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### The Doctrine of Regeneration as Seen Especially in Romans 6:1-14

Eugene Klug

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir\_kluge@csl.edu

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CONCORDIA SEMINARY

THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION  
AS SEEN ESPECIALLY IN ROMANS 6, 1-14

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED  
TO THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

BY

EUGENE F. KLUG

1. Reference of the text to regeneration has not been sufficiently explained.
2. Luther's comment on Ro. 6, 3ff (July 4, 1534. WA XLII, 362ff) should have been considered. Th. S.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

APRIL 26, 1942

Approved by

Thos. Fischer  
W. Arnold

This paper is respectfully dedicated to my teachers  
at Concordia Seminary by whose instruction and  
guidance I learned to look upon God's Holy  
Word with greater love and insight.

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## INTRODUCTION

"Nothing which does not burn itself can kindle a flame in something else." (Gregory I) These words were not written as a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, but they do nevertheless belong in every critique of this great epistle; for it truly "burns" and has kindled that same flame in the hearts of many thousands. In the history of the New Testament Church it occupies a high position of prominence. The influence of this epistle on men and events can be traced with striking clarity from apostolic times. Through it, just to mention one instance, God brought Luther to a right knowledge of His Word, and through this valiant servant, many other Gospel-starved souls.

It is a common experience among men to thrill and to tremble when their hands or their eyes rest on some treasure. All of us appreciate in a measure the breathless anxiety and nervous tension of the diamond cutter as he gingerly, and yet firmly, taps on his diamond chisel, hoping that the priceless gem before him will split according to expectations. We appreciate too the love and admiration with which a virtuoso receives into his hands a genuine Stradivari or Guarneri violin. Students of the Bible experience this same sensation - and perhaps in a greater measure - when they read Paul's Letter to the Romans. Those fortunate few who are able to do this in the Greek original find still greater gratification and reward for their study. Here certainly we have the very heart

of the Christian doctrine. Luther has aptly stated this in the opening words of his preface to the letter:

Diese Epistel ist das rechte Hauptstueck des Neuen Testaments, und das allerlauterste Evangelium, welche wohl wuerdig und werth ist, dass sie ein Christenmensch nicht allein von Wort zu Wort auswendig wisse, sondern taeglich damit umgehe, als mit taeglichem Brod der Seele. Denn sie nimmer kann zu viel und zu wohl gelesen oder betrachtet werden, und je mehr sie gehandelt wird, je koestlicher sie wird und basz schmecket.<sup>1</sup>

Everyone who deals with this epistle - be he renowned Bible commentator or neophyte Bible student - will undoubtedly confess his inadequacy and presumption in attempting to add anything to what Paul has already said so beautifully. And yet, that very fact makes it a challenge to every lover of God's Holy Word. Sanday, whose commentary on Romans is unquestionably one of the finest and most penetrating, has expressed the sentiments of many others when he says in his preface:

There are few books which it is more difficult to exhaust and few in regard to which there is more to be gained from renewed interpretation by different minds working under different conditions. If it is a historical fact that the spiritual revivals of Christendom have been usually associated with closer study of the Bible, this would be true in an eminent degree of the Epistle to the Romans.<sup>2</sup>

Even in the field of philosophy, where men look at life and the forces that control it, in a cold, intellectual manner, we would find the Epistle to the Romans ranking high among the best philosophical treatises. To the Christian scholar, of course, it means much more. With Sanday we therefore join forces to say: "It is one of the most original of writings. No Christian can have read it for the first

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<sup>1</sup>Luther, Martin, Vorreden zur deutschen Bibeluebersetzung, St. Louis: Concordia, 1908, col. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Sanday-Headlam Commentary, I.C.C., Romans, p. 5 of Preface.

time without feeling that he was introduced to heights and depths of Christianity of which he had never been conscious before."<sup>1</sup>

Not only, however, has Paul recorded the Gospel message and Christian doctrine in a striking, logical manner, but he has also brought out clearly the link that exists between the Old Testament teaching and that of the New Covenant. Luther recognized this early and emphasized it continually in his own teaching. At the close of his Preface he sums this up very appropriately in the words:

Darum es auch scheint, als habe St. Paulus in dieser Epistel wollen einmal in die Kuerze verfassen die ganze christliche und evangelische Lehre, und einen Eingang bereiten in das ganze Alte Testament. Denn ohne Zweifel, wer diese Epistel wohl in Herzen hat, der hat des Alten Testaments Licht und Kraft bei sich. Darum lasse sie ein jeglicher Christ ihm gemein und stetig in Uebung sein. Da gebe Gott seine Gnade zu. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

With this exhortation of Luther before us - who loved the great apostle Paul for the power with which he preached Christ, and who himself became thereby under God's guidance the greatest power in the Church after Paul - it remains for me but to add the exhortation of Paul himself to every Bible student: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim.2,15) If I can in a measure fulfill that difficult task in the following exposition, I shall be happy and well rewarded for the effort expended in its composition.

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<sup>1</sup>Sanday, op.cit., p.xli of the Introduction.  
<sup>2</sup>Luther, op.cit., col.109.

## I. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

### 1. Introduction

Regeneration in the Epistle to the Romans: that is the problem before us for our consideration. Does Paul speak of regeneration at all in this epistle? There are those who hold that he does not, while others maintain that he does. Still others, unable to decide one way or the other, attempt to adopt a middle course, thereby becoming hopelessly enmeshed in doctrinal and exegetical confusion. The problem resolves itself still further into a dispute over one passage, ch.6,1-14, which is the only section of Paul's well planned letter which could - and which does, if I may anticipate my conclusion - refer to the regenerating process. It will be my purpose, therefore, to show that Paul does treat of regeneration in Rom.6,1-14. In order to present a complete picture of regeneration, I will, however, also adduce other New Testament references.

The manner of treatment was a problem in itself, for two methods of approach present themselves, namely, an inductive and a deductive mode, if I may use these terms of logic somewhat loosely. The subject matter is both doctrinal and exegetical. Hence the choice was present for me to treat the one or the other first in the order of discussion or both simultaneously. I have chosen a combination of the latter and of the deductive method, that is, I will first present the Scriptural (and of course Pauline) doctrine on regeneration,

and then in the second place, this doctrine as it is found in the Letter of Paul to the Romans, especially in ch.6,1-14. By this plan I hope to engineer a finished product of the doctrine of regeneration and thereby build a framework around Paul's presentation in Romans which can not be shaken.

### 3. Definition of Regeneration

This doctrine is of course fundamental in the Christian religion. It stands in close proximity with the central doctrine of Christianity, justification by faith; for it describes the process whereby a sinner becomes a believer, how unregenerate becomes regenerate man. Since the time of the Reformation, when these doctrines were under heavy fire, there have been careful attempts made to give a sound, comprehensive statement of this doctrine. The truly Lutheran - because truly Scriptural - expositions and definitions are incontestable. I need but repeat some to establish a basis for attack of the problem. Dr. A.L. Graebner has summed regeneration up with these words:

Regeneration or Conversion, in the stricter sense of the terms is the work of divine power and grace by which man, born of the flesh, void of all power to think, to will, or to do, any good thing, and dead in sin, is, through the means of grace, quickened from spiritual death, born into a new spiritual life, endowed with spiritual power to know and understand spiritual truth, to will and to do what is spiritually good, and is thus transferred from his natural state of sin and wrath and spiritual death into a state of spiritual life, of faith and grace, and made to accept and enjoy the benefits of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, the Redeemer and Savior of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A.L.Graebner, Theological Quarterly, 1901, vol.V, p.134.

Dr. Franz Pieper in his monumental work, Christliche Dogmatik, has given a shorter, but nevertheless complete, definition:

Wiedergeburt bezeichnet begrifflich die Setzung eines neuen, namentlich des geistlichen Lebens. Dass diese Wiedergeburt aber in der Anzuendung des Glaubens an Christum besteht, sagt 1 John 5,1: "Jeder, der glaubt, dass Jesus der Christ ist, der ist von Gott geboren."<sup>1</sup>

This is very similar to Baier's definition, which Pieper also quotes:

Facile constat, regenerationem in eo consistere, quod in hominibus generatur fides, adeoque homines ex non credentibus fiunt credentes, 1 John 5,1: Omnis, qui credit Jesum esse Christum, ex Deo natus dicitur. Nasci ex Deo autem est renasci, et sic manifeste constat hominem per hoc ipsum renasci, quod fides in ipso accenditur.<sup>2</sup>

The Formula of Concord, in the Thorough Declaration, gives this statement:

The word regeneratio, that is, regeneration, is used so as to comprise at the same time the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake alone, and the succeeding renewal which the Holy Ghost works in those who are justified by faith.... As also the word vivificatio, that is, making alive, has sometimes been used in a like sense. For when man is justified through faith (which the Holy Ghost alone works), this is truly a regeneration, because from a child of wrath he becomes a child of God, and thus is transferred from death to life.<sup>3,4</sup>

### 3. Exposition of Regeneration

The concept regeneration occurs with its synonym conversion (narrow sense) in various forms in Scripture.

Hence they are all Scriptural terms. Regeneration (παραγενεσις)

<sup>1</sup>F. Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik, vol. II, p. 600.

<sup>2</sup>Baier, in Christliche Dogmatik by Pieper, vol. II, p. 601.

<sup>3</sup>Formula of Concord, in Concordia Trilotta, p. 921.

