THE JOHANNINE CONCEPTION OF
ETERNAL LIFE

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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM UNDER STUDY

I. PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was designed to present an interpretation and evaluation of the Johannine teaching on eternal Life as contained in the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle. Both of these documents contain a common motif viz., the unique usage of the expression 'eternal Life' (ζωή αἰώνιος).2 Ζωή αἰώνιος appears throughout the New Testament as conventional terminology but usually with an exclusively eschatological setting or meaning. In the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle the expression has been reinterpreted with the

---

1There were several reasons for including the First Epistle with the Fourth Gospel as basic source materials in this study. First of all it is important to note that New Testament scholars generally assume a relation between the two, usually holding to a theory of joint authorship. C. H. Dodd, among other reputable scholars, has taken the position that "the author of the Epistle was a disciple of the [Fourth] Evangelist and a student of his work"; C. H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles. The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), p. lvi. Regardless of the various theories on authorship, the similarities in the contents of the two documents are universally acknowledged. In brief, both writings contain essentially the same purpose—i.e., that men through faith in Jesus Christ may have eternal Life and that, with full assurance (cf. Jn. 20:31 and I Jn. 5:13). Both are characterized by the use of such terms as word, fellowship, light, and love that form the substructure of like theology.

2There are instances throughout
emphasis upon the Life as a present experience and possession rather than as a contemplated state of ultimate blessedness. The Johannine conception is that the eternal Life transcends time and that the future status of the individual in the Life eternal will only be an extension of an experience which began in this life.

A large number of scholarly works has been written on the teachings and theology of the Johannine literature. In most of these the doctrine of eternal Life, although well treated, has occupied only a small portion of the book and at the most, a chapter. Both Stevens\(^1\) and Dodd\(^2\) have produced excellent treatments of the Johannine teaching on eternal Life in outstanding works of a more general nature. But in the modern trends of New Testament scholarship the Johannine doctrine of eternal Life per se has not claimed exclusive attention. In this study all materials have been integrated around the theme of eternal Life.

the New Testament and the Johannine literature particularly where \(\varepsilon\au)\ is employed without the adjective \(\alphai\au\\)os in reference to eternal Life. In all cases where eternal Life is meant, \(\varepsilon\au)\ has been written in translation with the capital L.

\(^1\) G. B. Stevens, The Johannine Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907).

II. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

Johannine thought in general, with its distinctive theological features, has been viewed as a background for a more specific coverage of the theme. It was necessary to consider such areas as the Johannine symbolism, concept of God, and literary style as the main factors of the setting in which the subject is found.

For chapters three and four a study\(^1\) has been made of each instance of the occurrence of \(\tau\varepsilon\iota \alpha\iota\nu\delta\sigma\iota\) in the Greek New Testament.\(^2\) In chapter three, the heart of the study, all of the most important Johannine passages containing the expression 'Life' or 'eternal Life' have been analyzed and classified according to predominant topics. The passages within each category have been quoted\(^3\) in whole or in part at the beginning of the section. On the basis of these passages

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\(^1\) The concordance employed was that of Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, revised William B. Stevenson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1910).


\(^3\) Scripture quotations in this thesis, unless designated otherwise, have been taken from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1952).
the theological significance of ἀιών has been pointed out. This involved relating ἀιών to other Johannine theological concepts which convey a similar idea and help clarify the meaning of the expression.

In the final chapter a survey has been made of the New Testament in general on the subject of eternal Life in order that the Johannine conception might be compared therewith and properly evaluated. The subject has been studied according to each major division of New Testament theology (Synoptic Gospels, Pauline literature, etc.) other than Johannine thought. The study ends with a series of conclusions from this New Testament survey, followed by a comparison of the Johannine doctrine of eternal Life with the general New Testament teaching.
CHAPTER II

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF JOHANNINE THOUGHT

I. SYMBOLISM AND ALLEGORIES

The Johannine writings contain an approach to and representation of eternal truth that distinguishes them from the contents of other parts of the New Testament. The Johannine writings convey the truth of the Christian faith as reflected from the events that made up the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. The author sought to evaluate these events sub specie aeternitatis. In the Fourth Gospel, for example, there is present much theological interpretation which gives significance to the facts. This interpretation was accomplished largely through the author's use of symbols and allegories. The Fourth Gospel records much of the symbolism as contained in the discourses of Jesus; in other instances it stands separate from the discourses. The overall Johannine symbolism is important because it has become the channel through which ultimate truth is mediated.

