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## The New Creation in Christ

A Study of the Pauline ἐν Χριστῷ Formula

By WALTER BARTLING

ALL modern studies of the ἐν Χριστῷ formula take as their starting point the fascinating dissertation of Adolf Deissmann, which appeared in 1892. It is hardly possible to overestimate the influence this book has had upon research in Pauline theology. Deissmann's basic conclusion, that the ἐν of the formula has throughout a local significance, rests, no doubt, upon a proper grammatical insight and has received but slight modification by later scholars. According to Deissmann's count, the formula ἐν Χριστῷ or one of its variants (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ, etc.) occurs 196 times in the New Testament. Of these 196 occurrences, 164 are to be found in the Pauline corpus. The *a priori* consideration arising out of this remarkable fact is that the formula dare not be regarded as accidental when it is found in Paul and then be ignored as being of no special consequence. "Der Begründer der christlichen Theologie," says Deissmann, "hat ein Anrecht darauf, dass man ein jedes seiner Worte, zumal seine Aussagen ueber Jesus Christus, mindestens beachtet."<sup>1</sup> But just this was not done with reference to the ἐν Χριστῷ formula. "Empirismus," "Libertinismus," "Willkuer," "dogmatisch interessierte Umdeutung," are the terms Deissmann uses to describe the current general attitude toward Paul's favorite phrase.<sup>2</sup> Though many scholars since Deissmann have attempted to right the wrong that Paul's "Lieblingsbegriff" has suffered, it is still true that the average Bible reader is unaware of the rich treasures that lie buried in the unassuming little phrase "*in Christ Jesus.*"

This article in no way pretends to be an exhaustive study of



the formula. We shall merely attempt to discover some of the elements that went into the fashioning of the phrase and to solve a few of the problems that arise out of its use. The  $\epsilon\nu$  Χριστῷ is used in a great variety of contexts, but the most interesting is its use with the verb "to be," either expressed or unexpressed. It is this use which is basic to all others and which is theologically most significant. Our discussion, therefore, will center in the  $\epsilon\nu$  Χριστῷ εἶναι.

### I. GOD'S REDEMPITIVE ACTIVITY "IN CHRIST"

We begin to see why  $\epsilon\nu$  Χριστῷ is Paul's "Lieblingsbegriff" when we examine what has variously been termed the "objective" and "heilsgeschichtliche" use of the formula.<sup>3</sup> A listing of some of the passages in which this use of the  $\epsilon\nu$  Χριστῷ is found should be sufficient to convince us of its central importance. *In Christ* men are justified (Gal. 2:17), sanctified (1 Cor. 1:2), and receive grace (1 Cor. 1:4). *In Him* they have freedom (Gal. 2:4), are led in triumph (2 Cor. 2:14), and shall be made alive (1 Cor. 15:22). *In Christ* there is grace (2 Tim. 2:1), salvation (2 Tim. 2:10), redemption (Rom. 3:24), eternal life (Rom. 6:23), truth (Eph. 4:21). *In Him* God reveals His love (Rom. 8:39), His kindness (Eph. 2:7), and His will (1 Thess. 5:18). *In Christ* all things receive their Yes (2 Cor. 1:19 f.), for *in Him* the promise (Eph. 3:6) and the blessing of Abraham (Gal. 3:14) are fulfilled. Everything that God has planned for the salvation of fallen man, everything that He has done in history for man's redemption, He has planned and executed *in Christ Jesus*. In the person of Christ and in His work on the plane of history is man's redemption. "In Christo tritt die Offenbarung, das heilsschaffende Handeln Gottes, tritt sein Heil in die Geschichte. 'In ihm' ist es beschlossen, in ihm ist es da. Auf die geschichtliche Begründung blickt die alte 'objektive' Fassung."<sup>4</sup>

But this "Heilsgeschichte," this history of God's redemptive activity, is not merely history, if by history we mean events of the past or the narration of such events. It *is* redemption; it *is* salvation. The historical Christ, in whom God accomplished His saving design, is the still living Christ. Yet He knows a continuity with His historical existence, for He is and ever remains  $\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\omega\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (Gal. 3:1; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2). "It is not that Jesus was first the



Crucified, then became the Risen, and is now the Exalted; but as the Exalted is the Risen, so He is the Crucified. His death is not something which belongs merely to history, though it is indeed a historical fact. But He is now present as the Crucified."<sup>5</sup> *In Christ*, today and every day, there is salvation, for God's redemptive activity is daily actualized for those who are *in Christ*. This is beautifully expressed in those passages in which the ἐν Χριστῷ has a pregnant force (= ἐν Χριστῷ εἶναι) and relates the effects of God's redemptive activity to the believers, to those who are *in Christ*. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are *in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:1).<sup>6</sup> Ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and consecration and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). "If any man is *in Christ*, he is a new creation; the old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17). "You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God *in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 6:11). "*In Christ Jesus* you are all the sons of God, through faith" (Gal. 3:26). "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that *in Him* we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21; cf. Phil. 3:8 f.). We state the inescapable conclusion: to be *in Christ* is to be taken up into the sphere of God's redemptive activity.<sup>7</sup> For Paul the state of *being in Christ* is the all-inclusive presupposition of salvation. The ἐν Χριστῷ is the central, the focal point in the Pauline thought world. If this is true, it is a gross misunderstanding to say that ἐν Χριστῷ εἶναι expresses a mystical, esoteric, highly subjective experience. *Being in Christ* is Paul's expression for a universal Christian experience.