<sup>4</sup>cf. also Concordia Cyclopaedia, p. 181 (Conversion).

and conversion (ἐπιτροπή) describe the same process, though they view the phenomenon from a different angle. It might be well to note the other Scriptural terms which are synonymous with this concept: ἀναγενᾶν (1 Pet. 1, 3, 23); ἀποκτείν (James 1, 18); γεννηθῆναι ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος (John 1, 13; 1 John 5, 1); γεννηθῆναι ἕνθεν (John 3, 5); γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος (John 3, 5, 6); λωοπαρεῖν (Eph. 2, 5); ἔξειρεῖν (Eph. 2, 6); καινὴ κτίσις (2 Cor. 5, 17; Gal. 6, 15); δοῦναι μετάνοιαν (Acts 5, 31).<sup>1</sup>

"The subject of regeneration or conversion (subjectum regenerandum sive convertendum, as the dogmaticians designate him) is man in his unregenerate state."<sup>2</sup> Scripture describes him in John 3, 6 as man born of the flesh. In all respects he is similar to a regenerate man - in his physical and mental properties - except that his mind is carnal and enmity against God, Rom. 8, 7. Natural man has no spiritual understanding; in fact he is blind and ignorant, Eph. 4, 18; 5, 8. The Epitome of the Formula of Concord characterizes him as follows:

The unregenerate will of man is not only turned away from God, but also has become an enemy of God, so that it only has an inclination and desire for that which is evil and contrary to God, as it is written Gen. 8, 21: The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.<sup>3</sup>

To natural man the things that pertain to God are foolishness, and he finds it impossible to receive and understand them, 1 Cor. 2, 14; 2 Cor. 3, 5. Natural man's will is always at loggerheads with the will of God, Rom. 5, 10; Col. 1, 21. And the point to be emphasized over against all Pelagians and Synergists is that man's corruption and lack of spirituality is total. "Darkness (κόρος), Eph. 5, 8, is not twilight, but the total absence of light. Blindness is not defective

<sup>1</sup>cf. Graebner, op.cit., p.134.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.135.

<sup>3</sup>Formula of Concord (Epitome), Concor. Tric., p.785.

vision, but the total inability to see."<sup>1</sup> His heart, his thoughts, are and only can be evil, Gen.6,5. He is not only indifferent to God, but also completely different, because of the sinful state in which he exists. His condition, in fact, is so bad that Scripture speaks of him as being dead in sins, Eph.2,5; Col.2,13. There is not even a spark of spiritual life in natural man, for to be spiritually dead means to be spiritually lifeless. And this death does not come upon men after a long life of sin and transgression, but from the very moment that physical life is begun in each new offspring there exists spiritual death; for original sin, which is the sting of death and its cause, is handed down from one generation to the next, Ps.51; Gen.3,21. Every one is filthy, none does any good thing, not even one, Rom.3,10ff.

"We may change a dead man's garment; but he is as dead in a decent shroud as he was in the clothes in which he died."<sup>2</sup> Left to himself natural man does not become better, but rather sinks off into deepest moral degradation, so that even Nature must blush at his filth, Rom.1,21ff. Under the influence of a Christian society and the pressure of accepted convention natural man does often lead an outwardly decent life, but this seeming moral purity is only the pretty shroud over an otherwise dead body. "Reason and free will are able to a certain extent to live an outwardly decent life; but to be born anew, and to obtain inwardly another heart, mind, and disposition, this only the Holy Ghost effects."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Greebner, op.cit., p.136.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.137.

<sup>3</sup>Formula of Concord, op.cit., p.391.

As little as it is possible for higher forms of life to develop out of lower orders, so little is it possible for natural man to help himself in any way. The Formula of Concord aptly remarks that man can concur "in his own conversion or regeneration just as little as a stone or a block or clay."<sup>1,2</sup> Nothing short of a new creation, a complete, organic, essential change could transform man's status of "flesh born of flesh." The mere fact that Scripture attributes to the regenerate person the title of "the new man," gives evidence to the completeness of the change. The Apology, therefore, has it correctly: "Accordingly, before we observe the Law, our hearts must be born again by faith."<sup>3</sup> This new creation, this new man, does not proceed from the old, as in a process of evolution. But it is as its name indicates a new creation. As man was once born physically, only to be in spiritual darkness, so he now is reborn again into a new spiritual life, Tit.3,5 (παλιγενεσις), 1 Pet.1,3,25 (ἄνωγενεσις).

The new man is God's handiwork,<sup>4,5</sup> as we confess with all Christians in Luther's exposition of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed.<sup>6</sup> It is apparent also that regeneration, or conversion, is essentially the creation of faith in man's heart. The Evangelist John declares that every man who believes in Jesus Christ is "born of God," 1 John 5,1; John 1,12,23. We become God's children by faith in his Son, Gal.3,26. Through the faith of the operation of God we are risen with Christ, Col.2,12, saved from eternal perdition, John 3,16,

<sup>1</sup>Formula of Concord, op.cit., p.891. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.895.

<sup>3</sup>Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Conc.Trig., p.207.

<sup>4</sup>Luther, Sacramentale Schriften, V, 560.

<sup>5</sup>Apology of the Augs.Conf., op.cit., p.191; cf. also Theological Quarterly, V, p.141.

<sup>6</sup>Formula of Concord, op.cit., p.895.

and blessed with life through his name, John 20, 31. Luke records in Acts 11, 21 that at Antioch the hand of the Lord was with them that preached the Lord Jesus; and a great number believed and turned (ἐπέστρεψεν) unto the Lord. Conversion (or regeneration) is thus used as a synonym of faith in the same passage, thereby indicating decisively the oneness of meaning. Hence the Apology rightly declares: "From this it is evident that we are justified before God by faith alone, that is, it obtains the remission of sins and grace for Christ's sake, and regenerates us."<sup>1</sup> Writing on the significance of the Christian's dying and rising with Christ, Wilhelm Hahn, present day German theologian, states:

Zu den die Existenz des Christen unschreibenden Formeln, der Mensch befinde sich "in Christus" und werde "mit Christus" "gleichgestaltet," tritt als dritte Aussage die in der Theologie des Paulus besonders im Vordergrund stehende, wonach sich der neue Mensch vom alten durch den Glauben unterscheidet.<sup>2</sup>

It is a Scriptural fact that the regenerate man, the new man, does possess certain new powers and energies, which he did not have when he was "in the flesh." They are even a vital and inherent part of him after regeneration. God is pleased with the fruits which the new man produces, because they proceed from a pure and spiritually discerning nature. In this blessed state man can even cooperate in a sense with the Holy Spirit in bringing about new fruits of faith. But the powers themselves, which enable him to live according to the Spirit, are a product of regeneration, and hence a creation

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<sup>1</sup>Apology of the Augs. Conf., op.cit., p.171.

<sup>2</sup>W.Hahn, Das Mitsterben und Mitaufstehen mit Christus bei Paulus, p.165.

<sup>3</sup>See also G.Stevens, Pauline Theology, p.233.

of God. Of himself man would be without help in this world.

Dr. Graebner, therefore, has correctly stated:

The faculty of hearing and the sense of sight are not engendered before the child, but in and with the child; they do not concur in, but presuppose the procreation of the living child. The spiritual man as well as the physical man with all his energies is *Deo factus*, not of himself, but of him who made him, God.<sup>1</sup>

God works through natural means. He creates and sustains physical life by natural processes. So also in the realm of spiritual life. God does not work immediately (without means), but mediately, through the means of grace, media, instrumenta gratiae.<sup>2</sup> These means of grace, ordained by God and made efficacious by the meritorious work of Christ, do not only offer and exhibit (vis dativa) God's grace, that is, the forgiveness of sins, but they actually produce and sustain faith and bring about regeneration (vis effectiva), Rom. 10, 17; 1 Pet. 1, 23; 1 Cor. 4, 15; Tit. 3, 5; 1 Cor. 11, 24, 25.<sup>3</sup> "Regeneration is essentially the bestowal of faith; and faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."<sup>4</sup>

God, as has been shown, is the sole cause of our regeneration. But Scripture nowhere gives the slightest indication of the opposite conclusion which some men under pressure of their reason attempt to set down as Bible teaching, namely, that God must also be the cause why some men are not converted. The plain teaching of Scripture is that man is the sole cause for his unconverted state. Hosea laments, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help," Hos. 13, 9. Paul solemnly warns such as despise the goodness of God, harden their hearts against him continually, and thus add up wrath against themselves on Judgment Day, Rom. 2, 4, 5.

<sup>1</sup>Graebner, op.cit., p. 142. <sup>2</sup>F.C., op.cit., p. 902.  
<sup>3</sup>Ph. Engelder, Notes on the Means of Grace, p. 1  
<sup>4</sup>Graebner, op.cit., p. 143.

Regeneration is an instantaneous act or occurrence - whether it is always recognized as such or not. There is no neutral, intermediate or passive state through which man must pass before regeneration. Men are either regenerate or unregenerate. A man is either spiritually alive or spiritually dead. Every sinner can become acquainted with the contents of the Gospel, recognize his sinful state, and hear that Jesus is his Savior, but unless he have faith in this Savior, which is a gift of God, he is still unregenerate.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Spirit is present and active at all times in the Word and in the Sacraments; and the Word of God itself, as Scripture says, is a power of God unto salvation. Regeneration is effected in that instance when the Word of God, successful in dispelling all resistance, engenders the first spark of faith in the repentant sinner's heart. Faith is a revolutionary phenomenon in the life of every man - whether outward manifestations are present or not - for it brings man from death unto life, from spiritual darkness to spiritual light. The Evangelist Matthew, therefore, describes this matter very graphically in the words: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," Matt. 11, 12.

But a Christian, and faith itself, must not be static. From the moment of regeneration there begins a progressive growth in spirituality. Thus we can say that a Christian has infinite possibilities of spiritual expansion until he reaches perfection of heaven. But this - it must be remembered - is just a growth of what was already there. The human embryo,

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<sup>1</sup>Gruebner, op.cit., p.147f.

quite shapeless and tiny at first, embodies nevertheless all the determining genes and chromosomes that will later develop into the beautiful human body with all its marvelous organs and senses. This is to some extent an analogy of the process that takes place in a regenerated man. Possessed of new spiritual powers and energies he too grows in faith and in spirit. This is commonly known as the new life, or conversion in the wider sense. Hence, while regeneration and the new life must always be found together, we must nevertheless be careful to distinguish between the two occurrences, for the latter is only the result of the former. Both come of course through the working of God's grace, with this difference however: the new man does in a certain sense cooperate with the Spirit. "The subjectum convertendum in the former is a passive subject only, while in the latter it is an active subject. To confound the one with the other is like issuing a burial permit for a living man, or prescribing medicine and diet for a corpse."<sup>1</sup>

It has long been a mystery to the faithful of God why some men remain unregenerate, while others are renewed in heart and spirit, though all were equally guilty and sinful, and though all were offered the same efficacious Word. Rightly the dogmaticians have given this puzzling fact the title: crux theologorum. But we need not go this far to stump our limited reason. Regeneration itself is a miracle, a mystery, which we can not explain. Nicodemus was one of the first to puzzle over it. He asked the Master: How can a man be born a second time? Jesus answered: of water and the Spirit. But even the Lord is so far from removing all difficulty from

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<sup>1</sup>Grabner, op.cit., p.149.