Such words as light, bread, water, and vine are typical Johannine symbols. Very frequently, in conjunction with each of these symbols, appears the epithet 'true'. Moreover, ἀληθινός is often preferred instead of the regular term for 'true', ἀληθις. ἀληθινός carries the additional meaning of
'real' as opposed to that which is illusory or unreal.

C. H. Dodd has clarified the import of the term by citing a parallel in Greek philosophy "as when Aristotle speaks of τὰ ἀληθινά as opposed to τὰ ἐγραμμένα, real objects as opposed to their pictured counterparts." When Jesus spoke of φῶς ἀληθινὸν he referred to the archetypal light (αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς) of which all physical light is merely ectypal and symbolic. By ἄρτιος ἀληθινός was meant the spiritual and eternal reality behind every tangible leaf.

It is the employment of this unique symbolism that denotes the fundamental Weltanschauung in the Johannine writings. The evangelist viewed his world of phenomena and concrete objects as the living and moving counterpart of the eternal.

The so-called allegories of the Fourth Gospel are extended illustrations involving symbolism but are quite

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1 Dodd, op. cit., p. 139.

2 The term 'allegory' in modern usage generally denotes a story without historical basis, e.g., Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Because the Fourth Gospel contains both history and interpretation, it is misleading to classify it as allegory. The term should be confined to specific portions of the Fourth Gospel (vide infra) so as not to include the historical situations in which they originated. Cf. J. H. Bernard, The Gospel According to St. John (Vol. XXIX, Pt. I of The International Critical Commentary, ed. A. H. McNeile. 44 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), pp. lxxxiii–xc.
different from the Synoptic parables. Two outstanding allegories of the Gospel are the accounts of the Good Shepherd and the Vine and the Branches. When these are compared with a typical Synoptic parable, the dissimilarity can be detected. In the Synoptic parable of the Prodigal Son, for instance, specific details have no separate significance; it is the over-all, collective meaning that is important. On the contrary, an arbitrary analysis of the Johannine allegory of the Good Shepherd reveals that details are of independent importance. Auxiliary factors such as time and place (which commonly constitute the background of the Synoptic parables) are altogether missing. Instead, the symbols shepherd, gate, sheep, sheepfold, and the like are particulars and convey distinct ideas. Jesus is the shepherd and the gate; the sheep are disciples; and the sheepfold is the realm of safety and spiritual welfare.

II. CONCEPT OF GOD

The Johannine concept of God, in essence, formed the

1 Jn. 10: 1-16. 2 Jn. 15: 1-11.

An exception apparently exists in the parable of the Seed and the Sower (Matt. 13: 3-8; 18-23), the interpretation of which involved the identification of component parts. This, however, is not typical of the Synoptic parables in general.
basis of the doctrine of eternal Life. What God is like was an integral part of the author's Christology. He saw the transcendent Divine Being as immanent and operative in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, to whom he referred as the Word (λόγος) become flesh.\(^1\) Jesus was, to him, the revelation and mediator of the Life of God Himself—the eternal Life.

In the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle, the attributes and moral qualities of God have been clearly set forth: light, spirit, righteousness, love, and Life.\(^2\) These properties were ascribed to God by other New Testament writers prior to the composition of the Johannine literature but not in the same manner. The distinctiveness of the Johannine conception of God lies in the fact that God is equated with His attributes. The author succinctly stated that "God is light" (ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν), "is spirit" (πνεῦμα ὁ θεός), "is love" (ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν), etc. The interrelationship of these qualities has been well stated by Robert Law:

Righteousness and Love are the primary ethical qualities of the Divine Nature; Life itself is the essence in which the qualities inhere; and that God is Light signifies that the Divine Nature, as Righteousness and Love, is self-necessitated to reveal itself so as to become the Truth, the object of faith and the source of

\(^1\)Jn. 1:14.

\(^2\)I Jn. 1:5; Jn. 4:24; I Jn. 2:29; 4:8, 16; 5:20.
spiritual illumination.\(^1\)

The expression "God is spirit" must be interpreted as an indication of the essential nature and being of God and hence, tantamount to 'Life'.\(^2\) That is to say, God is at once absolute Spirit and animating power. The uniqueness of the eternal Life lies in the fact that it is an impartation of God's Spirit-Life, in contradistinction to a materialistic view of life.

