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New Man – New Creation in the Theology of Paul

Abstract

God had congratulated himself for creating the universe and humankind (Gen 1,31), a “very good” creation brought to nought by human sin. However, human nature still sighs and longs for the goodness and image of God within. God’s creation yearns to be created anew. Paul’s understanding of “new creation” and “new man” looks to the wise plan of God negated by sin. For Paul, the new era, in which the new creation reaches its aim in perfection, is the time of the *parousia*, the new and future coming of Jesus Christ. The Apostle of the Gentiles understood “*kainē ktisis*” in a soterio-cosmological sense, as the event consequent upon the redemption brought about by Christ Jesus that will be fulfilled in the *parousia*. New creation, new mankind in a new covenant takes place in communion with the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus in Baptism. The fundamental condition by which the revelation of the mystery of God takes place is the new covenant fulfilled in the blood of Christ and its effects: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, upon those who believe, as even the prophets had foretold. One can observe the development of the Pauline thought in his Letters: from a theological perspective and its legitimacy in the Major Letters, to the practical consequences in the daily life of the Christian assemblies in the Deutero-Pauline Letters, that emerge from the application of these theological arguments.

Keywords

New creation – New Covenant – Redemption – Justification – Proto-pauline Letters – Deutero-pauline Letters.

1. Introduction

“When God created the world and all nature, he put an aim for this creation. Such an aim had to do both with the order of grace as well as with the order of glory, but far removed from the order of nature and of the world. This aim: to give himself to those he loves, and whom he calls to take part in his own life in Christ the Saviour, in whom all creatures are to be reconciled, and elevated to a true glory.”¹

These are meaningful words by the French Philosopher Jacques Maritain, that succinctly reflect the thought of several authors, exegetes and commentators regarding „new man” and „new creation” as explicated by Paul in his letters.

The majority of Jewish thinkers believed that God created a good world through the mediation of Wisdom (Prov 8,22-31; Sir 24; Wis 7,22-8,1). Man, however, reduced this divine plan to nought. By his sin man went against the will of God for him and for the whole of creation, which he was commanded to administer. Yet, at the same time, this illusion, brought about by man, gave rise to the wish that a new creation in a new era will come about, in which all creation will be liberated from this self-inflicted annihilation and transformed into its original goodness and beauty. When God finished creating the universe and mankind, he had congratulated himself: “saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good”² (Gen 1,31). By his sin man destroyed this goodness and this image of God within him. Towards this original goodness was man’s desire and for this new creation did man sigh!

Paul has correctly perceived that the Wisdom through which God has made all creation is Jesus Christ (1Cor 1,17-25; Col 1,15-20). Paul has also understood that sin defaces the goodness of creation by negating the wise plan of God. Mankind chooses to do what goes against his will, and thus against the goodness that God has endowed him with, that makes him God’s image and likeness. Instead of the goodness that creates him, mankind has chosen sin that destroys him. For Paul, the new era, in which all is renewed, and in which the image

¹ J. Maritain, *Le pensée de Saint Paul*, New York 1941: Editions de la Maison Française, pp. 147; English edition: *The Living Thoughts of Saint Paul*, London 1945, Cassell; and in Italian: *Il pensiero di San Paolo*, Roma² 1999, Borla.

² The Hebrew adjective *tôb* (like the Maltese „tajjeb”) encapsulates very many shades of „goodness”, that may be gathered under three categories: aesthetic, moral and functional goodness.

created by God within him is restored, is the time of the *parousía* or the new and future coming of Jesus Christ.³

In fact, within the whole context of the debate regarding the phrase “in Christ” in 2 Corinthians 5,17, R.H. Strachan opines that whenever mankind acquires Christ anew, and remains in him, there a new creation takes place, since mankind would then be grafted into Christ Jesus.⁴ Strachan says that Paul adopts the Hebrew language of his times and thus defines “in Christ” in 2 Corinthians 5,17 as “creation in a new world”, “in a new creation”. He applies this idea to 2 Corinthians 5,17⁵ and Galatians 6,15⁶ and says that Paul understands „*kainē ktisis*, new creation” in a soterio-cosmological sense, that is, as the event consequent upon the redemption brought about by Christ Jesus that will take place in the new era.