What, exactly, is that experience? Our discussion thus far indicates that the ἐν Χριστῷ is a succinct expression for the sphere of God's redemptive activity and that to *be in Christ* is to be taken up into that sphere. We have also noted that ἐν Χριστῷ as an expression for the redemptive sphere is to be understood quite literally: *in Christ*, i. e., in the once historical and in the still living Christ, God has revealed and executed His saving purpose — *in Him*, in His person and in His work, the two to be thought of as one. It remains to be seen whether an equally literal interpretation of the pregnant ἐν Χριστῷ is justified. Does *being in Christ* mean for Paul an actual identification with, or incorporation into, Christ?



## II. INCORPORATION INTO CHRIST

In Gal. 3:26 f., *being in Christ* is more closely defined as *putting on Christ*, and both expressions are associated with Baptism. The believer has in Baptism put on Christ as a garment and is henceforth a son of God *in Christ*, through faith. "Die Taufe ist der Grund fuer dieses Sein und das ihm zugrunde liegende Verhaeltnis."<sup>8</sup> How or why Baptism effects this *being in Christ*, "das ihm zugrunde liegende Verhaeltnis," is not disclosed in the Galatians passage. Apparently the Galatian Christians needed no instruction on this point. But we do not have to search long for a commentary on our text. Rom. 6:1-14 comes to mind immediately as an obvious parallel. In Romans 6, as in Galatians 3, Baptism is represented as the starting point of a stream of consequences which issues in "being alive to God *in Christ*" (v. 11).

Baptism εἰς Χριστόν is more closely defined in Romans 6 as Baptism εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ (v. 3). Paul is opposing the opinion which would make a mockery of God's grace by finding in it the occasion for renewed sinning. He does so by reminding the Roman Christians, not so much of their Baptism, but of what there took place. "Baptism symbolizes death, burial, and resurrection with Christ. But not only so; it is the means through which we are actually identified with these events of the Messianic life story."<sup>9</sup> "Die Taufe bedeutet," says Mittring, "ein ganz reales Teilhaben, Beteiligtsein an Tod und Auferstehung Christi, aber nicht im Sinne eines symbolischen *Significat*, sondern im Sinne des Sakraments, das ein sichtbares *Signum* einer unsichtbaren Wirklichkeit ist. Es handelt sich nicht nur um ein Miterleben dessen, was an Christus geschah, sondern die Taufe versetzt uns . . . als ganz existentiell Beteiligte in die Situation der Kreuzigung, des Begrabnisses und der Auferstehung 'am dritten Tage.'"<sup>10</sup> Baptism implies far more than a mere symbolical drowning. It is in the deepest possible sense a means of grace — the means by which the believing initiate is actually identified with Christ in His redemptive work.

Any other interpretation does not do justice to the text as a whole. The συνετάφημεν αὐτῷ of v. 4, the συνεσταυρώθη of v. 6, and the ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ of v. 8, cannot mean that what Christ experienced on a specific occasion is repeated symbolically in the believer at the time of his Baptism. The σὺν (Χριστῷ) stands



stubbornly in the way of this interpretation. A symbolical recapitulation could not have been termed "dying *with* Christ."<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the "rising with Christ" in Romans 6 is not decribed as the result of the baptismal act, but as a necessary consequence of the "dying with Christ." This intimate relationship between dying and rising with Christ indicates that we have to do here with nothing less than the actual death of Christ on Calvary. Gal. 6:14 lends solid support to this interpretation of Romans 6: "Far be it from me to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." The Apostle's own death to the world has its source, its *locus*, in the Cross of the Crucified. But also Rom. 6:10 shows that Paul has in mind throughout the once-for-all event of Calvary: "The death He died He died to sin, once for all (ἐφάπαξ); but the life He lives He lives to God." Verse 11 then reveals what this once-for-all event means for the believer: "So you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God *in Christ*." "Wie naemlich dieser Gekreuzigte durch die Herrlichkeit des Vaters von den Toten auferweckt wurde und nicht im Tode blieb, so bleibt es auch fuer uns nicht bei diesem in der Taufe vollzogenen Tode, denn dieser war ja eben ein Mitsterben mit diesem gekreuzigten, aber nicht im Tode gebliebenen Christus."<sup>12</sup>

In Rom. 6:11 we have again met our formula—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. It is intended to show in which respect it is true that the readers are alive to God. It is true, inasmuch as they are *in Christ*. In other words, their becoming alive to God, or (which is the same) their sharing in the life of Christ, a fact of which Paul has spoken in vv. 4, 5, 8, has its validation and its source in their *being in Christ*.<sup>13</sup> Now, since according to vv. 4, 5, 8, the believer shares in the life of the risen Christ only because he has first shared in His death, the conclusion is near at hand that also the dying with Christ has its foundation in the *being in Christ*. And so we have come full circle and are back at Gal. 3:26 f. The *putting on Christ*, or the *being in Christ*, which is the result of Baptism, is a compact expression for the dying and rising again of the believer with Christ in Baptism. It means a very real identification with Christ, so very real that it can best be described as *incorporation into Christ*. We summarize with Percy:



Das Mitsterben des Gläubigen mit Christus in der Taufe, wovon Roem. 6:1-12 spricht, kommt somit dadurch zustande, dass der Gläubige durch die Taufe in das, was einmal mit Christus geschah, hineingegliedert wird, und dies kann seinerseits nichts anderes bedeuten, als dass er in Christus selbst und zwar in ihn nicht nur als den Auferstandenen, sondern in ihn schon als den, der am Kreuz starb, auf eine ganz reale Weise eingegliedert wird.<sup>14</sup>

That this is a hard teaching is not to be denied. We shall briefly develop the idea that Christ is the representative and, in a sense, inclusive personality of the new creation. This idea helps us somewhat in overcoming the difficulty of conceiving the identification of believers with Christ. But there is still another problem, equally intense for our limited field of comprehension: that is the problem of the time relationships involved. "The Messianic events of Christ's death and resurrection," remarks Thornton, "took place once for all in history and can never be repeated as historical events." And not only in the sense that this is true of all historical events. "The Messianic events are unique, final, and unrepeatable in a sense proper to them alone. For in them the whole plan of God's redemptive action, as unfolded in Holy Scripture, came to its fulfillment. In them, on the Christian reading of history, God did once for all that which, whilst this world order lasts, will never need to be done again; that which, when this world order is ended, will be manifestly brought to its fruition."<sup>15</sup> Yet this one event, far away and long ago, is an ever-present reality: "I *am* crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). That is the stone of stumbling. We may succeed in making this hard fact more acceptable to our minds by inventing concepts of "super-history," and the like, but the hard fact remains. If the explanation offered is that the time thought of in the embarrassing aorists (συνεσταυρώθη, etc.) is the moment of Baptism, then we must remember that Baptism does no more than effect the identification with the once-for-all event of Calvary (not to mention the fact that Paul can speak of dying with Christ outside the context of Baptism — Gal. 2:19 f.; 6:12 ff.; 2 Cor. 5:14). Deissmann coined the phrase "Passionsmystik" to take away from the hardness of Paul's teaching. There is, indeed, according to Deissmann, an identification of the believer with the great events of Christ's life, but this identification is made psychologically ex-



plicable through the mystical experience of communion with the "Pneuma-Christ."<sup>16</sup> Feine, too, interprets the identification psychologically: "Der Glaebige soll sich dergestalt in das Leiden und den Tod Christi versenken, dass er mit diesen Erlebnissen Christi innerlich zusammenwaechst und sie so stark empfindet, als seien sie auch an ihm vollzogen."<sup>17</sup> All such explanations, while taking away from the hardness of Paul's teaching, at the same time rob it of much of its power. All that we can confidently say is that this teaching of Paul implies a complete overthrow of the usual time relationships. And we must leave it at that. "Angesichts der Bestimmtheit der paulinischen Aussagen kommt eine unbefangene Betrachtung gar nicht um das Zugestaendnis herum, dass das exklusive Verhaeltnis, das fuer das empirische Urteil zwischen verschiedenen Subjekten, Raumpunkten und Zeitpunkten besteht, in diesen Saetzen aufgehoben ist."<sup>18</sup>

### III. THE NEW CREATION "IN CHRIST"

We have now to see what the status of *being in Christ*, of being incorporated into Christ in His death and resurrection, means for the believer. The teachings of Paul on this point form a complex whole, yet they can be conveniently divided for discussion purposes. The results of *being in Christ* are both negative and positive, the negative associated with "dying with Christ," the positive with "living with Christ."

According to Romans 6, the death of Christ, in which the believer shares, is a death which releases from sin: "The death He died He died to sin, once for all" (v. 10). "Our Lord was identified with us in our sinful state, and we were identified with Him in His death"<sup>19</sup> (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3). The result for the believer is that the *παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος*, the *σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας*, has been destroyed; and with its destruction the power of sin over him has also been destroyed. In Rom. 7:4 ff. and Gal. 2:19 the death that we died with Christ is described as bringing freedom from the Law. The implication in both passages is that the Law has power over a man only so long as he lives. If he dies (as we have with Christ), that power is finally and effectually broken. Finally, and in summary fashion, the death with Christ is a death to the world, to the Old Age, to everything that is associated with fallen and depraved *σάρξ*.



"Far be it from me to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14).

"Die Taufe εις Χριστόν bedeutet aber nicht nur reales Teilhaben am Tode Jesu von dieser Weltordnung, von diesem Aeon und den sie beherrschenden Mächten, Gesetz, Sünde und Tod, weg, sondern *eo ipso* auch Teilhaben an dem, was auf seinen Tod folgte, nämlich seiner Auferstehung und dem neuen Leben, das er als Auferstandener lebt: gerade dies ist es doch, worauf es fuer Paulus letzten Endes ankommt."<sup>20</sup> Just as Christ's death would be meaningless if He "be not risen" (1 Cor. 15:14 ff.; cf. Rom. 4:25), so "dying with Christ" would be a sorry game without the "rising with Him." Death is but the necessary entrance portal to the new life. We have found this expressed in Rom. 6:5, 8, 11, with which we may compare Gal. 2:19 and especially Col. 2:12: "You were buried with Him in Baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

When we inquire into the implications of this resurrection to new life, we find that basic for everything else is the acquisition of a new righteousness, a faith-righteousness which will hold its own before the holy God, thus opening the way to fellowship with Him *in Christ* (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:17; Phil. 3:9). *In Christ* this righteousness is ours. Righteous before God, we are free from the judgment of wrath, for "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are *in Christ*" (Rom. 8:1). More, we are now the children of God *in Christ Jesus* (Gal. 3:26). As dutiful children, we offer God willing and happy obedience (Rom. 6:4, 11) and are assured of eternal salvation (Rom. 8:39). Finally, identification with Christ in His resurrection gives us a share in the vital forces of Christ's resurrection, forces which, as the living Lord and Savior, He even now gives to strengthen us in our weakness (2 Cor. 4:7-15; Phil. 3:10), and which will become manifest in us at that great Day (Rom. 8:11; Phil. 3:11; 2 Cor. 4:14).