Nicodemus' mind, that he understandingly admonishes his pupil never to expect to be able to comprehend fully this mystery: "Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John 3,7-8. And when Nicodemus asks for proof, How can these things be? Jesus gives him the evidence to which we still cling today: These things are true. Believe it. For I, who am true God and man, who have come down from the inner councils of heaven, with whom nothing is impossible, declare them unto you! (John 3,11-13) And though the answer of Nicodemus is not recorded, we might well imagine that it must have been similar to that of the trusting father whose son Jesus healed: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mark 9,24)

#### 4. Baptism - its Importance

This sacrament is a further extension of God's great kindness, divinely instituted as a means of grace, that we might become still more certain of our regeneration. The Formula of Concord expresses this well in the words:

For this reason also (no de revelata Dea ergo nos voluntate dubitemus) Christ causes the promise of the Gospel not only to be offered in general, but He seals it through the Sacraments, which He attaches as seals of the promise and thereby confirms it (the certainty of the promise of the Gospel) to every believer in particular.<sup>1</sup>

"Die Taufe ist nicht mehr und nicht weniger als ein von Gott geordnetes Mittel, wodurch Gott den Getauften die

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<sup>1</sup>Formula of Concord, op.cit., p.1075.

durch Christi satisfactio vicaria vorhandene Vergebung der Sünden auf besondere Weise darbietet und zuignet."<sup>1</sup> Hence, like the Word, it brings about regeneration.

Die Schrift kennt nur eine Wiedergeburt, die auf seiten des Menschen sich durch den Glauben an Christum, das heißt, durch den Glauben an die von Christo erworbene Vergebung der Sünden, vermittelt. So ist auch die Taufe nur dadurch Mittel der Wiedergeburt, dass sie die Vergebung der Sünden darbietet und durch diese Darbietung auch den Glauben erweckt, resp. stärkt.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, it is by virtue of Christ's word that Baptism has such power and efficacy. The presence of his word makes it a true sacrament. Without the promises that the Word contains, the Sacrament of Baptism would be a meaningless rite, for faith could have nothing to hold and to embrace. Indeed, faith could not be engendered if the Word of God were lacking. Those who hold Baptism to be a mere symbolical act, a sort of external demonstration that a man has come to faith, violate in every way the plain teaching of Scripture. They fail to note that Jesus himself, in his words of institution, ascribed to Baptism the power of making disciples, believers of all nations, Matt.28,19.20. They fail too to note the force of "baptizing into (eis) the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Similarly, they fail to observe the emphasis Paul puts on the fact that Baptism is not *eis tò óνομα Παύλου*, 1 Cor.1,13.15, nor into the name of Moses, 1 Cor.10,2, but into the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Gal.3,7; Rom.6,5; Acts 8,16. There is the power of Baptism! That is where its significance lies! It brings us first of all the forgiveness of sins which Jesus gained for us, and then also it brings us into a most intimate union with Christ, so that we can be said

<sup>1</sup>Pfeifer, op.cit., III, p.308f.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.312.

to die and to rise with Christ, and thus become partakers of all the benefits of his meritorious work.<sup>1</sup> Baptism, or spiritual rebirth, would be less important in our lives than our physical birth and life, if this were not true.<sup>2</sup> The regenerating power of Baptism is clearly indicated in Scripture. To deny it is tantamount to calling the Holy Ghost a liar and the Apostle Paul whom God inspired a base deceiver. - But let Scripture defend itself. In John 3,3 Christ states that a man comes into heaven by "being born again," and then in verse five he says that this rebirth is "of water and the Spirit." Tit.3,5 Paul says: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." To the Galatians he writes: "In truth ye are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for (explicative γάρ) as many as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."<sup>3</sup> In Eph. 5,25f Paul shows the importance of baptism and then at the same time states the source of its great power: "Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." And the Apostle Peter makes it very clear that the blessing of baptism is not merely a new life but regeneration for the forgiveness of sins when he says: that baptism saves us, not because it leads us to give up the filth of the flesh, but because it is the answer of a good conscience toward God (ὁ νεκροῦσθαι ἐφ' ἧς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν), 1 Pet.3,21.<sup>4</sup> Baptism

<sup>1</sup>B. Weiss, Lehrbuch der Biblischen Theologie des N.T., p.52

<sup>2</sup>Luther, Sämtliche Schriften, V, 560.

<sup>3</sup>Note that Rom.6,1-14 is a close parallel to this passage. I mention it only briefly here, because it will be taken up at greater length in Part II.

<sup>4</sup>Graden, op.cit., p.17: "In legal parlance ἐπερώτημα is a compact, ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν is a compact with God."

is our seal of forgiveness and acceptance by God. Abraham was given the sign of circumcision, Rom.4,11, that he might be assured of God's favor and grace. Certainly, then, we must not despise Baptism, for it carries with the great promise of union with Christ. Baptism, therefore, when administered according to Christ's word of institution, is a power of God unto salvation. Christ himself established its importance forever in the commission which he left with his disciples shortly before his ascension: (Having assured them of his

almighty he said:) πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλόμην ὑμῶν. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μετ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάντας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. (Matt. 28,19,20)

## II. REGENERATION ACCORDING TO

### ROMANS 6, 1-14

#### 1. How Paul Comes to Treat Regeneration

The Epistle to the Romans was from the very first recognized to be of extremely rich doctrinal content. The early Church therefore rightly assigned it the place of honor immediately after the four Gospels and the Book of Acts. In modern times, however, there has been much dispute among Bible scholars with regard to the purpose for which Paul wrote this epistle. Whatever his motive may have been, the letter certainly has a very systematic character, proceeding logically from one point of doctrine to the next. And yet, it is not only dogmatical, for "Luther did find the Gospel in Romans, and found it in a power which made him the greatest conductor of spiritual force since Paul, which directly regenerated one half of Christendom, and indirectly did much to reform the other half."<sup>1</sup> Paul's treatment of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is so complete in this epistle that one might rightly assert without fear of contradiction: "No one who read the first eleven chapters of the epistle could meet the Apostle as a stranger on anything essential in Christianity."<sup>2</sup> True it is, that the Epistles to the Corinthians, the Captivity Letters, et al., contain elements of Christian teaching which are not treated especially in Romans. But it profits little to dispute whether Paul treats this or that doctrine. "There can be only one fundamental doctrine,

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<sup>1</sup>The Expositor's Greek Testament, vol.II, p.570.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.575.

and that doctrine for Paul is the doctrine of justification by faith. That is not a part of his gospel, it is the whole of it: there Luther is his true interpreter."<sup>1</sup> Anyone who reads this letter in its entirety, and at one sitting, will soon recognize that Paul's guiding motive can not be chiefly controversial, as some hold. In Paul there is only one driving force: "that I might by all means save some." Keeping this point in mind, one appreciates more fully the power of his argumentation.

Though some may disagree, it is quite obvious to every student of Romans that the section under our immediate consideration, ch.6,1-14, stands as the climax of the epistle. All else either builds up to it or follows from it. Matthew Arnold, with whose rather subjective estimates one can not always agree, has in this case fashioned a fair and accurate description of the first part of the epistle:

The first chapter is to the Gentiles - its purport is: you have not righteousness. The second is to the Jews - its purport is: no more have you, though you think you have. The third chapter assumes faith in Christ as the one source of righteousness for all men. The fourth chapter gives to the notion of righteousness through faith the sanction of the Old Testament and of the history of Abraham. The fifth insists on the causes for thankfulness and exultation in the boon of righteousness through faith in Christ; and applies illustratively, with this design, the history of Adam. The sixth chapter<sup>2</sup> comes to the all-important question: "What is faith in Christ, which I, Paul, mean?" - and answers it. The seventh illustrates and explains the answer. But the eighth down to the end of the twenty-eighth verse, develops and completes the answer. The rest of the eighth chapter expresses the sense of safety and gratitude which the solution is fitted to inspire.<sup>3</sup>

This outline is of course quite sketchy and brief, but it does nevertheless give the key to these chapters. Sanday's

<sup>1</sup>Leips. Grk. Test., II, p.575.

<sup>2</sup>cf. Stevens, op.cit., p.275.

<sup>3</sup>M. Arnold, St. Paul and Protestantism, p.93.

observation is also very keen:

The really fundamental passages in the Epistle we should say were, ch.1,16.17, which states the problem, and 3,21-26, 6,1-14, 8,1-30, which supply its solution. The problem is, How is man to become righteous in the sight of God? And the answer is 1) by certain great redemptive acts on the part of God which take effect in the sphere above, though their consequences are felt throughout the sphere below; 2) through a certain ardent apprehension of these facts and of their Author Christ, on the part of the Christian; and 3) through his continued self-surrender to Divine influences poured out freely and unremittingly upon him.<sup>1,2</sup>

This is certainly a brief and yet comprehensive analysis of this epistle. We would but add one thought to complete the picture: section "2" above stands fittingly as the climax. For in that section, which we will presently consider more fully, Paul describes how man becomes a partaker of saving faith and its benefits (which is the burden of ch.5,21-26); while ch.8,1-30 gives in perspective the new life which flows from regeneration in a Christian.

Natural man needs regeneration;<sup>3</sup> Scripture requires it.<sup>4</sup> But man is in a hopeless state if all he learns of Christian doctrine is that a man is saved by faith and not by works. Paul brings him the comfort and the truth that he needs in ch.6,1-14. For it is God who also effects this regeneration in man that he might be saved. This is the heart of Paul's message. Upon this all else hinges. Stoeckhardt, I believe, fails to indicate this strongly and clearly enough when in the introductory sentences to this section (ch.6-8) he says:

Nachdem er die Lehre von der Sünde und von der Gnade dargelegt hat, kommt er nun auf Leben und Wandel der Christen, auf die Heiligung als die notwendige Folge der Rechtfertigung und des rechtfertigten Glaubens zu reden. Das ist der Inhalt des dritten Hauptteils des Briefes; Kap. 6-8.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>San day, op.cit., p.211. <sup>2</sup>Arnold, op.cit., p.92.

