THE OBJECTIVE REALITY OF THE RENEWAL OF LIFE
IN ROMANS 6:1-11

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1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

As indicated above, our present study will be mainly limited to the first eleven verses of Romans 6. Against this limitation one could legitimately raise the objection that there are indications that the pericope as a semantic unit does not in this case end with verse 11, but with verse 14. It is indeed common knowledge that the vast majority of text editions, translations and commentaries end the pericope at verse 14.1) This is obviously due to the fact that although verse 12 represents a sharp change from indicative to imperative, verses 12-14 as a unit still relate syntactically and semantically more closely to the previous than to the following verses. There is undoubtedly a more clearly marked division between verses 14 and 15 than there is between 11 and 12. The division between 14 and 15 is clearly marked by the continuing diatribe style, represented by τίς φύν (cf. 6:1). This unmistakably indicates at least the beginning of a new phase in the argument (cf. Du Toit 1979:263). If, therefore, this chapter is to be divided into two separate units the incision should be made between 14 and 15, rather than between 11 and 12.

Even if such a division is made, it cannot be denied that verses 12-14 for several reasons constitute a separate unit or paragraph of this pericope.2) Consequently, these verses are for instance described by Michel (1963:148) as 'eine Art Überleitung'. True as this observation may be, this is not the reason why we confine ourselves to verses 1-11. The reason is primarily that this study should only be concerned with the indicative reality of the new life (in Christ), as stated in verses 1-11. A full and thorough investigation of this reality should, however, be preceded by a semantic discourse analysis of the text, in order to determine as clearly as possible the structure and flow of the argument of this unit. To this we now turn.

2. SEMANTIC DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ROMANS 6:1-11(1-14)

(In view of the fact that the pericope extends to verse 14, an analysis of the whole unit is given.)
The analysis is basically that of Louw (1979a:13), with a few slight modifications. The same form of numbering is used for the verses and cola respectively, the numbers of the verses appearing on the left hand side. The separate clusters of related cola in the pericope are grouped in blocks, each marked by a capital letter on the right side of each block. Words, expressions or other syntactic units, which function as semantic or structural markers, are indicated by different signs and, in the case of words or expressions which are semiotactically connected with one another, by corresponding signs. The connecting lines to the left indicate the relationships between the different cola of each cluster, and those to the right the relationship between the clusters).

The line of argument in this pericope is complicated because the same thought is dealt with from different perspectives. Of necessity, this involves a certain degree of repetition. 3) If our discourse analysis above is correct, the line of argument can be summarized as follows: The argument in 5:12-21, and especially the statement in 5:20b, may lead to the conclusion that sin is not so bad, but indeed a profitable thing, since it brings about God's exceeding kindness (cf. Rm 3:8). Such a conclusion, however, would be a complete misunderstanding of the whole matter of God's kindness in Christ, and the aim of our pericope is to deal with this possible misunderstanding. In diatribe style cola 1 and 2 then pose a question concerning the possible wrong conclusion, and this is answered in 3 and 4 by a question also. The answer emphatically states the total impossibility of a life in sin of those who are dead to sin, and in addition, the implication that such a conclusion would be totally absurd.

This statement needs explanation, and this is given in cola 5-9 (cluster B). Colon 5 states the essential fact on which the answer in 3-4 (cluster A) is based: everyone who has been baptized has died with Christ. Although it is assumed (agnoeite) that the readers are acquainted with this fact, it also needs explanation. This
is given in cola 6 and 7, of which 7 is an elucidatory repetition of the content of 6: through baptism the believer not only dies with Christ, but is (will) also (b) raised to a new life, just as Christ was raised to life by the glorious power of the Father. In cola 8 and 9 we have a variation of the thought expressed in 5-7, but at the same time we also have a statement denoting the basis on which this thought is founded. This goes beyond baptism back to the cross on which, in a sense, all believers (as part of Christ as corporate personality?) have been crucified with Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:14; Gl 2:19; 6:14). In these cola, which relate the argument of 5-7 to cluster A, we also have a clearer exposition of the answer given in 3 and 4, describing how it comes about that the believer is dead to sin through baptism. Colon 8 states that to be dead to sin actually means not to be capable of serving sin any longer (as the slave of sin), due to the fact that one is now a dead slave. Colon 9 summarizes 8 as a sort of maxim. It is clear from the line of argument in cluster B that it expands and defines cluster A.