2. „New creation” in the Hebrew Scripture

We shall here consider the thought of the Hebrew Scripture alone according to the Prophets. We are aware that there are three currents of thought, but all three can be united in the phrase „new creation”.

The prophet Isaiah (mainly in chapters 40-55) considers „former things/new things” as the imminent liberation of the Jewish People from slavery as another exodus, a second exodus, a new liberation that creates the people anew. Actually, Isaiah makes use of figures of creation for liberation from slavery. This demonstrates that the theology of Exodus in Isaiah is a theology of freedom taken from much deeper meanings. Creation and freedom are gathered in the same figures. Isaiah uses verbs such as *gā'al* („he freed”) and *yasha'* („he saved”) both in creation contexts as well as in those of liberation (confer Isa 43,12; 45,17; 52,3-9; 63,9).

³ Confer R. Fabris, *Per leggere Paolo*, Roma 1993, Borla, p. 99.

⁴ R. H. Strachan, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, London, 1935, Hodder & Stoughton, p. 113.

⁵ W. H. Gloer, *An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Understanding of New Creation and Reconciliation in 2Cor. 5:14-21*, Leviston, New York, 1996, Mellen Biblical Press, presents a very good analysis of the new creation through the reconciliation brought about by Jesus Christ.

⁶ Confer also J. L. Martyn, *Galatians*, The Anchor Bible 33A, New York, 1998, Doubleday, pp. 559-570.

Towards the end of his Book, Isaiah widens these figures to include heavens and earth. God promises his people not only “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Isa 7,22) but also a world that is much in line with what God had intended for it when he formed it. In this manner Isaiah links together the first creation of the world with the new creation of his people, created anew when he himself freed it from slavery and exile. Jeremiah and Ezekiel follow the same train of thought.

Since the concrete situation of the communities addressed by Jeremiah and Ezekiel was very similar to, and at the same time different from, that of Isaiah, these two prophets present a message that is quite similar to and agrees with that of Isaiah just as well. How can it be, Jeremiah and Ezekiel argue, that such a hard-headed people (Eze 2,3-4) and a people who dared rebel against God himself, a people that can change as much as an Ethiopian can change the colour of his skin, (Jer 13,23), be the people of God? In such a precarious situation, Jeremiah and Ezekiel look forward to the day when God creates his own people anew from within. God needs to make a new covenant with his people, give him a new heart and fill him again with a new Spirit. The two prophets make it more than clear that the real enemy of the people is not the army encamped outside the walls, but one entrenched within: its own hard-heartedness of not wanting to understand with which Spirit God himself wants to move them in their life.⁷ A creation of a new Spirit in the heart of the people is what actually leads the people to let God save it from the desperate situation that it has found itself in.

3. The anthropology of Paul

Paul's anthropology goes part and parcel with the relation of mankind with Christ Jesus. In his letters, Paul makes use of the formula “in Christ Jesus”⁸

⁷ Confer M. V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought*, SNTSMS 119, Cambridge, 2002, Cambridge University Press, pp. 23-25. To be fair, in his revised doctoral thesis, Hubbard distinguishes a cosmological new creation (a new world) and an anthropological new creation (a new person), concluding that texts do tend to emphasize one or the other and that the former usually has special emphasis in the apocalyptic texts.

⁸ *en Khrīstō Iēsou* occurs fifty times in the Pauline Letters. For a quite exhaustive treatment of the term „in Christ”, confer J. Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, The Oxford Bible Series, Oxford, ²1990, Oxford University Press, pp. 49-52. It is important to note that Paul does not find any difficulty in saying “If Christ is in you ...” (Rom 8,10), so as to create an expression

or other similar formulas.⁹ Paul makes use of such expressions as if to underline the authenticity of the Christian existence of the believers.¹⁰ All those who through faith, or in baptism, are bound to Christ Jesus form with him one living creation and take part in his nature of children of God.

Consequent upon this fact Paul deduces two conclusions. Among those who believe, there should be no more divisions based on social, racial or denominational differences. To the Christians of Galatia, who were being unsettled by propagandists from the Judaizers who wanted to mount again the dividing wall separating Jews from Gentiles, Paul waves the manifesto of full freedom and communion between all those who are in Christ: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3,28).