When the author of the First Epistle said, "God is love," he went beyond all other interpretations of love in the New Testament. The Johannine concept of love is not as descriptive as that of the Synoptic parable of the Prodigal Son or the classic thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians. These accounts vividly portray love in action. The peculiar Johannine equation denotes that behind and immanent in all manifestation of \( \alpha \gamma \nu \rho \chi \) is God. Love in action is God in action--a God whose self-revelation and self-communication to man is motivated exclusively by infinite love.

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\(^2\)Cf. Jn. 6:63, where \( \pi \nu \varepsilon \omega \mu \alpha \) and \( \xi \omega \) stand in close correlation.
III. LITERARY STYLE

Semantic dualism. The reinterpretation of standard New Testament terms is perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Johannine literary style. This re-evaluation appears most effectively through the implication of dual meaning in a single word. In addition to an ordinary meaning, there is involved a secondary or spiritual connotation. Colwell and Titus\(^1\) have noted that the double meanings are expressed in the Fourth Gospel in two patterns viz., either (1) within the word itself (e.g. λόγος, ἀνωθέν, πνεῦμα, etc.) or (2) in words that lend to symbolism (e.g. ναός, ὡς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, βραδύς, etc.).

In the first of the two patterns, λόγος has the ordinary meaning of 'spoken word' (cf. λέγω); however, in the Prologue to the Gospel, λόγος means 'rational word'—the eternal and metaphysical reason of God which "became flesh" and consequently, personal. In this case, the author has endeavored in some detail to explain the secondary meaning, 'personal word'. But in the case of ἀνωθέν, the explanation of the higher meaning is preceded by evidence of mistaken meaning. Jesus, in his conversation with Nicodemus,\(^2\) related

\(^{2}\)Jn. 3:1-16.
to him the necessity of spiritual regeneration—i.e., that men must be born of the Spirit (ἰνανωθέν) in order to enter the kingdom of God. Ἰνανωθέν, however, had a lower or physical meaning of 'anew' or a 'second time'. Nicodemus seized this latter meaning and asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time [Σεϋτερον] into his mother’s womb and be born?" Jesus had intended that the term be taken to mean 'from above', and in the succeeding portion of the discourse he explained the spiritual nature of regeneration. In order to state the fact of the mysterious character of the experience, he used the word πνεύμα, which meant both 'wind' and 'spirit'. Here, if the lower meaning were grasped, it would have still been illustrative of the higher meaning. In this case, Jesus did not attempt to distinguish between the two. Both meanings were capable of conveying the fact of the mystery involved in the experience.

Words in the second class of dual meanings are concrete symbols which often involved, like words in the first class, mistaken identification. It is noteworthy that when the lower meaning of such words was grasped, the error became the occasion for expounding the higher meaning. The word for temple, ναός, was uniquely employed by Jesus in a conversation with certain Jews in Jerusalem at a Passover.¹

¹Jn. 2:18-21.
The incident occurred in the Temple and when Jesus referred to the destruction of "this temple," his audience took the statement as a reference to the sanctuary. But in as much as Jesus was making an allusion to his death, the evangelist explained that "he spoke of the temple of his body."

In like manner the Samaritan woman, whom Jesus met at the well near Sychar, could not separate the "living water" (ὕδωρ ζωής) of which he spoke from the physical water in the ground. To her, ὕδωρ ζωής meant fresh, invigorating water with which one could quench the thirst. Jesus pointed out that the water in the well only brought temporary satisfaction but that the 'spiritual water' which he could bestow had power to satisfy thirst permanently.

In the same setting, the disciples of Jesus failed to understand his use of ἄρτος (food). After his disciples had procured supplies in Sychar, they returned to the well and offered him food to eat. Jesus replied that he had food of which they were unaware. When they had mistaken his statement to mean physical nourishment, he proceeded to teach a brief lesson on service—explaining that the ἄρτος by which he was strengthened was found in doing the will and perfecting the work of God.