Cluster C continues the same argument, but as a conclusion drawn from the previous statements. Attention is focused on the necessity of recognizing the fact of the new dispensation and of living accordingly. In this sense this cluster already leads to the imperatives of the next cluster. Our analysis of the clusters shows in the first place that the implication of colon 10 is repeated and explicated in colon 15. To have died with Christ implies that one is dead to sin; living with Christ implies putting oneself at the disposal of God (Louw 1979b:76). Cola 11-14 form the basis of 10 and 15. The resurrection of Christ means that he has triumphed over death and sin and that neither death nor sin has any power over him. To the believer who dies with Christ, this fact is the ultimate guarantee of his own new life in Christ: a life free from sin and for the honour of God.

Finally, it is semantically important to note that the pericope is, in cola 2 and 19-20, respectively embraced by the two terms which play an important role in the line of argument of the previous pericope, namely hamartia and chérès.

3. CRUCES INTERPRETUM IN ROMANS 6:1-11

Anyone who has ever grappled with Romans 6:1-11 will know very well that this is, exegetically speaking, one of the most complicated sections in the New Testament. This is one of the reasons why, apart from the fact that this section is of primary importance as part of the New Testament teaching on baptism, the literature on it has become so extensive. The most difficult and debated questions connected with our text are the following: what is to be
understood by the formula *eis Christōn* (colon 5)? What is referred to by the term *homōma* (colon 7)? How are the future tenses *ēsōmetha* (colon 7) and *suzēsomen* (colon 10) to be regarded? Not all these questions are of equal importance to our study, but we shall nevertheless have to investigate each one of them to some degree in order to determine their relevance in this connection.

3.1 It is common knowledge that there are basically two different approaches to the first question posed above. The one is that the formula *eis Christōn* should be interpreted in a local sense (i.e. the believer is baptized into Christ. Christ in this context is understood as corporate personality in whom all the believers are included). The other approach is to take the formula as an abbreviated form of the longer baptismal formula *eis τὸ ὄνωμα τοῦ Christou*, which in turn is interpreted as a formula for transfer of ownership, or as an indication of the constitutive factor for the nature of the baptismal act, or an indication of the goal of this act (cf. Tannehill 1967:22). The advocates of each of these approaches are convinced that they have sufficient support for their stance from parallel cases in the New Testament itself. It is clear that the first approach operates on the juristical level, the second on the 'mystical'.

The question now is: would preference for the one or the other point of view result in any significant change in the theme of the pericope? In my opinion the answer is 'no'. It is actually irrelevant whether the believer shares in the redemptive result of Christ's death (and resurrection) by way of baptism as a 'mystical' incorporation into (the body of) Christ, or by way of baptism as a transference into the ownership of Christ. The essential fact, according to the text, is that the objective reality of the redemption of the believer through the death of Christ, becomes a subjective reality for him through baptism. The important feature of colon 5 is therefore that the believer through baptism shares in Christ's death as saving event, and it is on this fact that the following cola elaborate. The complicated question whether the formula *baptizō eis Christōn* refers to baptism as a mystical or juristic event, therefore belongs rather to the debate on the New Testament teaching on baptism as such.

3.2 The foregoing also actually applies to our second question. It is well-known that in this case a lively and extensive debate was started by the history of religions school, which claimed that the concept of baptism as expressed in Romans 6:1-11, was directly influenced by the initiation rites of the Hellenistic mystery religions. This conviction is primarily based on what is stated in colon 7, and although the debate has receded considerably in recent times, it has not ceased and probably never will. Decisive arguments have been brought forward against this view, yet they
have not succeeded in fully quenching the smouldering embers of the debate. But even if the mystery issue could have been put aside as entirely irrelevant to our text, there still remains what can be called a variation of this approach. This is, namely, that some scholars interpret the term homotoma as referring to the baptismal rite or event as an image 'Abbild' of the death and resurrection of Christ. According to this view the believer shares in what happened to Christ, by way of this baptismal image as a symbolic or sacramental act resembling the death and resurrection of Christ. As Louw 1979b:75) puts it, '...baptism suggests burial symbolized by going down under the water, and coming out of the water represents emergence from the tomb, i.e. coming into life again'. Or in the words of Nygren (1965:172), 'Wie jeder unmittelbar merkt, knüpft Paulus in diesen Worten an die "aussere Form" der Taufhandlung an. Wenn der Täufling unter Wasser getaucht wird, dann bezeichnet dies sein Begraben-werden "mit Christus", und wenn er wieder aus dem Wasser heraufsteigt, seine Auferstehung "mit Christus"." Normally, in the case of this interpretation, it is necessary to supply autō after sumphutos and to take το homoiomati as instrumental dative or dative of reference.9)