<sup>3</sup>See Apology of the Auss.Conf., op.cit., p.125.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.221.

<sup>5</sup>Stoeckhardt, Brief Pauli an die Roemer, p.282.

Paul's very manner of approach demands that there be a passage or discussion of regeneration. The new life of a Christian can not flow out of a corpse, which is indeed man's natural state. There must be life first of all. It is Paul's purpose (in ch.6,1-14) to show how this life is engendered into the believer.

## 2. Paul Does Describe Regeneration Here

There were unlearned and unstable men, Peter says, who wrested the inspired writings of Paul to their own destruction. There were despisers of God, who when they heard that when sin abounded grace did much more abound, immediately concluded, Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound. When they heard that the faithful were not under the law, they sinned. They croaked, we will sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace.<sup>1</sup>

In order to guard against such an unfortunate misconception of sin and especially grace, Paul shows in chapter 6 how utterly impossible it is for a truly regenerate man to act or think thus. Hodge has correctly stated: "As the Gospel reveals the only effectual method of justification, so also it alone can secure the sanctification of men. To exhibit this truth is the object of this and the following chapter."<sup>2</sup> Obviously, he refers to sanctification here in the wider sense. Paul shows decisively in this section, v.1-14, that as Christ ceased from all contact with sin when he died on the cross, so every Christian united to his Savior by baptism, has once and for all been freed from sin, from its guilt, punishment and dominion, and as a result of his regeneration lives a life

<sup>1</sup>J. Calvin, Institutes, vol. I, p. 28 of the Dedication.

<sup>2</sup>C. Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, p. 299.

dedicated to God. This is the basis from which Paul draws all future exhortation to godliness. Therefore, regeneration is of prime importance in the epistle and worthy of our closest attention and study.

Verse 1: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"

Paul raises the question: The more sin, the more grace? That is the point which was indicated in chapter 3, 2 already. Paul realizes that this ~~is~~ a logical conclusion to his argumentation of grace over works. But he spends little time in attempting to prove in a defensive manner that this argument does not follow (non sequitur), but proceeds rather to that doctrine which is fundamental in this consideration, "the second of his great pivot doctrines," as Sunday terms it, "the mystical union with Christ dating from Baptism."

Verse 2: "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Paul begins this verse with his favorite and strongest term for expressing denial and abhorrence:  $\mu\eta\ \gamma\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\omicron$ . That is his answer to the horrible and unchristian thought raised in verse 1.

" $\alpha\pi\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron$  does not mean dead, nor have died, but died. It refers to a specific act in our past history."<sup>1</sup> This is a keen observation on the part of Hodge, whereby he furnishes proof that some act, like that of regeneration, is here meant. "It is therefore, as the apostle argues, a contradiction in terms, to say that gratuitous justification is a license to sin, as much as to say that death is life,

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Hodge, op.cit., p.501.

or that dying to a thing is living in it."<sup>1,2</sup>

*τῆ ἁμαρτίας* cannot be translated here "on account of sin." The only possible translation is "dead to sin;" compare Gal.2,19 (dead to the law); 1 Pet.2,24 (dead to sins); Rom.7,4; Col.2,20; Gal.6,14. The meaning in every case is "to be free from."

Verse 3: "Know ye not that so many of us as (i.e., all of us who) were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

Paul asks: Is it possible that you are not aware of the significance of baptism? In other words, it is through baptism that we become partakers of his death.

"To be baptized into Christ" always means "to be baptized in reference to," that is, "to be brought into union with."<sup>3</sup> It is not merely obedience to Christ that is effected but incorporation into Christ; hence an intimate and close union with him. (cf. Gal.5,27) This is a fundamental concept, the very root of what is to follow. Here union with Christ is joined intimately with regeneration. That is certainly clear from the passage. Moreover, to this regeneration, and to the union with Christ that it effects, all other results and consequences (as described in the remainder of ch.6, and 7 and 8) must be traced. It is the touch-stone.

Dr. Steockhardt notes fittingly: "an unserer Stelle schlieszt das *ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν* den Glauben in sich."<sup>4</sup> Again: "Die Schrift stellt durchweg das Glaubigwerden, *πίστεύειν*, als den Anfang des Christenstandes hin....Nach dem

<sup>1</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.301.

<sup>2</sup>cf. Stevens, op.cit., p.272: "He (Paul) speaks of conversion as a dying to sin."

<sup>3</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.302. <sup>4</sup>Steockhardt, op.cit., p.286.

Taufbefehl Christi sind Taufe und Glaube mit einander verbunden."<sup>1</sup>

Christ's death is the all-important thing in this passage. It was truly objective, removing the barrier of sin between God and man. His shedding of blood seals the covenant with believers to which baptism admits them. Here certainly we have reference to the "heavenly element" in baptism, the blood of the Lamb, God's precious Son. (cf. Col. 2, 12-15; 2 Tim. 2, 11; Luke 12, 50; Matt. 10, 58)

Verse 4: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Burial is death sealed and made certain. The two concepts are correlatives, with no real difference in meaning. "In den Tod begraben werden, ist nur ein starker Ausdruck fuer sterben."<sup>2</sup> The thought expressed in verse 5, "we have been baptized into Christ's death," is just another way of saying, "we have though baptism died spiritually with Christ." "Our baptism was a sort of funeral; a solemn act of consigning us to that death of Christ in which we are made one with Him. (Vaughn)"<sup>3</sup> It effects therefore not only a renewal, a regeneration, of our works but also and especially of our very nature.<sup>4</sup> This regeneration is the means whereby God saves; our efforts mean nothing.<sup>5</sup> Compare also 1 Pet. 3, 21; John 3, 5, 5; 2 Cor. 5, 17. All of these passages stress alike the saving, the regenerating power of baptism.

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<sup>1</sup>Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p. 286. Sibid., p. 287.

<sup>2</sup>Sanday, op.cit., p. 154.

<sup>4</sup>Luther, op.cit., XII, 141. Sibid.

Stoockhardt, too, refers this verse to the instilling of new life, the regeneration, of man, although not always so distinctly, for he seeks to emphasize at the same time the new life which flows from the first implanting of the same.

Note these comments, however:

Wir Christen stehen von unserer Taufe her in einem neuen Leben. Und dies hat seine Gleiche in dem neuen Leben, zu dem Christus auferweckt worden ist.... Mit seiner Auferstehung ist Christus aber in ein neues Leben eingetreten. Und dem entspricht das neue Leben, in dem die getauften Christen stehen. Das ist das tertium comparationis, nichts Anderes.<sup>1</sup>

It is not possible to separate completely the act of regeneration and the new life, which comes as a result, for they belong so intimately together. However, I firmly believe that exegetes do injustice to Paul's teaching and weaken his argument considerably, when in their habit of making application they stress more the result (the new life in this case) than the regeneration which causes that result. It is true in a sense that Paul treats them side by side. But it is certainly more true - if such a thing is possible - that Paul's chief point in this text is the regeneration, the creation of new life in man. The whole passage loses its force if that is ~~it~~ not maintained.

The Reformed theologians, of course, do not appreciate the full importance of this passage, because of their weak doctrine on baptism, as a symbol of man's entrance into grace. Take away the <sup>regeneratively</sup> power ~~and efficacy~~ of baptism and this passage means little. Hodge at times does however speak beautifully, for example: "They (those who have been baptized) are as effectually shut out from the kingdom of Satan, as those who are in the grave are shut out from the world."<sup>2</sup> Again: "It

<sup>1</sup>Stoockhardt, op.cit., p.233. <sup>2</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.304.

is not necessary to assume that there is any reference here to the immersion of the body in baptism, as though it were a burial.... The reference is not to the mode of baptism, but to its effect. Our baptism unites us with Christ, so that we died with him, and rose with him."<sup>1</sup> Certainly, a fine statement, to which every Lutheran would nod agreement!

It might be well to note also the apt remarks of Hodge on *Ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς*: "The idea of purity is associated with that of newness in the word of God - a new heart, a new creature, the new man. Newness of life is a life that is new, compared with what is natural and original; and it is a holy life, springing from a new source."<sup>2</sup>

The German theologian Hahn fails to let this text express all its power when he remarks:

So stimmt auch das sonst von Paulus gezeichnete Bild mit dem in Rom.6 und Kol.2 gewonnenen überein: Der Christ ist mit Christus gestorben, auferstanden und lebt mit ihm. Diese Christengemeinschaft ist nicht eine einmal vollzogene und nun in sich ruhende, sondern ein tägliches Sterben und auferstehen(1 Kor.15,51;2 Kor.4,16).<sup>3</sup>

Generally speaking this statement might stand uncorrected. But certainly every careful reader of Rom.6 will observe that this chapter has a more profound meaning than Hahn would give it.

Verse 5: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall be also (in the likeness) of his resurrection."

Stoeckhardt explains this verse correctly when he says that here Paul describes how we come into this new life.<sup>4</sup> A little farther on the same commentator states:

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<sup>1</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.305. Ibid., p.306.  
<sup>2</sup>Hahn, op.cit., p.45; cf. also p.74.  
<sup>4</sup>Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p.228.

Bei Christo haengen Tod und Auferstehung eng zusammen. Christus ist der Gekreuzigte und Auferstandene. Wer also an seinem Tode Antheil hat, ist auch seiner Auferstehung theilhaftig. In Vorhergehenden, v.4., war nur bemerkt, dass das neue Leben, in dem wir Christen stehen, eine Gleiche hat mit der Aufweckung Christi.... Aber hier, v.5, wird nun noch hinzugefügt, dass dieses unser neues Leben aus der Auferstehung Christi quillt und flieszt.<sup>1</sup>

*σύνωσις* is the really significant concept in this verse.

Having its root in *σύνω*, it might be translated, "united by growth." It carries the sense of very intimate union with, the process whereby a graft becomes united with the life of the tree. So the Christian into Christ! On this metaphor compare Rom.11,17 and Phil.5,10.