All of these various lines of thought may be summed up in one word: *καινή κτίσις*, the eschatological, the new creation of God. "If any one is *in Christ*, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). "Wenn die Auferstehung von den Toten," says Sasse, "nach der Lehre der juedischen und der urchristlichen Eschatologie die Wende der



Aionen, den Anfang der neuen, ewigen Schoepfung bedeutet, dann hat mit der Auferstehung Christi, insofern sie der Anfang der allgemeinen Auferstehung ist, der neue Aion bereits begonnen, wenn auch verborgen von den Augen der Menschen." <sup>21</sup> The New Age has impinged itself upon the old through the creative power of Christ's resurrection, and the man *in Christ* has been transferred into the New Age. This implies, as Gutbrod so well observes, not only a new state of being ("Sein"), but a new life ("Leben") in the active sense, a life from God and for God. <sup>22</sup> The old world, however, exists side by side with the new. And even the believer, insofar as he is still  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  (Gal. 2:20), has one foot in the old world. It is the old story, at once glorious and dreary, of the "even now" and the "not yet," of the "arrived" and the "still afar off." This means tension for the man *in Christ*, tension and strenuous effort. Every indicative relating to the new life becomes an imperative; what the new man *is*, he must *be* and, in a sense, *become*. <sup>23</sup>

#### IV. CHRIST, THE REPRESENTATIVE PERSONALITY OF THE NEW CREATION

We are now ready to take up Hunter's significant hint as to the meaning of the  $\epsilon\nu$  Χριστῶ: "The clue is to be found in the Hebrew concept of corporate personality: in passages like these Paul conceives of Christ as *the inclusive Representative of a new humanity*: so that to 'be in Christ' is to be one of the new people of God of which Christ is Head." <sup>24</sup> Oepke points in the same direction: "Grundlegend ist die Vorstellung von Christus als Universalpersönlichkeit." <sup>25</sup> It will not be necessary to go into very great detail in this section, for everything that can be said has already been implicitly stated. We have seen that *being in Christ* implies a real participation of the believer in everything that Christ has suffered and done as the divine Agent of reconciliation. Furthermore, we have seen that this participation of the believer in Christ is not some sort of fictitious imputation, but that the believer is in a very real sense incorporated into the historical person of Christ, who died on Calvary and rose the third day. But this is possible only because all men were, in principle, already from the beginning (i. e., already on Good Friday and Easter) incorporated in Christ, their Representative and Substitute. 2 Cor. 5:14 cannot very well



be understood in any other way: "One died for all; therefore all have died." Or Rom. 5:6, 10: "While we were yet helpless, at that time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . While we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Thus the ἐν Χριστῷ is already contained in the ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. "Der paulinische Gedanke des Seins der Glaebigen in Christus wurzelt also letztthin," says Percy, "im Gedanken der stellvertretenden Selbsthingabe Christus um unsertwillen; dieser Gedanke ist das Zentrum der ganzen paulinischen Theologie, von dem aus sich diese erst recht verstehen laesst."<sup>26</sup>

Paul himself helps us to an understanding of the idea of Christ as a representative Man by means of the familiar analogy of the First and the Second Adam. The comparison and contrast of Adam and Christ is a significant facet of Pauline theology: Adam, the "first," "earthly," "psychic" man; Christ, the "second," "heavenly," "pneumatic" man.<sup>27</sup> Paul uses the Adam/Christ typology to implement three different but closely related ideas:

1. graphically to present the fact of universal grace, Rom. 5:12 ff.;
2. to show the certainty of the resurrection, 1 Cor. 15:22;
3. to make somewhat understandable the nature of the resurrection body, 1 Cor. 15:44 ff.

What did Paul wish to say with his typological analogy? In answering this question we shall attempt to do no more than draw some of the obvious inferences. Basic is the view that Adam and Christ, as representative men, determine the fate of the entire race. The heritage of the First Adam is sin and death; the heritage of the Second, forgiveness, righteousness, and life. "In either case," says Thornton,

individuals enter a system of relationships which they did not originate, but which was constituted by actions other than their own. Yet in either case the individual is identified with the consequences of such acts. In these two organisms there are, as it were, two contrasted biological sequences. Or, again, we might say that from each fountainhead there flows a stream, one for evil and the other for good. The first stream flows from sin to death, the second from death to life. The sinner as a member of Adam's race falls short of the glory of God, for which he was created. He lives "after the flesh," that is, he lives for the aims of natural



self; and these come to an end with death. He is therefore under the reign of death, whether he be aware of his situation or not. The second stream flows from Christ; its starting point is His death on Calvary. For there "one man's act of redress issued in acquittal and life for all." In His death our Lord identified Himself with the evil consequences of our sins in an act of expiation. In His resurrection the victorious consequences of this act become manifestly effectual; for His resurrection showed that the reign of death had been brought to a close. Now all of this Christ effected in His representative capacity, as the One Man who is Abraham's Seed, "Israel, my Servant." By His self-identification with us sinners in His "act of redress" we may be said to be identified with Him in that act.<sup>28</sup>