There are, however, serious objections to this view, both on linguistic and theological grounds. Firstly, there is on linguistic grounds no legitimate reason for supplying autō to the text. The strongest argument for supplying autō to the text seems to be the idea that sumphutos can only apply to things of a similar nature. If this is the case, it would have been impossible to state that the believer (a person) could grow together with the (impersonal) homoiomata of Christ's death. However, Kuss (1963:300) has convincingly shown that this assertion cannot be supported by the actual usage of sumphutos, '..."Gleichartigkeit" ist keineswegs erforderlich, sondern lediglich natürliche zusammengehörigkeit im allgemeinsten Sinne' (cf. also Siber 1971:219). Secondly, if homoiomati refers to baptism in colon 7a it must be the same in 7b where the term has not been repeated, due to an ellipsis. If this is the case, the future verb esometha indicates that if το homoiomati is repeated in colon 7b it cannot refer to the resemblance of the resurrection of Christ in the past baptismal rite, and neither can the parallel use of homotoma in the first half of the verse resemble Christ's death (Tannehill 1967:33; Siber 1971:219). This naturally depends on the assumption that the future verb esometha is a real future and not a 'logical' future, as this approach assumes.

Scholars who disagree with this approach maintain that colon 7a should read as it stands, namely that το homoiomati is syntactically the complement of sumphutos gegonamen. In actual fact, the text thus says that as a result of their baptism, the baptized are all 'grown together' or 'one with' the homotoma of Christ's death.10) Even though the vast majority of scholars support this view, there is
still no agreement as to the question to what *homoioomatì tou thandtou* refers or in what sense the believer becomes united with this *homoioôma*. Is it a conformation to the death of Christ 'der in der Taufe präsent ist' (Schlier 1979:196), or is it a conformation in the sense that the believer is initiated into the community, the church, which was already included in Christ as corporate personality on Golgotha (Ridderbos 1959:129)? Bound up with this is the question whether *homoioôma* in this context means 'image' ('Abbild') or 'form' ('Gestalt'), each of which is possible. If, together with the majority of interpreters, we should decide upon 'form' as the correct equivalent, how are we to explain why the text speaks of the 'form' of Christ's death rather than speaking simply of his death?

It is almost generally agreed that the sense in which the term is used in the Christological passages Romans 8:3; Philippians 2:7, is to express both identity and difference. If the same could apply to our text, and there is no reason why it should not, the answer is that the term *homoioôma* is used here to denote the fact that it is really Christ's death which is spoken of, and yet with a difference. As Kuss (1963:302) puts it, '... im Taufgeschehen ist der Tod Jesu Christi "da" aber er ist naturgemäss in einer von dem Ereignis auf Golgotha verschiedenen Gestalt da....' *Homoioôma* therefore does not indicate some intervening reality, but the reality of the death of Christ, in which in one way or another the believer partakes through baptism. Evidently, it would not have been sufficient only to say that the believer dies as Christ died, because somehow Christ's death is a present reality with which the believer becomes united or to which he becomes conformed. On the other hand, it would also not be possible to state that the believer actually dies the same death that Christ died, for Christ's death on the cross was his alone (so, rightly, Käsemann 1974:156).

As was said above, objections have also been raised on theological grounds against the assumption that baptism or the baptismal act, resembles the death (and resurrection) of Christ. These are, namely, there is no indication elsewhere in the New Testament that baptism was understood in this way by the early church; there is no clear analogy between the act of entering the water and Christ's death, for Christ was not drowned; there is also no clear analogy between entering the water and burial, for burial in water was and is not the normal means of burial; in the other passages in the Pauline letters where there is reference to the believer's death to the powers of this aeon, baptism is not mentioned (cf. Rm 7:4,6; 2 Cor 5:14f; Gl 2:19f, 5:24, 6:14; as well as Phlp 3:10,21).