1Jn. 4:5 ff.
Antithetic dualism. The Johannine writings are marked by a series of terms, each of which has its corresponding antithesis. In fact, several of the major theological terms stand diametrically opposed to a corresponding negative term. The author employed areas of thought that were strictly confined and sharply delineated—devoid of degrees or variation. The most common antitheses found in the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle are as follows:

1) God— the evil one (I Jn. 5:19)
2) The Father— the world (I Jn. 2:15)
3) Light— darkness (Jn. 1:5)
4) Salvation— judgment (Jn. 3:17)
5) Truth— falsehood (Jn. 8:44)
6) Belief— disbelief (Jn. 3:18)
7) Love— hate (I Jn. 4:20)
8) Life— death (Jn. 5:24)

A survey of these pairs of terms reveals that they are ethical in nature. Taken as a whole, they concern not the metaphysical dualism which makes evil an essential and eternal principle of the universe, but a moral dualism which...finds illustration in human history from the beginning of the race. The moral history of mankind is the conflict of light and darkness, the shining of the true light in the world's darkness...  

Peculiar phraseology relevant to eternal Life. The phraseology that is peculiar to the Fourth Gospel and the

1 The references given are only typical and by no means exhaustive.
2 Stevens, op. cit., p. 12.
First Epistle forms a considerably large group. In view of this fact, it has been considered appropriate in this study to provide only a selected listing of terms that are particularly relevant to the Johannine conception of eternal Life. This condensation is given below.

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>St. John</th>
<th>I John</th>
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<tr>
<td>ἀκούειν (believingly)</td>
<td>5:24, etc.</td>
<td>4:5,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ἰωάννης διῆνας</td>
<td>6:33; 17:2</td>
<td>5:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἔχειν τὴν Ἰωάννης</td>
<td>3:36, etc.</td>
<td>5:12,13</td>
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<tr>
<td>τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν</td>
<td>1:9</td>
<td>2:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν</td>
<td>6:19</td>
<td>4:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα</td>
<td>1:12, etc.</td>
<td>5:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σκοτία (metaphorically)</td>
<td>1:5, etc.</td>
<td>1:5, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μεταβάνειν ἐκ τοῦ ψαλτατοῦ</td>
<td>5:24</td>
<td>3:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>εἰς τὴν Ἰωάννης</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μένειν ἐν θεῷ</td>
<td>6:56;</td>
<td>2:6,10,</td>
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<tr>
<td>ἐν τῷ λόγῳ</td>
<td>8:31;</td>
<td>27,28;</td>
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<tr>
<td>ἐν τῇ ἁγάπῃ</td>
<td>12:16;</td>
<td>3:6,14,</td>
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<tr>
<td>ἐν τῷ φωτί</td>
<td>15:6,</td>
<td>24;</td>
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<tr>
<td>ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ</td>
<td>7,9,10</td>
<td>4:13,16</td>
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<tr>
<td>ἐν τῷ σαλατῷ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μένειν εἰς τὸν ἁίωνα</td>
<td>8:35;12:34</td>
<td>2:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἡ ἁγάπη μένει ἐν...</td>
<td>5:42</td>
<td>3:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ἰωάννης ἁίωνιος μένει ἐν...</td>
<td></td>
<td>3:15</td>
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1 For a complete list of Greek terms and phrases peculiar to these sources vide Law, op. cit., pp. 342-43.

2 Ibid. The majority of the terms listed recur or receive explanation in chapter III, wherein their relevance to eternal Life becomes more obvious.
CHAPTER III

AN INVESTIGATION OF JOHANNINE PASSAGES CONTAINING THE TERM ETERNAL LIFE

I. THE NATURE OF ETERNAL LIFE

And this is eternal Life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (Jn. 17:3)

I give them eternal Life and they shall never perish. (Jn. 10:28)

Eternal Life, which the Son of man will give to you. (Jn. 6:27)

Thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal Life. (Jn. 17:2)

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true. This is the true God and eternal Life. (I Jn. 5:20)

The basic Johannine viewpoint. The most inclusive and predominant proposition of the Johannine writings is that the eternal Life, characteristic of God Himself, may be possessed by men in this finite world. This Life of the divine realm is set forth as the power which, when appropriated, exalts men above the common, biological existence.