Paul always views man in his relationship to God, be that positive or negative. Man does not and cannot exist outside that relationship. Either he is obedient to God and is taken into fellowship with Him, or he is disobedient and is rejected from that fellowship. But always it is man's relationship to God that determines the whole of his existence. *Ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν* (1 Cor. 15:22). Man has denied his right to live; he has sinned himself into a state of separation from the divine fellowship. Sin is the expression of that separation; death its result. But *ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται*. Something has happened to break the chain of consequences that had its rise *ἐν Ἀδάμ* and to start a new chain of consequences. That something, that everything, we have found to be God's redemptive activity *ἐν Χριστῷ*.

Adam is the *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*, the *πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος*. He points beyond himself to the *ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ*, the *δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος*; he points to Christ. "Diese Masse der Menschheit," says Stauffer, "die in der Zwischenzeit lebten und starben, zaehlt gar nicht gegenueber diesen beiden Menschen *κατ' ἐξοχήν*. In diesem Vollsinn ist Adam der erste, Christus woertlich und wirklich der zweite Mensch. . . . In ihm, dem Antityp Adams, ist der Menschenwelt noch einmal ein Anfang und Prinzip gesetzt."<sup>29</sup> *In Christ* there is a new creation; He is the Head of a new humanity of which He is Himself the *ἀπαρχή* (1 Cor. 15:20, 23) and the *πρωτότοκος* (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18). But Christ is the Beginning in a fuller sense than Adam. The analogy is not a "just as, even so." Rather it is *ὡσπερ, πολλῶ μᾶλλον* (Rom. 5:12, 17). Christ is not only the first Member of the



new creation; He is Himself its Creator (πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν). He is not only the First; He is the ἔσχατος, toward whom the entire new creation tends until all things are again summed up *in Him* (Eph. 1:10).

The importance of this analogy for an understanding of the ἐν Χριστῷ is as obvious as it is significant. The central Pauline concept of *being in Christ* is an extension of the type of thinking which can view an individual as the representative and inclusive personality of an entire race of men, with whom he is related by ties of blood or through necessities arising out of the order of creation.<sup>30</sup> It is in the order of the new creation that Christ be its inclusive Personality. The Representative of mankind in His death, He led man by means of His resurrection into the new creation which His resurrection heralded. To be *in Christ* is to be in the new creation which Christ represents. To this Oepke lends welcome support: "Die Glaebigen sind durch die Taufe aus der Suenden- und Todesregion des ersten Urmenschen in die Gerechtigkeits- und Lebensregion des zweiten versetzt worden. Aus dieser lokalen Grundvorstellung laesst sich die gesamte Praegnanz der Formel ἐν Χριστῷ und ihrer Parallelformeln ableiten."<sup>31</sup> With his reference to Baptism Oepke takes us back to our argument in an earlier paragraph. Baptism is normally the means of incorporation into the Second Adam and into the new creation, which He creates as well as represents (Romans 6; Galatians 3). Through Baptism a man is *in Christ*, and "if any man is *in Christ*, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17; cf. Gal. 6:15).

#### V. THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD "IN CHRIST"

Before closing our discussion, we shall push our argument one step further. The new creation, which is essentially realized *in Christ*, concerns more than the new life of the individual believer: the new creation is the community which Christ has established and which has its life and reality *in Him*. The pregnant ἐν Χριστῷ, expanded, becomes the "inclusive" ἐν Χριστῷ. The καινή κτίσις is an intensely personal matter. That is never denied. But it is also and always a communal matter. When a man is baptized into Christ, he is at once baptized into the Church, into the Messianic community (Gal. 3:26 ff.; 1 Cor. 12:13). To belong to the community is to be *in Christ*; to be *in Christ* is to belong to the com-



munity.<sup>32</sup> Thus it is that Paul can speak of the Church as well as of individuals as being the *καινὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐν Χριστῷ*: "He is our Peace, who has made us both one and has broken down the middle wall of hostility by abolishing in His flesh the Law of commandments and ordinances, that He might *create in Himself one new man in place of the two*, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end" (Eph. 2:13 ff.). With this we may compare Col. 3:9 ff., where, in the *νέος ἄνθρωπος*, there seems to be — at least in the practical implications — a mingling of the individual and corporate aspects of the new creation: "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there can be neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all in all" (cf. Eph. 4:24).