At the beginning of this section I indicated that, in my opinion, it is not of primary importance to our study to determine exactly to what *homoioôma* in colon 7 refers. The all important matter is that the intention of this colon is to express the fact that through
baptism the believer becomes united with the death of Christ, in that he dies (with Christ) to the dominion of sin. This feature is excellently epitomized by Käsemann (1974:159), 'In unserm Zusammenhang geht es primär um das Faktum, dass wir in der Taufe mit Christus gestorben und deshalb der Sündenmacht entzogen sind. Sofern das allgemein anerkannt wird, bedarf es keiner weiteren Explikation'.

3.3 As far as the third exegetical crux is concerned, the issue is in a sense more complicated and more relevant for our study than the previous ones. The question remains: how, exactly, are we to reconcile the future tense of the verbs in cola 7 and 10 with the notion that the new life is an already accomplished reality, as expressed in cola 6, 15 (and 18)? Are we to try and solve the problem, as some do by treating the futures concerned as 'logical' (i.e. equivalent to the present tense)? Or should we, with the majority of scholars, regard these as real futures? And if they are real futures, does it necessarily mean that we are left with a present-future contradiction in these verses? The answer normally given to this question is that in this context present and future do not really, but only seemingly, contradict each other. This 'contradiction' is ascribed to what is believed to be characteristic of the eschatological life (i.e. that it is always both present and future. Cf. Robinson 1979:70). Through baptism it is present reality already as new dimension of \( \zeta \). As ultimate consummation of the new life through the resurrection from the dead it is, however, still future promise and hope (cf. Schlier 1979:196; \( \pi \)teuomen, colon 10).

There is also a third explanation given for this 'contradiction' between present and future in our pericope. This is based on the assumption that Paul made use of a baptismal idea which already had a fixed form in the Hellenistic church before and contemporary with him (Tannehill 1967:10; Gäumann 1967:47f). This idea was that through baptism, not only the believer's death (to sin) but also his resurrection to a new life, became a past accomplished fact. Since, however, the concept of an already accomplished resurrection was unacceptable to Paul on theological grounds, he modified the idea by substituting in its place the ethical notion of 'walking in the newness of life' \( \zeta \). Thus Paul does not reject the idea that the baptized somehow participates in the new life in the present, but he is careful to make clear that it does not become the believer's possession. 'It is realized through a continual surrender of one's present activity to God, a walking in newness of life, and at the same time it remains God's gift for the future' (Tannehill 1967:12).

The implication of this approach to the present-future issue in Romans 6:1-14 is that we have actually two parallel lines of thought
presented in this unit. Firstly, there is the idea of the Hellenistic church (probably developed under influence of the mystery religions, so Gäumann 1967: 47ff) as modified by Paul, and which comprises freedom from sin. Secondly, there is the Pauline concept of the future eschatological new life with Christ, which is still to be realized through the resurrection of the believer at the parousia of Christ. The question whether these two lines of thought (i.e. freedom from sin and freedom from death) are of equal importance in this context, is answered negatively by Siber, 'Im Ganzen des Briefteils fällt Röm 6 vor allem die Aufgabe zu, die Freiheit von der Sünde zu entfalten. Die Darstellung der Freiheit von der Sünde stellt darum in Röm 6 die Hauptlinie dar, die der Freiheit vom Tode eher eine Nebenlinie' (1971:234).

This explanation of the present-future 'contradiction' presents a more acceptable solution than the assertion that the future verbs in cola 7 and 10 are 'logical' futures, rather than real references to future time. There is simply no reason why Paul had to use the future of the verbs if he was not really referring to the future (cf. Tannehill 1967:10). If he wanted to refer to the new life as an already accomplished fact, he could have done so by using either the aorist or the present or perfect tense. It must be kept in mind that the future tense always designates future time only. The only possible exception is when a general truth for all times is expressed, as, for example, in Romans 3:20 (cf. 6:2). In a case like this it may have a 'gnomic' aspect, but whether this is the case or not, depends entirely on the context and not on an aspect characteristic of the future tense itself (cf. Du Toit 1973:44ff). To this we will return later on.