We are to grow incorporate into Christ. The analogy of the tree and the branches is good. The branches die when the tree dies; they revive when the tree is revived. Their dependence on the tree is total. So the believer in his regeneration, or more specifically in Christ. The emphasis in this verse is obviously on the act of regeneration, revivification. As Christ's resurrection might be looked upon as a sort of rebirth from death, so is the change that takes place in the believer through regeneration. The emphasis is not on the new features of the changed existence of the believer but on the new life which is created in him. This, Hodge and many others fail to see; but this unquestionably is the burden of the apostle's argument or picture here. On the one hand there is the dead branch; on the other, the green verdure of a healthy twig. We must not fail to observe though, that before the latter could result a revivification had to occur. This effect, baptism, of faith, brings to the believer.

<sup>1</sup>Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p.289.

Verse 6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not have sin."

*γενώσκειν* signifies "appreciative or experimental acquaintance" according to Sanday. However one may wish to translate it, I believe that Stockhardt has struck true to the mark when he states:

In das *τοῦτο γενώσκειν* wird zu viel eingetragen, wenn man es, wie z.B. Hofmann, Luthardt, Philippi, Meyer, Weisz, als "erfahrungsmässiges Innewerden" fasst und den Fortschritt der Rede oben darin erblickt, dass der Apostel, der vorher objectiv geredet und gelehrt habe, jetzt von dem sage, was dem Christen aus seiner eigenen Erfahrung bekannt sei. Das *τοῦτο γενώσκειν* lauft parallel dem *ἡ ἀγνωστῆ* v.3, wie dem *εἰδότης* v.9. <sup>1</sup>

The most significant concept in this verse is *δ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος*.<sup>2</sup> Our "old self" was nailed to Jesus' cross in the same moment with Him - effective to us through baptism. Sanday speaks pertinently of this event: "The object of this crucifixion of our old self was that the bodily sensual part of us, prolific home and haunt of sin, might be paralyzed and disabled as henceforth to set us free from the service of sin."<sup>3</sup> Stockhardt quotes a very important passage from the commentary of Philippi; we note it here too: "Der *παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος*, der alte Mensch ist das sunderhafte Ich.... Er ist *παλαιός* vom Standpunkt der *ἀναγέννησις*, der *παλιγγενεσία* (John 3,3; Tit.3,5) aus angesehen, der ehemalige, vormalige Mensch, welchem der durch die Wiedergeburt geschaffene *ἄνθρωπος νέος, καινός*, oder die *καινὴ κτίσις* entgegengesetzt ist, Eph.2,24; Col.3,9.10; 2 Cor.5,17."<sup>4</sup> Here if anywhere we have a clear indication that Paul is speaking of and describing regeneration in this section. Luther has correctly said,

<sup>1</sup>Stockhardt, op.cit., p.290.

<sup>2</sup>Sanday claims that this phrase was coined by Paul.

<sup>3</sup>Sanday, op.cit., p.154. <sup>4</sup>Stockhardt, op.cit., p.290.

therefore, that it is regeneration through the Word which changes our members and person from what they were through birth by Adam, although they still remain the same members and person.<sup>1</sup> Hodge's observation is also apropos: "Our old man, i.e., our corrupt nature as opposed to the new man, or holy nature, which is the product of regeneration, and the effect of the union with Christ."<sup>2</sup> Again: "It is plain from this whole presentation that regeneration is not merely a change of acts, or of the affections in distinction from the understanding, but a change of the whole man."<sup>3</sup>

It is necessary to establish the right meaning of "the body of sin" in this verse. Stoeckhardt's interpretation is sound, I believe: "τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας ist nicht die Suendo als organismus (Philippi und andere) und τῆς ἁμαρτίας also nicht der Genitiv der Apposition, sondern τῆς ἁμαρτίας ist der Genitiv der charakteristischen Eigenschaft und τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας ist offenbar dasselbe, wie τὸ ἄνθρωπον σῶμα v.11"<sup>4</sup> Hodge's interpretation expresses about the same: "The body of sin is only another name for the old man, or rather for its concrete form."<sup>5,6</sup>

ἁγιασμοῦ also needs some explanation. In his Imitation of Christ, Thomas à Kempis remarked: "Behold! in the cross all doth consist, and all lieth in our dying thereon; for there is no other way unto life, and unto true inward peace, but the way of the holy cross and of daily mortification."<sup>7</sup> Sanday's reply to this is noteworthy: "This is rather the

<sup>1</sup>Luther, op.cit., XXII, 461. <sup>2</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.308.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.308f. <sup>4</sup>Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p.290.

<sup>5</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.309 (cf. also p.310).

<sup>6</sup>cf. Sanday, op.cit., p.158.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas à Kempis, Imit. Christi, II, 12, 3.

'taking up the cross' of the Gospels, which is a daily process. St. Paul no doubt leaves room for such a process (e.g. Col. 3,5 etc); but here he is going back to that which is its root, the one decisive, ideal act which he regards as taking place in baptism: in this the more gradual lifelong process is anticipated."<sup>1</sup>

Sin is a hard taskmaster. It dominates our old man so completely that the latter may well be identified with sin. But through Christ in baptism all this has been changed. Our old man is paralyzed, dead. Clearly then, in this verse Paul emphasizes regeneration and its eminent significance in man's new life. This is further shown by the purpose clause (τοῦ μυστήριου δουλεύειν) which Paul appends; for this could not follow if regeneration did not precede.

Verse 7: "For he that is dead is freed from sin."

The verdict is: Not guilty! As there can be no legal claim on a dead person so also he who is dead (ethically) <sup>?</sup> stands exempt from all claims that sin might make against him - he is free. (cf. 1 Pet. 4,1; Acts 13,39) "Nil iam in eum (qui mortuus est) juris est peccato, ut non iam sit debitor (Bengel)."<sup>2</sup> "As the man who has suffered for his crime is freed from it, so he who is crucified with Christ is freed from sin. In either case the power of sin is destroyed."<sup>3</sup>

The meaning of δεδικαίωται has caused some comment, which we might do well to note. Stockhardt maintains that here it simply means to be set free from the jurisdiction of sin with no emphasis on the being freed from the guilt of sin.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sanday, op.cit., p.158. <sup>2</sup>Stockhardt, op.cit., p.292.  
<sup>3</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.311. <sup>4</sup>Stockhardt, op.cit., p.291.

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In the main he is perhaps right. But with Sanday I believe that the forensic idea of freedom from guilt stands out also in this text. Hence it means: "declared righteous, acquitted from guilt."<sup>1</sup> The picture is that of a master claiming legal possession of his slave. But if the slave is dead, can he yet be held answerable to his former master? "Sin loses its suit."<sup>2</sup> Hodge also prefers to attach this meaning to the word, stating that  $\delta\epsilon\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\sigma\alpha$  means to be delivered from sin by justification. To me, therefore, the use of this verb is very significant. It demonstrates again that Paul is here describing regeneration, the not through which man is justified. Of course, the second meaning, the subjective release from the power of sin must not be excluded. Hence both interpretations are in order, although the latter must certainly not be emphasized over the former.

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Verse 8: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."

Does death end all? Is it the finish? Death to sin, is that where the union with Christ stops? No, God be thanked! By baptism, when we become believers, we die with Christ; at the same time by regeneration we shall live with Him.<sup>3</sup> "To live with Christ, therefore, includes two ideas: association with him, and similarity to him."<sup>4</sup> The former includes all that redemption means for us and the latter designates the resulting new walk of life in the converted man. Hahn has engineered a nice comparison of the two concepts, faith and dying with Christ, which I believe bears further attention:

<sup>1</sup>Sanday, op.cit., p.159. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.159.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Sanday, op.cit., p.159f. <sup>4</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.512.

Dass der Glaube und das Mitsterben usw. zwei Seiten der gleichen Sache sind, die unter verschiedenen Aspekt betrachtet wird, hat die bisherige Untersuchung ohne ausdrückliche Gegenüberstellung gezeigt. Eine doppelte Beschreibung der Existenz durch den "Glauben und das "mit" hat schon darin ihren Sinn, dass die eine die andere vor dem Missverständnis schützt. Die aussage vom Mitsterben usw. sichert der Bezogenheit der neuen Existenz auf das Christugeschehen die Objektivität und wehrt Psychologisierung und Spiritualisierung ab. Der Glaube seinerseits schützt das Personsein des Menschen in der Beziehung vor mechanischem oder magischen Verständnis. Das Mitsterben betont die Realität, der Glaube die Verborgenheit, die Unabgeschlossenheit und eschatologische Gespanntheit. Im Mitsterben usw. ist Christus allein Subjekt, der Glaube zeigt das verantwortliche Subjektsein des Menschen.<sup>1</sup>

A few sentences farther on, Hahn remarks appropriately:

"Der Mensch, der mit Christus stirbt und auferweckt wird, erfährt dieses Geschehen nicht anders als durch den Glauben und im Glauben."<sup>2</sup> -- All of which points to the fact that Paul is dealing with regeneration in Rom.6.

Verse 9: "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him."

Death is a vanquished foe! Christ has died to death forever. Never will he have to undergo it again. "Die Sünde ist nun fuer allemal gebueszt, getilgt, abgethan. Darum ist auch fuer uns kraft unserer Taufe auf den Tod Christi die Sünde abgethan."<sup>3</sup> Death opened up eternity to Christ, as far as his human nature was concerned; and it will do the same for us. Luther's Easter hymn is a beautiful exposition of this text:

Christ lag in Todesbanden,  
Fuer unsre Suond' gegeben,  
Der ist wieder erstanden  
Und hat uns brecht das Loben.  
Des wir sollen froehlich sein  
Und singen: Halleluja! Halleluja!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hahn, op.cit., p.170f. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.171.

<sup>3</sup>Stoekhardt, op.cit., p.295.

<sup>4</sup>German Hymnal, no.99 (cf. also the other stanzas. Many have considered this hymn second only to "A Mighty Fortress").

Verse 10: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

In what sense did Jesus die to sin? Compare verse 7 where he was forensically declared free from sin. The question arises: He was sinless; how could sin put a claim on him (cf. Cor. 5, 21)? The answer follows: It was our sin which brought death upon him, 1 Pet. 2, 22-24. Sin, like a bursting volcano, was showered upon him. He died. But in his death, death itself came to an end, decisively and forever. (cf. Job. 7, 27; 9, 12. 26. 28; 10, 10; 1 Pet. 3, 18 - There is a great difference between Christ's sacrifice, which he made once<sup>1</sup>, and the Levitical sacrifices which had to be repeated.)