Already Deissmann found the opinion quite congenial that *ἐν Χριστῷ* might very well mean "in der christlichen Gemeinde."<sup>33</sup> He was right, however, in not taking this definition as a clue to the solution of the entire problem. In one sense *ἐν Χριστῷ* = *ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*: the two are inseparable. But they are not quite the reverse sides of the same coin, because *ἐν Χριστῷ* is logically and soteriologically prior in time and in importance to *ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*. "Jenes ist die Voraussetzung fuer dieses, die Gemeinde hat ihr Dasein ueberhaupt erst durch Christus und in ihm, er bleibt immer die uebergeordnete Groesse, und die Zugehoerigkeit zur Gemeinde ist immer erst die Folge des Seins in Christus."<sup>34</sup>

The new creation, and the Church as the new creation, we said, has its being and reality *in Christ*. This is remarkably well expressed in the passages where *ἐν Χριστῷ* is immediately connected with *ἐκκλησία* (Gal. 1:22; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; cf. Eph. 3:21). Or, again, Paul's churches are *ἐκκλησίαι ἁγίων* (1 Cor. 14:33), and the saints, who are the Church, are *ἡγιασμένοι ἐν Χριστῷ* (1 Cor. 1:1; cf. Col. 1:2; Eph. 1:1). The New Testament *ἐκκλησία* is the fulfillment of the Old Testament congregation; it is the New Israel — and that *in Christ*.

Two more passages are to be noted in this connection. The first is the already oft-cited text in Galatians 3:



In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

The phrase which is of greatest interest to us is ὑμεῖς εἰς ἔστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, and in that phrase is the εἰς which demands attention. Burton's remarks on the word are at once a history of its interpretation:

εἰς may be taken distributively and qualitatively, or inclusively and numerically. In the former case the meaning is: Once in Christ Jesus, whether you are Jew or Gentile, slave or master, man or woman, all these distinctions vanish (there is no respect of persons with God); it is as if it were always the same person appearing before Him. . . . In the latter case the thought is that all those in Jesus Christ merge into one personality.<sup>35</sup>

And that personality, we might add, is Christ. There is no essential difference in the two interpretations; in either case, Christ is the Principle of the Church's unity. If the first interpretation is followed, great emphasis must be placed on the ἐν Χριστῷ; if the second, εἰς becomes the prominent word. In view of the contextual relationships, however, I am inclined to favor the second interpretation. "Hier kommt der Ausdruck offenbar von Vers 27," says Koehler. "Wir haben Christum angezogen. Nun sind das nicht so viele Christi, wie es gläubige Einzelpersonen gibt, sondern Christus ist eben nur einer."<sup>36</sup> The wider context, too, favors this interpretation. The entire third chapter is, generally speaking, an excursus on the promise concerning the Seed (σπέρμα) of Abraham (v. 8). This Seed is identified with Christ in verse 16, and in verse 29 the concept is expanded to include all who are Christ's. Verse 28 would then be a sort of middle term between vv. 16 and 29.<sup>37</sup> If this is true, we then have in the σπέρμα concept and especially also in the phrase εἰς ἐν Χριστῷ a definite form of the "inclusive" ἐν Χριστῷ and of the inclusive type of thinking, illustrated above by the Adam/Christ typology.

The last passage we shall consider is Rom. 12:4 f.: "As in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the



same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ (ἐν σῶμα ἐν Χριστῷ), and individually members one of another." This is the only passage in which the σῶμα concept, a designation for the Church, is followed by ἐν Χριστῷ. Evidently the idea of a "body" is nothing more than a picture in this context. Yet taken simply as a metaphor the σῶμα concept is highly significant.<sup>38</sup> By virtue of their incorporation into Christ all believers form a corporate whole. The new creation, the ἐκκλησία, is united under Christ, the Head, because all believers, individually and corporately, are *in Christ Jesus*.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Adolf Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu,"* Marburg, Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 75 ff. Deissmann has a special word of praise for Winer, who, more than most, recognized the importance of the formula. See Geo. Benedict Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, tr. J. Henry Thayer, Andover, Warren F. Draper, 1889, p. 388 f.

<sup>3</sup> The word "Heilsgeschichte" is untranslatable. It was first used in this connection by D. Weber, "Die Formel 'in Christo Jesu' und die paulinische Christusbrystik," *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift*, Vol. XXI, Leipzig, A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1920, p. 218 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 220. On the "heilsgeschichtliche" ἐν Χριστῷ, see also W. Moenkemoeller, "'Ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,'" *Lehre und Wehre*, LVII, St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1911, p. 305 f.; Walter Gutbrod, *Die paulinische Anthropologie*, Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934, p. 198 f.

<sup>5</sup> Hermann Sasse, "Jesus Christ, the Lord," in *Mysterium Christi*, edited by G. Bell and Adolf Deissmann, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1930, p. 109 f. Cf. Paul Althaus in the same volume, "The Cross of Christ," p. 217, and also Deissmann, *Paulus*, Tuebingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1925, p. 153: "Durch das participium perfecti ist doch wohl angedeutet, dass das Kreuz nicht eine nackte Tatsache der Vergangenheit ist, sondern wirksam hineinragt in die Gegenwart; der 'Gekreuzigte' ist eine Realitaet, die taeglich erlebt werden kann."

<sup>6</sup> All English Biblical quotations in this article are from the R. S. V.

<sup>7</sup> On this, see especially Karl Mittring, *Heilswircklichkeit bei Paulus. Ein Beitrag zum Verstaendnis der union cum Christo in den Paulusbriefen*, Guetersloh, C. Bertelsmann, 1929, p. 128 ff., and, above all, Ernst Percy, *Der Leib Christi in den paulinischen Homologumena und Antilegomena*, p. 23 f. The few references in the following are but a slight witness to the indebtedness of this article to the brilliant little work of Percy.