1 The passages have been quoted either in whole or in part under appropriate headings. Certain verses, despite partial quotation, show affinity to more than one category. This is largely unavoidable without further dissecting such passages, in which case the essential context is destroyed.
of the world and enables them to enter into "the spiritual
brotherhood and nobility of personal life which was hoped
for by the Jews in their Messianic age and by the Greeks in
their golden age. This is life eternal." ¹

There are three terms in the Johannine writings that
are rendered in English translation as life viz., ὁμονόματι, ὑπόκτητων, and εἰκόνα. ὁμονόματι is the least significant of the three. It
denotes the course, manner, extent, or means of a physical
lifetime.² It is absent from the Fourth Gospel but appears
twice in the First Epistle—in reference to worldly life³
and material goods or substance. The second word, ὑπόκτητων,
primarily means soul or animal life. Occasionally in the
Fourth Gospel, it is translated simply as life as, for ex-
ample, in John 12:25: Jesus said, "He who loves his life
[ὑπόκτητων] loses it, and he who hates his life [ὑπόκτητων] in this world
will keep it for eternal Life [εἰκόνα]." εἰκόνα is the distinctive
term that is consistently employed by the author when refer-
ence is made to the highest kind of life, the eternal Life.
Vincent has pointed out that εἰκόνα connotes existence in con-
trast to death or change.⁵ In addition, it must be said that

¹Benjamin W. Robinson, The Gospel of John (New York:
³1 Jn. 2:15. ⁴1 Jn. 3:17. ⁵Vincent, loc. cit.


\[ \text{is the ideal existence— the mode of being that is }
\]

entirely ethical and moral and which may be rightly called
the **summum bonum**.

The epithet 'eternal' (\(\text{aiōnōs}\)) makes especially

clear the unique import of the divine Life. Ordinarily \(\text{aiōn}\),
the root word, means an age or aeon of indefinite length.

\(\text{aiōnōs}\) is literally the Life of the aeon or age-long

Life. Yet the author employed the expression to denote a
state of being that transcends duration. As Campbell has
stated it, the eternal Life "is that which is as contrasted
with all that which comes into existence and passes out of
it." Thus, the Johannine emphasis is mainly upon the quali-
tative rather than the quantitative aspect of the Life. The

conclusion, therefore, is that \(\text{aiōnōs}\) — in the vast majority

of instances in the Johannine writings— connotes the source
and nature of \(\text{aiōn}\) rather than its continuation. The source

\[ \text{1Aioúνοs is rendered both 'eternal' and 'everlasting'
by the Authorized Version. The Revised Standard Version
consistently renders it 'eternal', which denotes the quali-
tative significance of the term.}

\[ \text{2The expression } \text{aiōnōs } \text{occurs seventeen times in
the Fourth Gospel and six times in the First Epistle. In
addition, the term } \text{aiōn } \text{alone is employed with reference to
'eternal Life' nineteen times in the Fourth Gospel and five
times in the First Epistle.}

\[ \text{3R. J. Campbell, The Life of the World to Come (London:
Longmans, Green, and Company, 1948), p. 124.} \]
of the Life is God, whose glory consists chiefly not in perpetuity of existence but in moral perfection, and it is reasonable that the nature of the Life which He imparts is most valuable for its God-like quality instead of its duration. The same thing comprises its value both in this world and in the world to come. It is its intrinsic excellence and influence (regenerating power) over man's nature.

It is noteworthy that the idea of 'everlasting' Life, the quantitative aspect of longevity, is not altogether missing from the Johannine thought. Twice in the Fourth Gospel appears the expression 'live forever' (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), the meaning of which is obviously 'everlasting Life'. Nevertheless, there seems to be a marked reference to employ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα in negative expressions. Jesus said, "Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die [οὐ μὴ ἀποθανῇ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα]" and, "They shall never perish [οὐ μὴ ἀπολανταί εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα]." Dodd is persuaded that even in these statements the eternal, qualitative import is dominant. He has provided reason for the usage of such negative equivalents by saying

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1S. Stevens, op. cit., p. 324.
3Jn. 6:51, 58; cf. Jn. 8:35; 12:34; I Jn. 2:17.
4Jn. 11:26; 10:28; cf. 8:51-52.
that "it is more philosophical to deny an ending to that
which is in its nature eternal, than to affirm perpetuity in
time of that which is strictly timeless."  

