aloof God who sulks until man returns to Him, but a God who comes into man's lot and shows how he himself agonizes because of the sins of man. But it would appear there is in the Pauline passages under discussion here,² reasonable evidence that God is not one to always look favorably upon the deeds of man even though he never ceases to love those in rebellion. To maintain that God somehow cannot do other than continue to love man without bringing a measure of wrath against him is nothing but a human conceit and a very unworthy view of a righteous God. It also empties the gospel of what could give it its sense of urgency. Those who insist that God does not need to be reconciled in anyway must answer the question: Why does sin matter if God because of this in no way needs to be reconciled?

It is the failure to admit that God also needed to be reconciled which causes great difficulty for some of our leading theologians of today. D.M. Baillie, for example, states bluntly that the "New Testament does not speak of God being reconciled to man, but of man being reconciled to God."³ He then attempts to honestly face up to the two Johannine⁴ passages which use *ιλθςμος* and the one

L. 1 James Orr, "Reconciliation," Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, p. 475.

² Romans 5:10, 11:28, 2 Corinthians 5:19, 5:20, 5:19.

³ D.M. Baillie, op. cit., p. 187

⁴ 1 John 4:10, 2:2.

Pauline passage¹ which uses the word ἰλασθηριον. Here he concludes that in the John passages ἰλασμος "does not mean anything like appeasing of an angry God, for the love of God is the starting-point. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'"² As regards the Pauline passage, he is anxious to quote professor C.H. Dodd, who assures us that the rendering 'propitiation' is misleading.³ Dr. Baillie suggests it would be better to simply translate the word "mercy seat" or "place of forgiveness"⁴ and to this few scholars would seriously object. But even after considering Dr. Baillie's position, there does not seem any real basis for concluding that God is not reconciled by the work of Christ. If only man showed enmity against God and there was no resentment on the part of God, the language of Paul about "Making peace by the blood of his cross,"⁵ sounds very strange if it is necessary to make peace with a God not at all wrathful at "you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind doing evil deeds..."⁶

Dr. Baillie is correct when he observes that the New Testament does not speak of God being reconciled to man. It should be noted that only Paul ever uses the word reconciliation. While not stating the need of God's reconciliation

¹ Romans 3:24ff.

² D.M. Baillie, op. cit., p. 187.

³ Ibid., p. 188 ⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵ Colossians 1:20

⁶ Colossians 1:21

specifically Paul almost does, and can on a sound basis be interpreted to do so.¹ It seems very unsatisfactory to take the position which Baillie does, yet he is by no means alone, so that the Greek ἰλασμος and ἰλασθηριον must be emptied of all meaning of propitiation² and even expiation. What is significant is that there was value in the death of Christ for both God and man, and any theory of atonement must do justice to this. There can be no suggestion, however, that "the death of Christ was necessary in order to change an unforgiving God into a merciful dispenser of grace."³ This would be a monstrous suggestion that the death of Christ worked a change in the very nature of God himself.⁴

¹ See pages 55 ff.

² The purpose of this thesis is not to work out a full theory of atonement. It will be enough to state that crude theories of substitutionary atonement or crude satisfaction theories are not suggested. Neither is the fact that "God was in Christ" overlooked in this thesis.

³ Elias Andrews, op. cit., p. 50.

⁴ It has been of great satisfaction to have reached the conclusions of this chapter independently and without reference to the Doctrinal Statement of the United Church Basis of Union, or to the work of James Denney, or P.T. Forsyth. I now support my findings with a few brief statements from these three sources. I do not wish to be charged with any of their excesses, however.

1. The United Church Manual, The Basis of Union, Doctrine. Article VII. Of the Lord Jesus Christ "....."For our redemption He fulfilled all righteousness, offered Himself a perfect sacrifice on the Cross, satisfied Divine justice and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world." p. 15.