<sup>8</sup> Gutbrod, *op. cit.*, p. 190. Some authorities believe that Baptism and the baptismal formula εἰς Χριστόν — ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ furnished Paul with the background material for his ἐν Χριστῷ formula; see Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 253, and Traugott Schmidt, *Der Leib Christi*, Leipzig, A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1919, p. 198. However this may be, there is a close relationship between the two thought patterns.

<sup>9</sup> L. S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ*, Westminster, Dacre Press, 1942, p. 59. On this passage see Mittring, *op. cit.*, pp. 32—62;



Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 25 ff.; and Paul Althaus, *Der Brief an die Roemer*, Goettingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1946, pp. 47—55, all of whom support in general the interpretation we are adopting.

<sup>10</sup> Mittring, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> It is here that Christian Baptism differs essentially from the manifold baptisms of the mystery religions. To use Schweitzer's terminology, the difference is that between a "realistic" and a "symbolic" interpretation of Baptism. In the mysteries "everything is founded upon the symbolic ceremony. The rite effects that which it represents." For Paul, "the believer experiences the dying and rising again of Christ in actual fact, not in the imitative representation. And he does not become in a sense the same as Christ. Paul goes no further than the thought that he has fellowship with Christ and in this way shares the experiences of Christ," *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1931, p. 16 ff. The difference between the realistic Christian view of Baptism and the symbolic view of the mysteries is thus twofold: First, the Christian believer is actually identified with Christ. In the mysteries this could not be the case because the experiences of the gods, which the initiate was to relive, were themselves symbolical (nature myths) and not rooted in history. Secondly, Baptism for the Christian does not, as in the mysteries, signify or effect deification, but rather fellowship (*κοινωνία*). Percy considers the essential difference to be that Christ's death was substitutionary and inclusive, whereas the gods of the mysteries died only for themselves, the initiate merely imitating their experiences (footnote on p. 43, *op. cit.*). To which we might add another distinction: The baptism of the mysteries was *ex opere operato*; Christian Baptism (Schweitzer notwithstanding) is not *ex opere operato*, but is conditioned by faith. How can one explain the fact that Paul uses the language of dying and rising with Christ outside the context of Baptism, if it is Baptism that effects these results *ex opere operato*? On all of this cf. Althaus, *op. cit.*, p. 51 ff., and Lewis Radford, *The Epistle to the Colossians*, London, Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1931, p. 231 f.

<sup>12</sup> Gutbrod, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>13</sup> The validity of identifying the life *in Christ* (v. 11) with the statements of vv. 4, 5, 8 is not materially affected in the futures (*ἐσομεθα* and *συζηήσομεν*) be held to have primarily an eschatological reference (so Gutbrod, *op. cit.*, p. 199). The *καινότες ζωῆς* of v. 4 must at all events ring through as a prominent overtone. And it is more than likely that Percy is correct in holding these futures to be merely *logical* futures, viewed from the standpoint of the *συνεσταυρωθῆναι*, *op. cit.*, footnote 62, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 27 f.; cf. Gutbrod, *op. cit.*, p. 193 ff., and Althaus, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> *Paulus, op. cit.*, pp. 143, 157. The conception of Christ as the Spirit (Pneuma-Christ) is basic for Deissmann's interpretation of the *ἐν Χριστῷ*. He summarizes his earlier studies in the following words: "Die von Paulus unter Benutzung eines vorhandenen Profansprachgebrauches geschaffene Formel *ἐν Χριστῷ εἶναι* charakterisiert das Verhaeltnis des Christen zu Christus als ein lokal aufzufassendes Sichbefinden in dem pneumatischen Christus. Dieser Gedanke, fuer welchen es in jedem sonstigen Verhaeltnisse des Menschen zum Menschen an einer Analogie voellig fehlt, koennen wir uns verdeutlichen durch die Analogie der den Wendungen *ἐν πνεύματι* und *ἐν τῷ θεῷ* zugrunde liegenden Vorstellung des Verweilens in einem der Luft vergleichbaren Pneuma-Elemente," *Die neutestamentliche Formel, op. cit.*, p. 97 f. For a similar treatment, see Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 84—91.



<sup>17</sup> Paul Feine, *Theologie des neuen Testaments*, fourth ed., Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1922, p. 193. But see his *Der Apostel Paulus*, Guetersloh, C. Bertelsmann, 1927, especially p. 574: "Alle Menschen sind im Tode Christi gestorben. Man soll nur nicht versuchen, von der Haerte und Groesse dieser Aussage irgend etwas abzubrechen, so raetselhaft auch die Worte klingen."

<sup>18</sup> O. Schmitz, *Das Lebensgefuehl des Paulus*, Muenchen, 1932, p. 45. The picture that we have just drawn from Romans 6 is substantiated by a number of other passages in the Pauline Letters; cf. Col. 2:11 f.; Rom. 7:4; Eph. 2:15-16 (Col. 1:22); 2 Cor. 5:14. A one-word description for all this is the highly pregnant N. T. concept of *κοινωνία*. "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the *κοινωνία* of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). The essence of *κοινωνία* in the N. T. is a life shared in common, and *κοινωνία* with Christ includes a real sharing in the great events of Christ's historical life, the events of which we have been speaking. This is admirably expressed in the host of passages in which the believer is drawn into these events by means of the preposition *σύν*, which, as Carr has noticed, is in close etymological connection with *κοινός*. See "The Fellowship of Acts 2:42 and Cognate Words," *The Expositor*, 1913, p. 463. For a listing of these passages and a discussion of their significance see the article by Hauck in Kittel's *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Vol. III, p. 805 f. The entire first half of Thornton's valuable book has the *κοινωνία* with Christ as its theme.