"In that he liveth, he liveth unto God. This is said in contrast to what precedes. He died unto sin, he lives unto God. So must the believer."<sup>2</sup> "Vivit Deo, vitam Deo gloriosam, divini vigoris plenam. (Bengel)"<sup>3</sup>

Christus lebt seit seiner Auferstehung Gotte ganz und gar, in jeder Hinsicht, auch seinem Leibe nach, wir leben seit unserer Taufe Gotte nach dem inwendigen Menschen. Das neue Leben der Wiedergeburt ist Gott zugekehrt. Der neue Mensch, der in der Taufe geschaffen, ist auf Gott gerichtet, freut sich Gottes, denkt, liebt, will nur, was Gottes ist. So leben wir jetzt Gotte mit Christo und zugleich in Christo Jesu, unserem Herrn. Wir leben in der Gemeinschaft Christi, und so unser Leben mit Christo beschlossen in Gott.<sup>4</sup>

Verse 11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through <sup>1</sup>caus Christ."

To understand this verse correctly one must go back to verse 6, where Paul introduced the concept of "the old man." Man and his "self," the old nature, are distinguished in verse 11. Man was once subject to sin, but since he died to sin in

<sup>1</sup>Hahn, op.cit., p.66-67. <sup>2</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.512.  
<sup>3</sup>Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p.293. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.293f.



have no more dominion. However, this very manner of speaking shows that sin is not entirely eradicated, for we still are troubled with our evil nature and will be until our dying day. Stoeckhardt notes correctly:

Das setzt voraus, dass die Sünde noch in ihnen vorhanden ist, obwohl sie ihre Macht verloren und aufgehört hat, ihre Gebieterin zu sein. Sie sollen nur der Sünde nicht die Herrschaft einräumen, ihr hinfort nicht mehr dienen. Luther glossiert: "Merkt, die Heiligen haben noch böse Luste in Fleisch, denen sie nicht folgen."<sup>1</sup>

The concept "to reign" carries with it the idea of absolute, uncontrolled authority.<sup>2</sup> The "mortal body" referred to here signifies just what it says; our mortal bodies are breeding places for sin.<sup>3</sup> The soul is affected by the sensuous appetites of the sinful body. Against these the regenerated Christian must strive with his new powers and energies. Toward this end God will further us. *Gratia non solum peccata deluit, sed ut non peccemus facit.* (Augustine) "A man must always serve. There is no middle ground between the service of sin and the service of God. We have justification completely or we have it not at all. Sanctification, as springing from a living faith, as the fruit of God's love to us, admits of degrees, and may be more or less cultivated; but this determines not our salvation, but only the measure of future blessedness."<sup>4</sup>

Note the change of tense in the imperatives: *μὴ παραίταυτε* (do not keep on weakly yielding to sin day after day!), but now being in Christ *παραστήσατε* (yield yourselves) unto God, by one decisive, resolute effort through the powers God has granted you in regeneration!

<sup>1</sup>Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p.294f. <sup>2</sup>cf.Hodge, op.cit., p.518.

<sup>3</sup>cf.Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p.295.

<sup>4</sup>Olshausen - quoted by Hodge, op.cit., p.320.

In verse 14 Paul reemphasizes the reason why this is possible. Sin has lost its sway over you, he says. You are not hopelessly under the law, which is sin's take-off point, its catapult, but under grace through and in Christ.<sup>1</sup> With this thought Paul closes his exposition on regeneration (v.1-11) and his exhortation to live unto God (v.12-14), indicating deftly the subject which he will expound in the verses to come, especially in chapters 7 and 8.

### 3. The Role of Baptism

In view of the discussion that preceded it will not be necessary to treat this topic at great length. Nevertheless, because baptism plays such an important role in this section, it is fitting that we devote a special chapter to it. Paul lays great stress on baptism, for it is the means whereby our close union with Christ is effected. Regeneration and the unio mystica are the concepts that are stressed in verses 1-11. Baptism is fundamental, therefore, in the whole discussion, because it is the vis effectiva of this act of regeneration.

Paul introduces his argument against continuance in sin by asking this searching rhetorical question: Do you know that all of us who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?<sup>2</sup> In other words, do you not realize that baptism is all-important in your life? It is that act which brought you into closest union with Christ, so that we can

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<sup>1</sup>cf. Apology to the Augs. Conf., op.cit., p.167ff; 203.  
<sup>2</sup>cf. Cracknor, op.cit., p.10f.

actually speak of an incorporation into Christ. This is shown by the fact that His death really becomes ours too through baptism. We die because Christ died - as a result of our baptism which brings us into this intimate union with Christ.<sup>1</sup>

In verse 4 Paul repeats and emphasizes this concept yet more strongly. Our death (spiritual) in Christ is certain and sure, just as burial is the seal of death. Now it is ours to say with confidence: "Christ's death and burial, his vicarious atonement, is appropriated to us in baptism. When Christ had died for our sins, he was justified from sin (cf. v.7.10), our sin, all our sin. Hence, having become partakers of his death by baptism, we are also justified from sin, our sin, all our sin."<sup>2</sup> So close is our association with Christ through baptism,<sup>3</sup> that, although his death occurred many centuries ago, we can still truly say that our old Adam has been crucified with him.<sup>4</sup> Luther has a fine statement on the significance of baptism in his Large Catechism, from which we quote in part: "Here you see again how highly and precious we should esteem Baptism, because in it we obtain such an unspeakable treasure.... It is a laver of regeneration, as St. Paul calls it, Titus, 3,5"<sup>5</sup>

There have been men in past ages and also in modern times who have sought to put a symbolical meaning into this passage. Such exegesis, however, does irreparable harm to Paul's argumentation and especially of course to the doctrine

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<sup>1</sup>Hodge, *op.cit.*, p.502: "In the expression baptized into his death, the preposition expresses the design and the result."

<sup>2</sup>Straehmer, *op.cit.*, p.16f.

<sup>3</sup>Stoeckhardt, *op.cit.*, p.295f. <sup>4</sup>Weiss, *op.cit.*, p.533.

<sup>5</sup>Luther, *Large Catechism, Conc.Trig.*, p.759.

of baptism as a means of grace. Lenski has an answer for such exegeses:

Those must revise their estimate of Baptism who make it a mere symbol of something else.... The function of this Sacrament is not to picture or to symbolize at all, - whatever of that character we think we see is wholly minor; the function is to act as a most effective, divine, spiritual means, one that derives its power from connection with Christ and his atoning death, one that effects in us a death to sin, and a new life, regeneration (John 3,5; Tit.3,5) or new birth, and thus a newness of life forever.<sup>1</sup>

The significance and efficacy of baptism is further established because of the role it plays in effecting the unio mystica. Hahn has emphasized this particularly, and we do well to note his words:

Die Taufe steht nicht als gesondertes Geschehen neben dem Christusgeschehen, sondern ist eine Funktion desselben und zwar so, dass Christus personhaft in ihr handelt.... Die Taufe ist der Arm, mit dem jenes Geschehen selbst nach dem Menschen greift und ihn in Vollzug der Handlung durch Ausschaltung alles Trennenden, auch des Raumes und der Zeit, auf paradoxe und verborgene Weise in die Gleichzeitigkeit mit sich selbst versetzt, wobei sich das Geschehen am Menschen ereignet. Es gibt also kein sakramentales Taufgeschehen neben dem geschichtlichen Christusgeschehen, sondern beides ist eins.<sup>2</sup>

In verses 5 and 6 Paul carries forward the concept of death and burial with Jesus by bringing in the analogy of the graft in the tree - though he does not mention these figures in so many words. With Christ we died, with Christ we live. And all this through baptism! Sin no longer is master over us. "Das ist Gottes Wille und Absehen, dass wir hinfert nicht mehr, wie vordem, der Sünde dienen. Und unsere Taufe hat uns oben hierzu in den Stand gesetzt. Wir brauchen nicht mehr die Sünde zu dienen, weil der alte Adam ertodtet ist und den Leib nicht mehr beherrscht."<sup>3</sup> Thus while it is

<sup>1</sup>Lenski, Commentary on Romans, p.599f.

<sup>2</sup>Hahn, op.cit., p.135. <sup>3</sup>Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p.291.

baptism's first object to effect our regeneration and thus our redemption, it brings with it the side effect of a new, filial relation to God. Ours is a new life after baptism.

*Ph. - ck  
th. 1  
ch. 1  
r. 2*

"Dieser von Gott hergestellte status quo... ist der innerste Kern der Heiligung. Das ist die Quelle, daraus das rechte christliche Verhalten fließt."<sup>1</sup>

Rom. 6, 5f must certainly be considered for all time as a sedes doctrinae on baptism. This is the first time Paul treats it in his epistles. Yet, every Christian theologian will undoubtedly agree that this reference very simply and yet most profoundly presents this fundamental doctrine of our religion. Dr. Steckhardt has caught the significance of this doctrine beautifully and fully in the following words:

Das rechte christliche Verhalten folgt von selbst aus dem Christenstand, aus dem, was die Christen bei ihrer Taufe erfahren haben und von ihrer Taufe her besitzen. Der Apostel schreift den Christen ein, und das sollen christliche Prediger ihren Christen sagen: Ihr seid der Sünde gestorben, seid der Sünde todt, Christus hat mit seinem Tod euch von der Sünde, auch von der Gewalt und Herrschaft der Sünde erlöst und ihr seid seiner Erlösung durch die Taufe theilhaftig geworden, die Macht der Sünde in euch ist gebrochen, euer alter Mensch ist gekreuzigt, das Band, das euch an die Sünde knuopfte, ist durchschritten, ihr seid los, innerlich los, wirklich los von der Sünde, ihr braucht nicht mehr der Sünde zu dienen, nun, so dienet auch nicht mehr der Sünde, laszt die Sünde nicht wieder ueber euch herrschen und erweist es mit der That, dass ihr von der Sünde frei seid. Ihr seid mit Christo auferstanden, ihr seid in der Taufe des Auferstehungslebens Christi theilhaftig geworden, es ist da ein neues, geistliches, goettliches Leben in euch eingepflanzt worden, ihr steht wirklich in einem neuen Leben, nun, so betheetigt auch dieses neue Leben, gebraucht und uebet die Kraefte, die in euch sind, und lebt und dienet Gott mit Leib und Seele.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Steckhardt, op.cit., p.294.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.297.