2. James Denney, The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917.)
 "...it is not by unconditioned love--an expression to which no meaning can be attached which does not obliterate the distinction between right and wrong--" p. 235
 "...Instead of God being man's chief end, man is made God's chief end. God has no raison d'etre, so to speak, but to

look after us; the type of religion becomes hedonist rather than ethical; there is a loss of reverence, of awe, of solemn worship, of concentration on the moral life." p. 236

".....We cannot dispense with the idea of propitiation, ἰλασμοῦ, ἰλαστροπρῖον: we cannot dispense with a work of reconciliation which is as objective as Christ Himself, and has its independent objective value to God....." p. 236

"...it is possible at the same time to love and to be justly estranged; yes, and at the same time also to work for the winning again of the offender against love." p. 237

"...If sin makes a difference to God--and that it does is the solemn fact which makes reconciliation of interest to us--then God is not immutable, and His love is not immutable, in the sense assumed. He has experiences in His love." p. 237.

3. P.T. Forsyth, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, (London: Independent Press Ltd., Memorial Hall, London, E.C. 4. Third Edition 1949 (first published 1907).

".....No one can forgive in full who does not feel the fullness of the offence. To feel the fullness of the offence as the Holiest must, is also to feel the wrath the Holiest feels..." p. 250.

"....He felt the weight of God's wrath in full, i.e. not God's temper but God's judgment; which for Him was God's withdrawal, the experience of God's total negation of the sin He was made. Grace could only be perfectly revealed in an act of judgment--though inflicted on Himself by the Judge....." p. 251

"It may freely be granted also that the reconciliation of God (by Himself in Christ) is not very explicit in the New Testament--for the same reasons which forbid the missionary preaching to his heathen on such a theme. The New Testament represents but the missionary stage of Christian thought and action. But the idea is not therefore untrue. If not explicit in the New Testament, it is integral to the Gospel. It is involved in the moral quality of holy forgiveness and in its divine psychology." p. 253

"I have wished to indicate that an expiatory atonement gives expression, by its searching moral realism, and its grasp both of holiness and sin, to an element in Christianity which has a crucial effect on the depth, wealth, and moral penetration of the preaching of the Gospel. The matter is, of course, a doctrine of the Church, and not a test of personal Christianity. It is not a Quincunque vult. It will only venture to say I never knew my sin so long as I but saw Christ suffering for me--never until I saw Him under judgment and realized that the chastisement of my peace was upon Him." p. 253.

"The note of judgment has gone out of common piety. It is not here a question of either denouncing or unchurched those who cannot recognize an expiatory element in our Salvation. I would simply express the conviction that their interpretation of the Cross does less than justice to the Gospel, and cannot continue to carry the full Κηρυγμα of the Church... It is not sufficiently charged with repentance and remission." p. 254.

If the gospel of Paul is to be understood in all its force, we must understand that it was not a God who was indifferent to the sins of man who "in him (Christ) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell."¹ It was a God who while loving us while we were yet sinners,² yet deeply resentful³ of our rebellion against his Holy will, came forth at the right time and died for the ungodly.⁴ It is because Paul sees the love of God able to do this despite his feeling of righteous wrath that causes Paul to say with amazement, "Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man-- though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die."⁵ It is because God's love can overcome this estrangement from man the sinner which gives to the love of God a depth which mystified Paul. One could almost say that God, like a human father, had to make up his mind about his wayward children, and in the end his love could not be subdued by his righteous indignation and he himself came forth as he suffered because of the sins of his children. Since God has taken the initiative and revealed his love which has made possible a reversal of the conditions of "enmity," Paul can say, "Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."⁶ But while Paul can say in one breath, "justified by his blood" this can have no real meaning for

¹ Colossians 1:19

² Romans 5:8

³ It has been suggested that resentment could never have produced such a revelation of God's love. I think the answer is that without resentment, such would not have been even necessary.

⁴ Romans 5:6

⁵ Romans 5:7

⁶ Romans 5:9

the sinner, unless he is "justified by faith." In this event, the enmity between God and man is ended in peace. "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul is overwhelmed with the goodness of God but this does not give to his faith a character which would "presume upon the riches of his (God's) kindness and forbearance and patience. Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will render to every man according to his works:..."¹ By this it is plain that Paul places a great deal of importance upon repentance. The old system of propitiatory animal sacrifice did not assure a changed mind and Paul would be aware that the sacrifice which God required is that of a broken and a contrite heart.² That is the response which must come from one who hears the proclamation of the gospel. Repentance in both Hebrew and Greek is closely associated with the root words for "turning." The Hebrew root נָחַם "(? from an onomatopoeic root signifying to pant or groan) is to change one's mind or purpose."³ The Greek, $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ means a change of mind, and it derives its moral content not from Greek but from Jewish and Christian thought. Repentance, "while it is a sense of regret and sorrow for the wrong-doings of the past, is far more. It