<sup>19</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 46. In this section we are following, in general, Percy's discussion.

<sup>20</sup> Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Kittel I, p. 207, *sub* *αὐτόν*. Cf. also Behm's statement: "Neuschöpfung ist das herrliche Ende der Heils offenbarung Gottes, das Hochziel urchristlicher Hoffnung, das aus der Heilszukunft schon in die Gegenwart der Christen auf der alten Erde hineinleuchtet, weil sie durch Christus Heilsgegenwart geworden ist; der neue Aeon, der mit Christus angebrochen ist, bringt eine neue Schoepfung, die Erschaffung eines neuen Menschen mit sich," Kittel III, p. 451, *sub* *καινός*.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 211.

<sup>23</sup> Thornton speaks of a *double polarity*: "Those who have died with Christ are to rise with Him; those who have arisen are to ascend. Yes; but we now see that those who have died, risen, and ascended with Christ, have yet to begin the infinite task of learning how to die, rise and ascend with Christ anew," *op. cit.*, p. 60 f.; and cf. Althaus, *Roemerbrief*, *op. cit.*, p. 54 f. On the ethical implications of the new life, see also Gutbrod, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-216.

<sup>24</sup> Archibald Hunter, *The Message of the New Testament*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1944, p. 73.

<sup>25</sup> *Sub* *ἐν* in Kittel II, p. 538; cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 232 ff.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> In this form, the typology is of Paul's fashioning. Rabbinic literature speaks of Adam as *אדם הראשון*, but nowhere refers to the Messiah as the Second, or Last Adam. (See Jeremias' article on 'Αδμ in Kittel I, p. 143; Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash III*, Muenchen, C. H. Beck'sche Verlag, 1926, p. 477 f.) There were, however, traces in contemporary Judaism of the first and second-man scheme, notably in Philo. Had these speculations influenced Paul? "Philo interpreted the two accounts of the creation of man in Genesis 1 and 2 as representing two separate



creations: first the ideal, archetypal Man in Heaven, and then, Adam, the actual historical man" (John Knox, *Christ the Lord*, Chicago, Willett, Clark and Co., 1945, p. 103). But if Paul was acquainted with this type of speculation, then it is more reasonable to assume that he consciously set himself in opposition to it than that he was positively influenced by it. The whole point of the analogy in the latter half of 1 Corinthians 15 is that the earthly Adam came first, the heavenly second. Moreover, the Heavenly Man was no Platonic idea for Paul, as it was for Philo; but He was the pre-existent Son of God, who, as Son of Man, had already come to judge the world for righteousness and who would come again to gather the harvest from the seed He had sown at His first coming. J. Jeremias may be quite right when he conjectures that Paul uses this antithesis to bring out what Jesus meant by His self-designation Son of Man, "dass Jesus der Erstling der neuen Schoepfung ist," *op. cit.*, p. 143; and cf. A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, London, Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1926, p. 125 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 58 f.

<sup>29</sup> *Sub* εἰς in Kittel II, p. 435; cf. Althaus, *op. cit.*, p. 46 f.

<sup>30</sup> This type of thinking was congenial to the Hebrew mind. We have only to remind ourselves of the manner in which the twelve tribes came to be identified, in a sense, with their tribal ancestors, or of how the entire race came to be known by the name of one of its patriarchs, Israel. For a particularly illuminating example of this type of thinking, see Heb. 7:10.

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 538.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the following quotation from Rawlinson, "Corpus Christi," in *Mysterium Christi*, *op. cit.*, p. 234 f.: "In the case of those who are 'in Christ'—for to be baptized 'into Christ' was to be henceforth 'in Christ' and to belong to God's renewed Israel—the renewal, the eschatological 'creation afresh,' has already, as it were, by way of anticipation begun. To be 'in Christ' and to belong to the New Israel are from henceforth the same thing. The New Israel, according to the N. T. thought, is 'in Christ' as the Jews were in Abraham, or as mankind was in Adam. The Messiah, the Christ, is at once an individual person—Jesus of Nazareth—and He is more: He is, as the representative and (as it were) the constitutive Person of the New Israel, potentially inclusive. He includes, He is one with, the New Israel; and the New Israel is one with, is united to, Him, as its Head."

<sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. VI.

<sup>34</sup> Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>35</sup> *Galatians* in the ICC, p. 307 f.

<sup>36</sup> J. P. Koehler, *Der Brief Pauli an die Galater*, Milwaukee, Northwestern Publishing House, 1910, p. 90.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Burton, *op. cit.*, p. 307 f.; Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 48 ff.; and see Schlatter and Zahn *ad loc.*

<sup>38</sup> For parallels from the classics, see the commentaries. The distinctive feature in Paul's use of the picture of the body for a society is the manner in which it is related to an individual, to Christ, be that with a genitive, as in 1 Corinthians 12, or with a prepositional phrase, as here, or by means of the κεφαλή idea, as in Colossians and Ephesians. Thus the Christian content all but obliterates the familiar pattern.