Furthermore, the Christians, grafted onto Christ Jesus by faith and baptism, share the condition of the Christ: crucified, killed and raised from the dead. Strictly bound to him they were, as it were, snatched from the power of sin that brought about death upon them, and now live according to the new condition inaugurated by the interior gift of the Holy Spirit in the hope of a fuller life in resurrection.¹¹ Paul sets out from the juridical principle that death brings an end to all bindings in contracts. Thus the old master of mankind, sin, is deprived of any right it has on the Christian believers by death. This is consequent upon the fact that they have died with the crucified Christ Jesus and, bound to him, they now belong to God. Paul expresses these fundamental truths by phrases of paramount importance while trying to rebuild the process of Christian liberation from sin. Thus, for example, in Romans 6,6-7 he emphatically states: “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might

and an idea regarding a concept with two sides of the same coin: „man in Christ” and that of „Christ in man” (see also Gal 2,20).

⁹ *dià pisteōs Iēsou Khrīstou* = through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3,22; Gal 2,16) or *ek pisteōs Iēsou Khrīstou* = by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3,22).

¹⁰ Confer Fabris, *Per leggere*, p. 99.

¹¹ Paul calls Jesus “the man from heaven” *anthrōpos eks ouranou* (1Cor 15,47). By this expression Paul meant that Jesus is the man as God had wanted him when he created humankind. Paul does not mean that he is only a man like us, but the true man, man as God had intended him to be. All his life as lived on earth is the life as God had wanted it to be lived by humanity: Confer G. Giavini, *Verso San Paolo. Guida popolare al suo messaggio per allora e per oggi*, Bibbia: Proposte e Metodi, Leumann, Torino, 2003, Elledici, pp. 84-85. Confer also J. J. Kilgallen, *First Corinthians. An Introduction and Study Guide*, New York, Mahwah, 1987, Paulist Press, pp. 136-140.

be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin.”¹²

One might get the impression that Paul works with a dualistic philosophical anthropology: the body and soul are, as it were, separate one from the other in one and the same person. It might seem that the body alone remains bound to the regime of sin and death. In fact Paul speaks of “the perishable/mortal body” or “the body of death” (Rom 6,12; 7,24).

This impression about the separation of body from soul gains ground when Paul himself says that the passions and cravings of the body – both taken in a negative sense – are closely linked to the regime of sin. Paul calls the human condition under the power of sin “to be” or “to live according to the flesh”, against “to be” or “to live by the Spirit”. He speaks of the “desires of the flesh” that are opposed to the Spirit and are opposed to each other. The fruit of the Spirit lead to life; those of the flesh lead to death (Gal 5,16-23; Rom 8,5-8).

Therefore, Paul combines elements from Greek anthropology when, in order to speak about mankind as a whole, he mentions the spirit, the soul, and the body (1Tess 5,23). He makes his own the Platonic and Stoic antithesis between „the exterior man” and „the interior man”, between „the visible things” – those that are ephemeral – and „the invisible” ones – those that endure for ever (2Cor 4,17-18). However, Paul does not embrace these philosophies and anthropologies lock, stock, and barrel, without imprinting upon them his own thought.¹³ He mounts this discourse in his own religious and eschatological belief, where the interior, eternal and definitive reality does not depend upon what makes mankind, but upon the all-merciful and efficacious initiative, gratuitously granted to all by God. In the same vein, Paul speaks about „immortality” and „incorruptibility”, but links them in a paradoxical manner to the body of those who rise from the dead, and not as the Greek philosophers, who link them to the human soul or spirit.

A consequent implication of all this: Paul’s anthropology is grafted onto his own vision of mankind’s religious history. Human history is forever marked

¹² Confer the comments by J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, The Anchor Bible 33, New York, 1993, Doubleday, pp. 429-439.

¹³ The highly regarded Italian Pauline exegete, Romano Penna, is of the opinion that, although Paul expresses himself in strong Jewish thoughts, no one can deny that these thoughts are at the same time thoroughly reworked in truly hellenistic/Greek language. However, Paul reworks them together in his own innovative Christian thought. Confer *Lapostolo Paolo. Studi di esegesi e teologia*, Milano, 1991, Edizioni Paoline, pp. 280-281.