4. THE REALITY OF THE NEW LIFE

We have reached the point where we should take a closer look at our pericope and the matters concerned. In doing so we are immediately struck by the prominent position of the opposites hamartia-chários at the beginning (colon 2) and end (cola 19 and 20) of the pericope, hereby embracing the argumentation in between. The featuring of hamartia at the end of the pericope is further supplemented by nómo (colon 20) as its semantic parallel. In the previous pericope (5:12-21) hamartia and chários were in the forefront as entirely opposite, mutually exclusive powers which respectively bring about opposite states of affairs: the dominion of hamartia results in death, the dominion of chários as God's abundant kindness, brings about eternal life (5:21; cf. also 6:23). Furthermore, the outstanding component of chários, namely, that it is God's abundant, unconditional kindness, has been excellently demonstrated: it results in the unconditional acquittal of the godless and the guilty (4:5; 5:16) and even increases abundantly where sin abounds (5:20).
It is, however, precisely this feature of *charis* which could be exploited by sin and which could consequently result in a disposition such as is expressed in colon 2. To this possible disposition our pericope now turns its attention and the answer given to it is plain and firm: it is impossible for one who has died to sin to live in it any longer. A statement like this sounds self-evident, but needs explanation. How does this apply to the believer? To explain this is the intention of cola 5-15.

Colon 5 starts the explanation by stating that it is through baptism that the believer dies to sin. As the believer is baptized, he is baptized into union with Christ, and is consequently inevitably united with the death of Christ. For to be united with Christ obviously implies that one is also united with his death, sharing in his death. Sharing in his death in turn implies that one is dead oneself. To illustrate this assertion, cola 6 and 7 now elaborate on how this union with Christ's death is accomplished through baptism. Actually, what has already been said, is only repeated in other terms in these cola. According to colon 6 the believer is somehow buried with Christ, probably as a sign of the finality of his death in union with Christ, while colon 7 again states that baptism results in being united with the form of Christ's death. Still another way of explaining the matter is deemed necessary, and this is done by colon 8. According to this colon, to be united with Christ through baptism, is to participate with him in his death on the cross, that is to be crucified with him.

It is extremely difficult to determine from our text what exactly the role and function of baptism is in this process. There is no clear indication that the event of burial or of dying and rising with Christ is symbolized by the baptismal act. We have already pointed out that the same thought is expressed elsewhere in the Pauline letters without even mentioning baptism as the means by which it is accomplished (cf. 2 Cor 5:14f; Gl 2:19). That baptism is implied in these contexts is unlikely. As tempting as it may be to interpret *homoiooma* (colon 7) in a symbolical way, it remains linguistically and theologically inadmissible and impossible to do so. The only tenable explanation for the use of *homoiooma* in this context, is that it expresses the fact that the death of the believer through baptism, is essentially the same as Christ's, but not in reality. By saying this I have actually rejected the assertion that our text could have been influenced by the mystery religions. I am aware of the fact that this is probably too easily done, but am also convinced that mystery influence or not neither viewpoint essentially alters the intention of our text.

The intention of our text is to state that everyone who has been baptized has died to sin, and that baptism is the means by which it is accomplished. It appears that this death to sin has been
brought about in a twofold manner, according to cola 8 and 9. On the one hand, the old sinner, so to speak, has died with Christ on the cross (colon 8), and consequently cannot sin any more. On the other hand, as a result of his death, he has been freed from the dominion of sin (colon 9), and consequently is under no obligation to sin any more. The very existence over which sin held sway is something of the past; it does not exist any more.

What happened to the believer through baptism therefore represents a total and radical change of existence. This is why sin for the baptized in Christ Jesus is and should be impossible. A believer who keeps on living in sin is in constant contradiction with his new self. In his new existence sin has been left behind, has been buried with his old self. For this new man to sin is an anachronism. The radicalism and finality of this change of existence can be illustrated by the Christ event, which is its basis as well as the transforming power that brings it about. Christ died once and for all to sin (colon 13) and everyone who is united with him in his death, has died to sin as he did, once and for all.

To state that the believer, through baptism into union with Christ, is dead to sin, is only the negative way of defining his change of existence. There is also the positive side. Actually the question posed in colon 2 has been satisfactorily answered by the assertion that the baptized in Christ has died to sin. This is, however, only half of what is to be said. As important as, or even more important than, the reality of the believer's death to sin, is his life in the new dispensation which was opened by his baptism. What does our text say about this life?