#### 4. The Mystical Union

One of the most noteworthy prophecies of the Old Testament is that which is found in Jeremiah 33,16, where we read: "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness (  $\text{יהוה אלהינו}$  )." Obviously, the spiritual Jerusalem, the New Testament Church, is referred to here. That is simple enough. But what is not easily explained at first is how the Church can be called "The Lord our Righteousness," in short, "Christ." Is not that a mistake on the part of Jeremiah? At first glance it might seem so, but the Christian reader will soon be struck by the fact that here we have the first mention in the Bible of the unio mystica. Thus already in the Old Testament do we find reference to this profound Christian doctrine. Of course, even this passage would be unclear to us if we did not have such plain statements of the fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Testament, for example, Rom.6,1-14; 1 Cor. 12,12. On the basis of these passages we are able to establish definitely the doctrine of the Mystical Union. For our purpose, however, it must suffice that we note how Paul expounds this doctrine in Rom.6,5ff.

Paul begins his teaching on the unio mystica in verse 5 when he states that by baptism we become partakers of Christ's death. In verse 4 he amplifies and reemphasizes this fact, adding the point of our resurrection with and in Christ's resurrection.<sup>1</sup> "Extra controversiam est induere nos Christum

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<sup>1</sup>Weiss, op.cit., p.355. (cf. also Hahn, op.cit., p.23.)

in baptismo; et hac lege nos baptizari, ut unum cum ipso sumus."<sup>1</sup>  
 In verse 5 Paul deepens the concept by naming those who have been baptized into Christ *σύνστοι*, planted together with Christ. As stated in a previous chapter this is the picture of the twig grafted into the tree, so that it becomes totally dependent upon the tree.<sup>2</sup> The union of the believer with Christ is so intimate (cf. *μετοχή* of Heb.5,14) that he shares Christ and all that He has. Not only do we partake of what he has procured for us but in this life already we begin to share of his divine nature, 2 Pet.14; 2 Cor,5,18; Heb.12,10. We are his body, or members of it, 1 Cor.6,15; 12,27; Eph.4,12; 5,50.<sup>3</sup>

In verse 6 Paul becomes still more specific when he states that through baptism we (our old Adam) actually are crucified with Christ. Certainly, there could be nothing more graphic, nothing more convincing than this. Lenski has therefore aptly declared: "The climax of this mystical expression is reached in the fact that it joins together even the form of Christ's death with our inward death in Baptism.... Our connection in Baptism is real, so real that it carries our old man to the very cross of Christ in a spiritual crucifixion that kills our old self."<sup>4</sup>

In verses 7-11 Paul develops further the unio mystica, stressing especially the fact that we are risen with Christ, freed from sin, and free to serve God. Thus he deftly leads up to the exhortation which he will bring in v.12-14: ye are alive in Christ, therefore live to God as Christ does, and not to sin as the old Adam would prefer. Certainly, powerful words!

<sup>1</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.304. <sup>2</sup>Stevens, op.cit., p.298.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Hodge, op.cit., p.306.

<sup>4</sup>Lenski, op.cit., p.407. (cf. Stoeckhardt, p.289)

An interesting phrase in verse 11, which must not escape our attention, is  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta$ . That is the unio mystica in brief, and it is the first time Paul uses it in this epistle. Very significant indeed! Deissmann finds that it is used 164 times by Paul. Thus Rom.6,11 becomes the pivot passage of a majestic doctrine. The phrase might well be called the summary expression of the doctrine which underlies the whole of this section and forms, as we have seen, one of the pillars of St. Paul's theology. We might add these points (on  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta$ ), which incidentally are based chiefly on Sanday's observation, to complete the picture:

a) The relation is conceived as a local relation; the Christian has his being "in" Christ, as living creatures "in" the air, as fish "in" the water, as plants "in" the earth.<sup>1</sup>

b) The order of the words is invariably  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta$ , not  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ .<sup>2</sup> We find however  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta$  in Eph.4,21, but not in the same strict application.

c) In agreement with the regular usage of the words in this order,  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta$  always relates to the glorified Christ regarded as  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ , not to the historical Christ.

d) The corresponding expression  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\ \epsilon\upsilon\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota$  is best explained by the same analogy of "the air." Man lives and breathes "in the air," and the air is also "in the man."<sup>3,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Deissmann, Die neutestamentliche Formel in Christo  
Jesu, p.84.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.88.      <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.92.

<sup>4</sup>Deissmann in his monograph treats this concept of "in Christ Jesus" as one of the most original of Paul's creations. It is not found in the Synoptic Gospels. There are approximations in 1 Pet.3,16; 5,10,14 ( $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ ); Acts 4,2 ( $\epsilon\upsilon\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta$ ); 4,9,10 ( $\epsilon\upsilon\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \delta\nu\theta\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ ); 13,59 ( $\epsilon\upsilon\ \tau\acute{\omega}\nu\tau\acute{\omega}\ \pi\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\ \delta\ \tau\eta\kappa\tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\delta\tau\alpha\iota$ ).

It occurs in full volume in John: ( $\epsilon\upsilon\ \epsilon\mu\omicron\iota$ ,  $\mu\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\upsilon\ \epsilon\upsilon\ \epsilon\mu\omicron\iota$ , 6,56; 14,20,50; 15,2-7; 16,55; 17,21); 1 John: ( $\epsilon\upsilon\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}$ ,  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \epsilon\mu\omicron\iota$   $\nu\iota\acute{\omega}\ \epsilon\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota$ ,  $\mu\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ , 2,5,6,8,24,27,28; 3,6,24; 5,11,20;  $\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\upsilon\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \nu\iota\acute{\omega}\nu$ , 3,13); Revelation: ( $\epsilon\upsilon\ \text{I}\gamma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta$ , 1,9;  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ , 14,13)

Some modern commentators have asserted that Paul must have gotten his doctrine of the Mystical Union through his rich personal experience. For us, however, and for all true Christian exegetes there can be only one source for Paul's doctrine: the Holy Spirit. A mere intellectual change could never have effected this concept of the Mystical Union in Paul. Even Paul's deep personal experience would have been insufficient, although this certainly played an important role in his record, as the Holy Spirit guided him in writing.

The analogy of friendship between two persons may help to elucidate this otherwise mysterious union. Two friends may become so "one," so united in purpose and aim; their interests, actions, hopes may become so identical; they may be permeated by such a mutual spirit of agreement that from all outward appearances they may be considered to be one person acting - so harmonious, so completely integrated are their lives. This describes somewhat the feeling of oneness with Christ that gradually became more and more evident in Paul, stronger and stronger as he devoted his every effort to Christ's kingdom. Although of course this union was completely established with his conversion, it was only through practice - as a child tries out its wobbly legs, to find them becoming stronger and stronger - that Paul began to realize the full significance of this union with his Lord. The Christian who has exercised little his faith, who has rarely been tempted by threat of calamity, by the onslaughts of unbelief and enormity of sin, can not appreciate this. Only a Paul - with the guidance of the Holy Spirit - could say: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I

but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2, 20) A remarkable passage!

It was as a result of his strong, personal faith, that Paul could look at Christ's death and burial and resurrection with such intense appreciation and think of them as his own. After all, it was for man the sinner that Christ suffered and died; and none of the apostles realized this more fully and personally than did Paul - except perhaps the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews, whose name remains buried in the centuries.

Paul, in his description of regeneration and the unio mystica is dependent upon no predecessor for words and concepts with which to express the thoughts that lay so deep in his soul. But close examination will reveal that his account is very similar - indeed it describes the same event - to the writings of John and Peter, two apostles who likewise felt keenly their relation with Christ.<sup>1</sup> Paul has not yet come to describe this transformation simply as a product of faith, but that is clearly what he implies. He does not connect faith closely with the unio mystica in one and the same passage until Eph. 3, 17, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." And yet, every careful reader of Rom. 1-8 must inevitably conclude that the faith which is set up against works in chapters 3-5, as the only means to salvation, is the faith which unites (of. baptism) the believer with his Savior (6, 1-14) and brings about a new walk of life as a result (6, 15-8, 39). It is for this reason that chapter 6, 1-14 has been called the climax, the pivot, of the Letter to the Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John 3, 5; 1 Pet. 1, 23; 3, 20, 21; James 1, 18.

## 5. Monergism of Paul

Certainly it is not difficult on the basis of Paul's epistles to establish the fact that it is God alone who brings us to faith, preserves us in faith, and finally brings us into his heavenly kingdom. At first glance, however, it might seem as though Paul makes no mention of it in his discussion of regeneration and the Mystical Union (ch.6,1-14). One certainly would expect to find some reference to this work of God in us and for our salvation, especially in this passage. Some perhaps will precipitate the thought - without very close consideration - that the discussion certainly implies this teaching here. We agree of course that the implication of man's passiveness in his regeneration is evident in almost every verse. (We are baptized into Christ; we have been planted together with him; our old man was crucified, etc.) Man is always spoken of as being acted upon, never as the agent of his regeneration. The logical and correct conclusion is that God is the sole agent of our regeneration.

But there is no need for relying on such implied doctrines, when there is direct reference to the matter. In verse 4 Paul says: "...that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also, etc."  $\delta\omicron\varsigma\lambda\alpha$  is the word used here for "glory." But it is evident at once from the use of the word that it means more than glory. Sanday gives the right cue to the interpretation when he says that it is "power externally viewed, hence glorious."<sup>1</sup> And

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<sup>1</sup>Sanday, op.cit., p.155.