by the salvific presence and action of Christ Jesus, without any chance of going back on its steps. Jesus is the New Adam who is to come, not like the one who once was (confer Rom 5,14). Christ Jesus is the Adam at the head of the whole humanity, since from him has emerged the new humanity, wholly different from the one that the first Adam began.¹⁴ Through his own sin, the First Adam introduced death into the world, a death that has corrupted the whole of humanity, by binding together all humans in the history of the sin of the First Adam who begot them. But the Second Adam, with his salvific action, has proved himself to be much stronger and more efficacious, in bringing about liberation from sin of the First Adam that Jesus Christ has brought about to all humanity, once and for all. When Paul compares the negative history of the first Adam with that of Christ Jesus, he shows how the new solidarity of mankind in salvation is by far stronger and all-embracing than the negative one brought about by the sin of the First Adam. This is why he could argue: “If, because of the one man’s trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ” (Rom 5,17).

Paul retraces, step-by-step, the history of mankind’s condition, in order to arrive at the specific point of showing that the Law, given by God through Moses, is in fact impotent and inefficacious in freeing mankind from the slavery of sin and death.¹⁵ By means of the Law, mankind only comes to know what the effects of sin are (Rom 5,20).¹⁶ Indeed, the precepts of the Law, in mankind’s condition as slave to sin, only set free his disorderly yearnings, and consequently add to the breaking of the Law itself (Gal 3,19; Rom 4,15). As a matter of fact, the Law does not work any justification for mankind (Gal 2,21; 3,21). The Law brings about the knowledge and experience of sin (Rom 3,20); it becomes indeed “the Law

¹⁴ Confer Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, pp. 52-57.

¹⁵ Confer M. D. Hooker, *Paul: A Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2003, Oneworld Publications, pp. 64-66; S. Romanello, *Una legge buona ma impotente. Analisi retorico-letteraria di Rm 7,7-25 nel suo contesto*, Supplementi alla Rivista Biblica 35, Bologna, 1999, EDB; J. D.G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul: Paul and the Law*, in: J. D.G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul. Collected essays*, Tübingen, 2005, Mohr Siebeck, pp. 130-141; J. J. Kilgallen, *Jesus and the Law in St. Paul’s Letters*, “Melita Theologica” 45 (1994), pp. 19-29.

¹⁶ R. Penna, *Una fede per vivere. Seguendo il filo della Lettera ai Romani*, Cinisello Balsamo, Milano, 1992, Edizioni Paoline, p. 72.

of sin and of death” (Rom 8,2).¹⁷ The end of this process in the life of mankind, where the Law itself has a major part in sin, is nothing else but death!

Paul the Apostle, especially in Romans 7,1-6 and 2 Corinthians 5,14-17, places two themes that are so evident in his Letters, side-by-side: the Spirit and the New Covenant. The one cannot be found without the other. The terminology of „*kainē ktisis*, new creation” serves Paul, in an eminent way, in his arguments regarding the „Spirit-body” dialectic. The prophetic tradition, especially in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, served the Apostle as a very sound platform in these arguments regarding the letter and the spirit of the Law.¹⁸

Behind this dramatic reconstruction of the human condition that Paul portrays lies the primary account of Genesis. The human person is represented by Paul himself in the first person, as if he himself is representing the whole of humanity.¹⁹ This he does since he knows very well this struggle of mankind as a first hand experience. In the arguments he puts forward, Paul uses the pronoun „I”, as if all human beings are gathered in him. Sin takes the part of the deceiving serpent, who makes use of the order of God in order to drag mankind in rebelling against his own creator. By this rebellion, mankind draws upon itself its own death. In so doing, Paul is not arguing that the Law is wrong in itself or that mankind is to do without it or would be better to do away with it! Simultaneously he repeats: “So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good” (Rom 7,12). But it does not have the power to free: “For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin.” (Rom 7,14). This impotence of the Law to bring freedom to mankind finds confirmation in what Paul says in Romans 7,19: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”

Paul himself experiences mankind’s struggle: For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.

His struggle finds expression in his yearning statement: “Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” (Rom 7,24). He only finds

¹⁷ Confer K. H. Schelkle, *Paolo. Vita, lettere, teologia*, Biblioteca di Cultura Religiosa 56, Brescia, 1990, Paideia, pp. 224-225.

¹⁸ Confer Hubbard, *New Creation*, p. 112.

¹⁹ For this view about Paul as representative, confer Hooker, *Paul*, p. 109-113.

respice in his complete surrender in God's hands, for whom nothing is impossible where mankind's salvation matters (confer Rom 7,25).