¹ Romans 2:4-6

² Psalm 51:17

³ W. Morgan, "Repentance," Dictionary of Bible, p. 225.

is an agonizing desire, leading to an agonizing and persistent effort, to realize such a radical change in the state of the mind as will secure and ensure against wrong-doing in the future."¹ Without the element of "turning" or "repentance" no "New Life" can be known. The "New Life" depends upon a turning from self (repentance) and a turning to God in Christ (faith). This is summed up by Paul as he addresses the elders of the Ephesian church, "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."² Sometimes the question is asked, What comes first, faith or repentance? "From the point of view of theory it is a somewhat barren discussion.....But what is of importance is to note that in conversion both are inextricably joined together in the unity of a complex but single moral act."³

While repentance is not specifically mentioned in the Fourth Gospel it is included as in St. Paul, in the notion of faith. "A man cannot exercise faith whose heart is not right, whose moral condition and attitude of will are opposed to the right."⁴ "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from God?"⁵ So faith here is morally conditioned, and this is exactly what is meant by repentance in its narrower sense.⁶ In both Paul and John, and especially of the New

¹ Gross Alexander, "Repentance" Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, p. 498.

² Acts 20:21

³ J.C. Lambert, "Turning," Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, p. 773.

⁴ Gross Alexander, op. cit., p. 499.

⁵ John 5:44

⁶ Gross Alexander, op. cit. p. 499.

Testament as a whole, we can say, "Faith is the condition of entrance into the experience of salvation, the enjoyment of eternal life; but repentance is the psychological and moral condition of faith. As eternal life is unattainable without faith, faith is unattainable without repentance."¹

This is very close to what Bultmann says about faith, as Paul thinks of it. In his epistles one finds "two acts of faith or belief and consequently two concepts of faith--belief must be distinguished. The first is belief (in the narrower popular use of the English word): willingness to consider true..... The second is faith which is self-surrender to the grace of God and which signifies the utter reversal of a man's previous understanding of himself--specifically, the radical surrender of his human "boasting."²

Considerable effort has here been expended to show that both God and man can become estranged from each other because of man's sin. This is what gives faith for Paul its stark contrast between hope and fear. "Faith would be cheated of its purpose if the believer were to consider himself insured by it.....The man of faith, who in view of God's 'grace' is freed from fear, must not forget that the grace that emancipates him is the 'grace' of a Judge."³ This is why forgiveness can never be unconditionally given for if God were to forgive the unrepentant it would be inconsistent with what we understand to be the nature of the

¹ Gross Alexander, op. cit., p. 499

² R. Bultmann, op. cit., p. 330. The words "utter reversal" can certainly mean a "turning" or "repentance."

³ Ibid., p. 321.

"New Life" of peace through the cross of Christ. Paul tells those already in the faith, "...but you stand fast only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you."¹ It would be strange, therefore, to find that the "change of mind" (faith psychologically conditioned by repentance) is so necessary to continue in a right relationship to God, but not at all necessary to the original establishment of this relationship. "Repentance is indeed a necessary ingredient of forgiveness if the two terms are rightly understood. Sorrow for sin and complete renunciation of it are not arbitrary conditions which the Sovereign chooses to exact before bestowing a boon; they belong to the very essence of the personal relation between Father and son which has been impaired or broken by error and disobedience, and which is to be restored in forgiveness."²

Estranged from God, then, as the sinner is, the first condition for receiving the "New Life" is to turn to God with a changed mind. To do this, the spectacle of God's reconciling love upon the cross is the great dynamic to produce this change. "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."³ There is thus both a Godward and a manward movement as we come to the cross of Christ to be reconciled to God. No

¹ Romans 11:20,21

² W.T. Davison, "Forgiveness," Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, p. 616

³ John 12:32.