As pointed out earlier in this study, it would only be justifiable to treat the futures in cola 7 and 10 as present tense or 'logical' futures, if the context demands and permits it. Is there such an indication in the context concerned? Before we try to answer the question we must recognize the fact that our text undoubtedly means us to understand that the positive side of the new existence of the believer, that is his new life, is a real thing. This is unmistakably implied and formulated in cola 6 and 15 (cf. colon 18). Yet it is remarkable that, distinct from the Deutero-Paulines, Ephesians and Colossians (Eph 2:1,5f; Col 2:12f,20; 3:1.4), Paul in this context consistently refrains from saying that the believer, as a result of his baptism, has already risen (with Christ) from death. Over against this, the believer's death with Christ is several times spoken of as a past event (sunetaphēmen autō, colon 6; συμμφυτοὶ γεγονόμεν τῷ ἰδίῳματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτῶ, colon 7; sunestaurōthē (autō), colon 8; apethēnomen sîn Christō, colon 10). It is entirely inexplicable why Paul did not say so if he had been convinced that the believer's resurrection was an accomplished fact as a result of his baptism. The only tenable explanation why Paul acted in this
way is that he knew very well that the ultimate resurrection of the believer is still to be accomplished in the eschatological future. This is in full accord with Paul's view on this matter as expressed elsewhere in his letters (e.g. Rm 8:11; 1 Cor 15:20ff; Phlp 3:10ff; 1 Th 4:15ff; cf. 2 Tm 2:18).

Whether Paul took over an already fixed baptismal idea or doctrine and modified it in accordance with his own views, cannot, with any certainty, be discernible from the context. We are not even absolutely sure that Paul, with the use of the formula ἐὰν αγνοήτε (colon 5), had some well-known traditional baptismal concept or doctrine in mind. Although it seems fairly evident that this must have been the case (cf. 6:16; 7:1), it is questioned by Kuss (1963:297), who argues for the possibility that Paul is simply speaking in terms of a 'polite pedagogy' and is actually transmitting new ideas to his readers. Whatever the case may be, the fact is that the new life of the believer is spoken of in two different ways or from two different perspectives. On the one hand, there is the life realized through baptism into union with Christ and known to be an already accomplished fact (ἐγνώσκο, cola 5 and 8; λογίζομαι, colon 15) in the life of the believer. On the other hand, there is the future (eternal) resurrection life opened up by baptism into union with Christ, but which is still the object of faith (πιστευ̂, colon 10) and hope. The believer's death to sin and the newness of life accomplished through baptism is in a sense the anticipation and guarantee of the eschatological consummation of this eternal life. 'In V.5 wie im V.8 gründet die Hoffnung auf das künftige Leben mit Christus in dem ein für allemal geschehenen Mitsterben mit ihm' (Siber 1971:243; cf. Schlier 1979:196). On the other hand, the resurrection life is already present here and now in the life of the believer, and his life is already controlled by its power (cf. Käsemann 1974:159). It is precisely because this new life is still lived in the mortal body which belongs to this transient aeon, that it needs the perspective of the time when mortality will be done away with (cf. Siber 1971:243).

It would not be wrong to say that this new life is sacramental in character. According to our text, it is only accessible through baptism and is only to be realized in the sacramental sphere, that is the body of Christ and the sphere of faith. It is therefore a reality only ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (colon 15). Not that baptism has an independent significance as salvation event. 'What takes place in baptism is a manifestation of the power of the cross. The individual can enter into Christ and be separated from the old dominion of sin through baptism only because of the eschatological significance of the cross. It is only because it is the effect of Christ's cross to bring the old dominion to an end and establish a new dominion that baptism can mean the realization of this eschatological change in the life of the individual' (Tannehill 1967:42).
This new reality is also a hidden reality, not only because it is a reality 'in Christ' and perceptible to faith alone, but also because it is a reality amidst the still existing realities of this aeon. Our text does not say that sin is eliminated or that death is finally overcome. Although the σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας (colon 8) has been destroyed, the believer still lives en τῷ θνῆτο σώματι (colon 16). There is still the possibility that the επιθυμίαι can gain control over the mortal body of the believer. For this reason it is not only imperative that the believer should constantly be reminded of the indicative reality of this new life, but also of the imperative to live up to it. Because this hidden reality can only be openly manifested in constant death to sin and in life at the disposal of God, it remains in this old dispensation a reality to be realized again and again through obedience and faith.