Lenski speaks of  $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$  as being glory with the omnipotence of God included.<sup>1</sup> The passage is clear at once, then; for the same almighty power which raised Jesus from the dead effects also regeneration in us - which is the burden of the apostle's argument. The Expositor's Greek Testament makes this fitting comment on the word: "In nothing was the splendor of God's power revealed so much as in the resurrection of Jesus, Eph. 1, 19f."<sup>2</sup> Moyer's interpretation is similar: "The  $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ ,  $\gamma\eta\lambda\omega$ , the glorious collective perfection of God, certainly effected the raising of Jesus chiefly as omnipotence (1 Cor. 6, 14; 2 Cor. 13, 4)... According to the invariable representation of the New Testament God is the raiser of Jesus (Rom. 4, 24; 8, 11, etc.)."<sup>3</sup>

Our regeneration, then, is the handiwork of the same Lord who gave us our physical bodies. Pieper has spoken very clearly on this subject:

Freilich ist es unleugbar, dass der christliche Glaube oder die Wiedergeburt nur durch goettliche Allmachtswirkung entsteht. Das lehrt die Schrift. Das lehrt auch besonders entschieden Luther, indem er z.B. sagt: "Wenn Gott den Glauben schafft in Menschen, so ist es ja ein gross Werk, als wenn er Himmel und Erde wieder schaffte. Das ist auch wider alle Formen des Synergismus festzuhalten. Aber dass deshalb Glaube und Wiedergeburt ohne Mittel in Existenz treten sollten, ist ein reiner Menschengeданke. Die Schrift lehrt beides, sowohl dass Glaube und Wiedergeburt eine Wirkung der goettlichen Allmacht ist, als auch, dass diese Wirkung sich durch die ausseren Mittel des Wortes und der Taufe vollzieht."<sup>4</sup>

Certainly a beautiful statement and a splendid summary - though not intended to be - of Romans 6!

<sup>1</sup>Lenski, op.cit., p.401.

<sup>2</sup>Exp's Grk.Test., II, p.633.

<sup>3</sup>Moyer, Commentary on Romans, p.252.

<sup>4</sup>Pieper, op.cit., III, p.174.

In verse 4, Paul attributes our regeneration to God's glorious power and in the same breath states that this is made effective in us through baptism. That is the plain teaching of Scripture elsewhere too. It is the almighty God who worketh in us; and yet he invariably chooses to work through means.<sup>1,2</sup>

We should not close this discussion, however, without first comparing the parallel passage in Rom.8,11. On this verse Sanday has made the following comment:

St. Paul is fond of arguing from the Resurrection of Christ to the resurrection of the Christian. Christ is the *ἀπαρχή* (1 Cor.15,20.23); the same power which raised Him will raise us (1 Cor.6,14; 2 Cor.4,14; Phil.3,21; 1 Thess.4,14). But nowhere is the argument given in so full and complete a form as here. The link which connects the believer with Christ and makes him participate in Christ's resurrection is the possession of His Spirit.<sup>3,4</sup>

We are thus introduced to still another factor of Christian teaching and belief, namely the work of the Holy Spirit in our regeneration and conversion, as Luther indeed treats of it in his explanation of the Third Article.<sup>5</sup> The Apology says: "Such faith is neither an easy matter, as the adversaries dream... nor a human power, but a divine power, by which we are quickened, and by which we overcome the devil and death. Just as Paul says to the Colossians 2,12...: 'wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God.'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Græbner, op.cit., p.141.

<sup>2</sup>cf. also these references on Romans: 1,16.17; 3,10.24.26; 4,5.17; 5,8.9.10.15.17.19; 7,24; 8,2.4.11.29.30.39; 9,10.20-24; 11,16ff.33-36.

<sup>3</sup>Sanday, op.cit., p.198. <sup>4</sup>Stoeckhardt, op.cit., p.365.

<sup>5</sup>Luther, Small Catechism, Conc.Trig., p.545; also p.687f.

<sup>6</sup>The Apology to the Aug.Conf., op.cit., p.191.

## 6. Role of the Holy Spirit

Christ's interposition for us and our intimate union with him through baptism had this result: sin was dethroned from its tyranny in the human heart, and in its stead the Spirit of Christ was installed, thus accomplishing what the Law of Moses failed to do. The Holy Spirit brings life because it essentially is life. It has long been the teaching of the Church that it is the Holy Spirit's peculiar office and work to bring sinners to faith by entering into their hearts through the preaching of the Word and through Baptism. Scripture emphasizes this teaching in many passages. Luther therefore strikes the true note of this Scripture truth when he says: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts and sanctified and kept me in the true faith."<sup>1</sup>

The question, however, remains: Where is this teaching expressed in Rom. 6, 1-14? The answer is of course: Nowhere, in just so many words. And yet, it is clear that the regeneration described in these verses is the work of the Holy Spirit because of the testimony of the immediate context. In chapter 8, 11, for example, the verse which we noted in the previous chapter, there is a direct parallel to ch. 6, 4, where God is spoken of as being the agent who effected Christ's resurrection and also our regeneration. Now, it is a Scriptural truth that the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, take part in every action which the Godhead decrees, because there

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<sup>1</sup>of. Luther's Explanation to the Third Article.

is essentially only one God. And yet it is also a clear teaching of Scripture that the individual persons in the Godhead are very frequently spoken of with reference to some special activity. It is clear then from Rom.8,11, where the specific reference to the Holy Spirit is made, that the regeneration and mystical union effected in those that believe is the special handiwork of the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, the relationship between the three persons of the Godhead is so intimate and mysterious to us that it is impossible for us to understand it fully. In chapter 6,4 the Father is said to have raised Christ up from the dead and us also (spiritually). In chapter 8,11 we observe that our regeneration was accomplished by the Spirit. The Triune God was, therefore, active in our regeneration. This much we know; beyond this we can not go, except to cry out: "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" (Rom.11,33)

It is another interesting feature of chapter 8, where Paul is bringing his application of the new life created in us, to observe that Paul uses those phrases,  $\piνεῦμα θεοῦ$ ,  $\piνεῦμα χριστοῦ$ , and  $\chiριστός$ , interchangeably. Hodge therefore comments: "It is obvious that the Spirit of Christ is identical with the Spirit of God."<sup>2</sup> And again: "From this interchange of expression it is plain that to say that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, and to say that Christ dwells in us, is the same thing."<sup>3</sup> The former phrase is also interchanged with the Spirit of God, and simply also with God. Thus Paul, in

<sup>1</sup>Weiss, op.cit., p.523.

<sup>2</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.405.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.405f.

a grand delineation, indicates very beautifully the close relation between the persons of the Trinity and their work. That is why the Christian can say with full confidence - though he can by no means understand it with his little mind: "qui Spiritum habet, Christum habet; qui Christum habet, Deum habet. (Bengel)<sup>1,2</sup>.

It is the purpose of Scripture, nevertheless, to distinguish between the persons of the Trinity, as can be seen from many passages. Here we note especially how the Holy Spirit is held to be a distinct person, for he pleads with the Father in our behalf, 8,26ff; dwells in us, v.9.11; bears witness, v.16; and assists, v.26. In verses 14 and 16 the Spirit is clearly designated as the person acting upon the believer's spirit. Steedhardt gives the gist of the Spirit's activity in these words:

Der Geist Gottes, so bekennet jeder Christ mit Paul, hat mir das Leben, welches in Christo Jesu ist, mitgetheilt, so dass ich nun in Christo Jesu bin und lebe, und hat mich damit befreit von dem Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes, dem ich von Natur und Geburt unterworfen war.... Diese Befreiungsthat des Geistes ist identisch mit jener That Gottes, die den Anfang unsers Christenthums bezeichnet, von welcher der Apostel 6,3ff geredet hat, dass wir in der Taufe mit Christo gestorben, der Sünde gestorben und der Auferstehung Christi, des neuen geistlichen, göttlichen Wesens, in dem Christus jetzt steht und lebt, theilhaftig geworden sind.<sup>3,4</sup>

The Christian is spoken of as being the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6,19; John 14,19; et al.). Paul calls these *οἱ κτὰ πνεῦμα*, who are fashioned and minded after the Spirit. From this basis then he demonstrates that a believer can no longer be carnally minded but must be led by the Spirit

<sup>1</sup>Hodge, op.cit., p.406. <sup>2</sup>cf. Sanday, op.cit., p.200.

<sup>3</sup>Steedhardt, op.cit., p.351; cf. also p.355.

<sup>4</sup>cf. Hahn, op.cit., p.116.

of God (8,14). However, he quickly explains that this is not a servitude such as sin forced upon us through the law, but it is the glorious filial relationship of sons working in harmony with the Father. And this blessed association with the Holy Spirit that is ours after regeneration carries with it not only the promise of the life which now is, but especially of that which is to come. We are the sons of God, and in Christ, joint-heirs with our Savior, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit in them that believe. Let us then also live according to the Spirit. In regeneration we have been granted spiritual powers and energies. Let us follow eagerly as the Spirit would lead us. Our close relationship with the Holy Spirit should be and remain our most comforting earthly blessing, for this was the great promise that Jesus left with his disciples and with all believers, namely, the sending of the Comforter; and the testimony of the Holy Spirit within our hearts brings us the assurance that we are God's children.<sup>1,2</sup> Paul could leave his readers with no more comforting message! Nor could he bring greater incentive for a consecrated, godly life!

--- Conclusion ---

It was my original intent and purpose to include in this essay a special chapter on the Sanctified Life of the Christian. This would have covered these additional topics:

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<sup>1</sup>Stoeckhardt, *op.cit.*, p.569.

<sup>2</sup>cf. also 2 Cor.1,5.22; Eph.1,15; 4,30; 1 Cor.2,4.5; 1 John 2,20.27.

1. The Christian's release from sin's bondage, as seen from two metaphors:
  - a. Servitude and emancipation, 6,16-23.
  - b. The marriage bond, 7,1-6.
2. The Christian's inner conflict:
  - a. Vindication of the law, 7,7-13.
  - b. Insufficiency of man, 7,14-25.
3. Perspective of the Christian's new life, ch.8.

It is evident at once that this would have increased greatly the length of this paper. Chiefly for this reason, then, I have omitted these sections. It is my hope, however, someday to be able to add also these topics, in order that the picture Paul presents in Romans 6-8 may be complete, especially since I have already gathered and organized my material on these chapters. Hence there is but a step remaining for me to complete the manuscript.

The essay in its present form is nevertheless complete. My object was to show that Paul does treat of regeneration in the Epistle to the Romans, and I believe this has been accomplished. If I have failed in every case to bring out Paul's meaning to the fullest, it is chiefly because the great apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, reached depths of Christian doctrine and experience which I can never hope to plumb. Yet, here is the challenge that inspires every student of Paul's epistles to persevere in his searchings and probings. Such study never goes unrewarded. Fresh bits of Christian knowledge and joy beckon all who would love and study these holy writings.

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