longer will the "New Creature" in Christ attempt to merit righteousness under the law,¹ for he has been redeemed from the curse of the law.² From now on the "New Life" is what matters "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."³ In the cross of the Lord the "New Creature" in Christ has found that the world has been crucified to him and he to the world.⁴ Those who have entered into the "New Life" live no longer unto themselves but they live "for him who for their sake died and was raised."⁵ Great importance is attached to the corporate idea for "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself."⁶ "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one spirit."⁷ Paul actually calls the church, the body of Christ, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."⁸

Because of the corporate nature of the Christian community, the mystical formula, "in Christ" must also mean in his church, or in the body of Christ. But to state as Bultmann does that the phrase "in Christ" is primarily an ecclesiological formula⁹ does less than justice to the nature of faith. Faith after all is "in Christ" and must be a personal thing. That it means also

1 Galatians 2:19

2 Galatians 3:13

3 Galatians 6:15

4 Galatians 6:14

5 2 Corinthians 5:15

6 Romans 14:7

7 1 Corinthians 12:13

8 1 Corinthians 12:27

9 R. Bultmann, op. cit., p. 311.

a corporate existence of the people of God is a possible key to a clearer understanding of the atoning work of Christ. Paul may well have thought of the death and resurrection of Christ in terms of the ritual of the "dying and rising gods" which had been for so many years the pattern in the Near East. Here the role as probably played by the Messianic king on behalf of the Hebrew race was an act of corporate religion. All who participated in this ritual, and the acting was on behalf of the whole race, would be mystically united to their Messianic king. So Paul can say, "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe.¹...If then you have been raised with Christ,² seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." In this ritual, and even in animal sacrifice, there was no thought of transference of guilt. So when Paul says, Christ "died for me" he is using language, which if interpreted in the terms of the cultus, is not forensic. This could also throw light upon the use of *ἵλασμος* in 1 John. Here would be explained the note of victory which Paul finds in the work of Christ as he triumphed over the enemies of man.³ It is astounding, but in Christ God has acted, so that the sinner can come into a close mystical union with God through Christ. No longer will the wrath of God be turned against the sinner, since this would be also against Christ, for Christ dwells in the "New Creature," and the "New Life"

¹ Colossians 2:20

² Colossians 3:1

³ Colossians 2:13-15

is "in Christ." The repentant sinner is thus accounted as righteous in a salvation sense, even though he is not righteous in an ethical sense, for Christ's sake.¹

For those who object to the word mysticism, the "New Life" which comes through the proclamation of the Gospel and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, can be thought of as a life of immediate fellowship with Christ. "It was John who first gave clear and adequate expression to this view of the Christian life, as nothing else than a continual communion with the invisible Lord."² Paul had, of course, already approached this conception, but it was not as clearly articulated, because he was concerned with the future Parousia, and because he almost separated the earthly Jesus from the exalted Christ. But for John, the larger invisible life of Jesus is only a continuation of his earthly life. Paul did not set out in a systematic attempt to theologically explain the "New Life" in Christ. He reported honestly and as best he could what had happened to him as he was made dead to the law, because something had come into his life with power. By this Paul found a new motive for ethics. "Now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."³ Paul would

¹ We must not conceive of this, however, as separating God from his own atoning work. The paradox of God-man is involved here.

² E.F. Scott, op. cit., p. 374

³ 1 Philippians 1:21

agree with John who wrote, "By this we may be sure that we are in him; he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."¹ The "New Life" is thus a life of service.

We have been dealing with the central problem of the doctrine of salvation. It is difficult to explain just how the divine and the human can come together in a life that is at once the free gift of God and at the same time the responsible choice of an autonomous person. That the "New Life" comes mysteriously is attested by the United Church doctrinal Basis of Union, "We believe in the necessity of regeneration, whereby we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God, who imparts spiritual life by the gracious and mysterious operation of His power,....."²

What is the ultimate meaning of the "New Life" in Christ? Paul says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."³ John says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,

¹ 1 John 2:5,6

² The Manual of The United Church of Canada, Article IX, p. 16 of the Basis of Union.

³ Ephesians 2: 4-7

that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."¹

¹ John 3:16

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