It is remarkable indeed how entirely ethically orientated the discourse on the new life is developed in this context. As Siber (1971: 241) puts it, 'Er (Paul Paulus) interpretiert das gegenwärtige Leben konsequent im sinne des Lebens im sittlichen Wandel, im Dienst an Gott und in der Absage an die Sünde.' The reason for this is obviously that the setting in which this life should manifest itself is a world in which it remains constantly a 'Fremdkörper' and that it is to be realized amidst the discontinuity between present and future. The strongest basis and motivation for this call for ethical realization of the new existence remains the Christ event and the consequent reality of the believer's life hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3). It is this indicative reality of the new existence, which constantly insists by means of the imperative: Be what you already are in union with Christ Jesus! To live in union with Christ, does not only require that one shall not sin any more, but also that one shall live at the disposal of God, as Christ constantly does (colon 14). It should not only be impossible for the believer to sin any more, it should also be impossible not to live at the disposal of God.

Should the new self of the believer be manifested in this way, it will also be the manifestation of the power of the χάρις of God, God's abundant kindness, in the life of the believer. It is precisely this χάρις of God, constantly bestowed on the believer, which is the new reality by which his life is ruled (colon 20; cf. 5:2) and which enables him to pursue and to realize this new existence in Christ.

5. CONCLUSION

A summary of the most important features of the new life as presented in our text will help to refresh the memory and will put the issue in perspective.
a. First of all, the Christ event is and remains the only basis and the generative power of the new existence of the believer.

b. Baptism is the only means by which access to this new existence is obtained.

c. Baptism establishes unity with Christ's death, resulting in the believer's death.

d. This represents a radical change of existence which is manifested negatively and positively in the life of the believer: negatively it is a life of death to sin, a life freed from the power of sin; positively it is a life of putting oneself at the disposal of God.

e. The new life is a reality of the present, and as such the anticipation of the future resurrection life.

f. It is a sacramental reality pertaining to the sacramental community in Christ and to the world of faith.

g. It is a hidden reality which cannot be seen or distinguished by the eyes of this world. It is also a reality amidst the unchanged realities of this godless world and exists amidst the discontinuity of present and future. It is actually hidden in Christ with God.

h. It can, as far as the believer is concerned, only be manifested and accomplished ethically and is lived by the power of the chris of God. Only when it finds expression ethically, does it become a manifest reality.

FOOTNOTES

1. Some of the few exceptions are Kuss 1963; K. Barth 1951; Käsemann 1974; Robinson 1979; Ridderbos 1959.

2. This is shown more clearly in the analysis of Du Toit 1979: 265, than in that of Louw 1979a:13.

3. Cf. Louw 1979b:77, as well as pp.75-7 for his presentation of the line of argument.

4. Cf. Louw 1979b:76, who makes this cluster a conditional subdivision (a) of a larger cluster C, comprising both our clusters C & D.

5. Some supporters of this view are: Dodd 1970:107f; Käsemann 1974:155f; Kuss 1963:296f; Ridderbos 1971:225, 450; Robinson 1979:69; Althaus 1970:64; Sandey-Headlam 1914:156:

7. In support of the first, reference is normally made to Mk 1:9; 1 Cor 12:13; Gl 3:27, and of the second, to passages such as Jn 3:18; Ac 19:3-5; 1 Cor 8:12, 10:2.

8. Besides references concerning this issue in almost every study on baptism, see Wagner 1962. See also Schneider s.a.: 192f for the different interpretations attached to this passage.

9. Some other advocates of this approach are: Dodd 1970:107; Schnackenburg 1964:54, '... Paul has at most understood the submersion beneath the water in a symbolic way as a being buried with Christ ...'; Barrett 1977:124, to a lesser extent.


11. For example, Schnackenburg 1964:38; Delling s.a.: 130, 131, note 466; Larsson 1962:71; Schneider s.a.:193f.


14. It is clear from the context surrounding this pericope that nomos is treated semantically, almost as a parallel to hamartia, since it promotes sin (cf. 5:20, 7:7ff) and like sin it is an enslaving power, operating in and belonging to the old dispensation (7:1ff).

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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