Paul's reconstruction of the human condition devastated by sin is hypothetical. Paul's aim is to insist upon the complete impotence of the Law against sin in a historical situation dominated by sin. However, this condition has been overcome by the initiative of God who, in his son Jesus Christ, has brought the power of sin to nought, and thus could bring about what could never be achieved by the Law: mankind's freedom from the slavery of sin.²⁰ In the New Testament God has provided us with a new Law, a law of freedom and liberation. It is a law that has brought about a complete renewal in mankind's life. This law has renewed man from his very roots.²¹ Through his own initiative, God has again reconciled mankind to himself and has outpoured upon him the gift of his Holy Spirit who has revamped anew, in the same mankind, the power of love that overcomes all obstacles (confer Rom 8,1-4).²²

Paul takes up this theme afresh in 2 Corinthians, where he presents his antitheses, which we find again in his Letter to the Romans: „the letter-Law” of the first covenant condemns to death whoever breaks the Law; „the Spirit” of the second covenant, the interior gift of God to those who believe, gives them back the power to act justly in God and gain their own life.

When those who are baptised go through this experience of a new reconciliation with God in Christ Jesus, they become „a new creation”.²³ This takes place because the grace of God, consequence of the new friendship with God, brings about a new style of life and existence in mankind's world, in which Jesus Christ and the believer begin to live as it were a common life. The believer shares with Christ this new way of life in faith and baptism that introduces him into Christ

²⁰ Confer Hooker, *Paul*, p. 66-70, where Christ is presented as the aim of the Law itself.

²¹ Maritain, *Pensée*, p. 153.

²² To be sure Maritain, *Pensée*, p. 153 considers the essence of Paul's spiritual and mystical thought as converging in his teaching about the disciple's communion with the death and life of Christ Jesus: when the disciple, through the cooperation with God's grace, moves forward in being one in Jesus' death and resurrected life.

²³ The expression *kainē ktisis*, new creation, has been the object of scholarly studies since Augustine. As a result of this long history of interpretation, we can say that by „creation” (*ktisis*) in his letters Paul always means „mankind, humanity, creatures who are human persons.” For an in-depth study of the phrase, confer A. Giglioli, *L'uomo e il creato? Ktisis in S. Paolo*, Collana Studi Biblici 21, Bologna, 1994, Edizioni Dehoniane, pp. 47-69.

and his Church.²⁴ If, in the first creation, man has brought upon himself the condemnation of God because of his sin that cut him off from communion with God, through this new friendship God again pours out life anew, recreates him, as he had already done.

Paul makes use of the expression „new creation” for the first time at the end of his letter to the Galatians. To the Judaizing missionaries, who wanted to impose circumcision on pagan converts to Christianity,²⁵ Paul waves his inflexible choice: “May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal 6,14). Coveting personal prestige does not make any sense anymore when Christ Jesus has given meaning to mankind’s life through his death on the cross. Now Jesus has given a new life to mankind, a life in which all barriers, founded upon differences of race or belief, have been completely erased: “For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! (Gal 6,15).

Paul uses the expression „new creation” a second time in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, when arguing about the profound reasons of his apostolate. What has always given him the impetus to continue working, moved as it were by an invisible force, was the personal, infinite love of Jesus towards all human beings, a love that was brought to consummation on the cross. “And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.” (2Cor 5,15). As a direct consequence of the fact that the Christian has been won for God by Christ through his death upon the cross, the Christian believer now belongs to God. All that he is belongs to God. God has freed him from the enslaving power that sin had upon him, and became the property of God. All that he does, he now does because God has won him to himself. Paul argues that mankind’s position in this relation between him and God or the Law that cannot free from sin, is now clear: he belongs completely to God in Christ Jesus. “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Cor 5,17; Isa 43,18).²⁶

²⁴ J. A. Fitzmyer, *Pauline Theology; A Brief Sketch*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1967, Prentice Hall, pp. 63-64.

²⁵ Confer J. D. G. Dunn, *What Was the Issue Between Paul and “Those of the Circumcision”?*, in: J. D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul. Collected Essays*, Tübingen, 2005, Mohr Siebeck, pp. 143-165.

²⁶ Christ identifies himself with the new „I” of the Christian. This experience of the „near identification” with Christ is an important foundation in the theological and spiritual

4. The Deutero-Canonical Letters

In the Letters from the Pauline Tradition, the antithesis between „the old man” and „the new man” is found again in the context of baptism catechesis. The baptised are invited to live a style of life consonant with the choice made in baptism, that they have received when they have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed themselves with the new self, “which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator” (Col 3,10). Within the same context Paul reminds the Christians of the taking away of every obstacle, whether coming from racial, social or religious differences: “In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!” (3,11; confer Gal 3,9-11).²⁷

The theme of the „new creation” appears in the Letter to the Ephesians primarily in an ecclesial context and then in one of baptismal catechesis. Jews and Gentiles, united as one within the Church, is the model of the new humanity reconciled and loved anew by God. It has its definitive foundation in the death upon the cross of Christ Jesus, who has broken down the dividing wall that separated mankind and destroyed the hostility brooding between them “that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body” (Eph 2,15). In the second part of the Letter, the author invites the baptised to be renewed from within and to “clothe themselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4,24). The new self is the one created in Christ Jesus and who has the image of Christ within him.²⁸

5. Conclusion

„New creation” is tightly linked to thoughts of paramount importance in Pauline theology, such as those of justification and the new covenant. The new being is mankind to whom, through his Holy Spirit, God offers forgiveness of sins. This

inheritance of Paul. Confer G. de Gennaro, E. C. Salzer, *Letteratura mistica: San Paolo mistico*, Vatican City, 1999, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, pp. 482-490.

²⁷ Confer J.-N. Aletti, *Lettera ai Colossesi*, Scritti delle origini cristiane 12, Bologna, 1994, EDB, pp. 196-199.

²⁸ For a particularly significant commentary on this letter, confer S. Romanello, *Lettera agli Efesini*, I Libri Biblici: Nuovo Testamento 10, Milano, 2003, Paoline.

takes place in the communion with the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus in baptism. To the new being, God opens anew the door to a new life in Christ, risen from the dead: “you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1Cor 6,11). One would explain the fact that Paul does not mention the new creation in his authentic Letters by arguing that the Apostle gives more attention to explaining the conditions under which reconciliation between mankind and God takes place.

The fundamental condition by which justification takes place, and thus the revelation of the mystery of God, is the new covenant fulfilled in the blood of Christ and its effects: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit²⁹ upon those who believe, as the prophets, prominent among which Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, had foretold. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (Gal 3,13), “in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal 3,14). The new covenant that God has made with mankind is fulfilled in the blood and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Spirit that he gave, at the point of his death, frees mankind from sin and death (Rom 8,2), and gives it a share in the new life of the Risen Christ.³⁰

Furthermore, when the Deutero-Pauline Letters mention the new creation, in contrast with his genuine Letters, they give much more importance to baptism as an instrument by which the new covenant is achieved. In baptism the radical and fundamental transformation takes place, together with the passage from the old condition to the new existence of mankind. These Letters give more importance to the concrete and visible effects of the transformation that has already taken place in the life of the Christian and in the ordinary life of the Christian communities.

In this sense one can observe the development of the Pauline thought, or better, of his Letters: from a theological perspective and its legitimacy in the Major Letters, to the practical consequences in the daily life of the Christian and of the Christian assemblies in the Deutero-Pauline Letters, that emerge from the application of these theological arguments.

²⁹ The verbs „breathed out his spirit” (*eksepneusenin* Mk 15,37; Lk 23,46), „breathed his last” (*afēken to pneuma* in Mt 27,50; *paredōken to pneumain* Jn 19,30) that the evangelists use to say that Jesus died on the cross, may be translated as „he gave, breathed out his Spirit.”

³⁰ Confer M. Lubomirski, *Il ruolo dello Spirito Santo nel passaggio dell'uomo vecchio all'uomo nuovo secondo San Paolo*, Roma, 1988, Pontifical Gregorian University, p. 374.

The relationship between the Spirit, mankind, and the „new” creation is a threefold occurrence that is found all the time in all Paul’s Letters (confer Rom 7,6; 8,2; 2Cor 3,18; Eph 3,16; 4,23). On the other hand, a difference obtains between the character of the different fruits of this Holy Spirit: in the Deutero-Pauline Letters the Holy Spirit is known as he who brings to fulfilment the great realities of the new covenant and of justification, as explained in the principal Letters.

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