Knowledge of God. The experience of knowing God is a
subject of utmost importance in the Johannine literature.
The word γνώσης is not found either in the Fourth Gospel or
the First Epistle. Instead, there is a preference for the
verbal form γνῶσκειν. Many scholars, such as Colwell and
Titus, hold that the author shunned the term γνώσης because
it was the catchword of the Gnostic sects of the Mediterranean
world. If this be the case, then the author desired to avoid
the confusion of his concept of knowledge with that of
Gnosticism.

In contemporary religious and philosophical circles
of the Greco-Roman world, γνώσης was a popular term. In the
purely Greek idea of knowledge, γνώσης was entirely empirical.
It was considered as a process of objective contemplation in
which an object was viewed from a distance in an endeavor to
grasp or master its essential qualities i.e., the thing in it-
self. The knower stood opposite the known. Any idea of inti-
mate connection or communication between the two would have

1 Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 150.
been considered as "an element of κίνησις or γνώσις, and so as disturbing the pure apprehension of τὸ ὄν." ¹ In the cults of Hellenistic mysticism, which must be distinguished from pure Greek philosophy, ² γνώσις was strangely different. The Gnostic viewed knowledge not as an achievement of man's intellect but as a gift of God. Through this knowledge man could be united with God and even be a god himself. Likewise, for the Hermetist, an adherent to the Hermetica,³ knowledge was a discipline of cosmological and theological speculation which was consummated in a peculiar mystical vision or deification. The standard Hermetic maxim very concisely set forth the relation of this knowledge to salvation: τὸ τοῦ μόνου σωτηρίου ἀνθρώπων ἢ γνώσις τοῦ θεοῦ.⁴

¹ Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 151-52.

² "The Gnostic form of knowledge is attached to the Greek in so far as it is a form of contemplation, θεωρία.... But in its final form it lies beyond even the pure rational intuition of the eternal ideas which for Greek philosophy is the highest type of θεωρία." The esoteric character of Gnosticism, with its peculiar 'ecstatic visions', is not properly Greek. Ibid., p. 153.

³ There was produced in Egypt during the second and third centuries A.D. a group of writings known today as the Hermetica. These writings were current in antiquity under the name of Hermes Trismegistus. In contents they represent basically a fusion Platonism and Stoicism.

⁴ Cited by Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 163.
In the Johannine writings, knowledge has a two-fold aspect. In certain instances γνῶσκειν means to possess assurance or an unwavering persuasion. The verb ἐίδομαι is employed in the same manner, perhaps with greater force. The First Epistle contains such statements as, "We know [οἴδαμεν] that we have passed out of death into Life" and, "I write this to you... that you may know [εἰδήσετε] that you have eternal Life." These references reveal that the author was thoroughly convinced of his possession of eternal Life, and that apparently his sole objective in composing the First Epistle was to cultivate in believers that same overwhelming certainty. To him, believers could appreciate and prize eternal Life only in so far as they knew apodictically that the Life of the world to come was in their grasp.

The other usage of γνῶσκειν, which is the predominant one, conveys the idea of experiential apprehension or interaction between knower and known. The Johannine conception of knowledge is the typical Hebrew viewpoint in which the desire is not to know the thing itself but the action and effects of the object. Knowing, then, means a vital concern

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1 Cf. e.g. Jn. 6:69; 17:25b; I Jn. 2:3a.
2 I Jn. 3:14.
3 I Jn. 5:13
of the subject in relation to the object and involves the intellectual, emotional, and volitional responses.

The Fourth Gospel most closely approximates a definition of eternal Life in the words of Jesus, "That they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."\(^1\) \(\gamma νώθεω\) is used in the present tense (\(\gamma νώθσω\)) in this definition with the implication that Jesus meant "growing in the knowledge" of God. Tietze has suggested that the definition in question "represents the knowledge of God not as an instantaneous and complete possession, but rather as developmental, as a revelation progressively experienced."\(^2\) However, John 17:3 might simply mean the continuing experience of knowing God, which is eternal Life.

The nature of the \(\gamma νώθε\\) in question must be viewed as an experience of spiritual intuition and apprehension of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Men know God only by first knowing Jesus. "We meet God," says Forsyth, "in his coming in Christ, meet him there on his own tryst, and find there that we know only because we were first known."\(^3\) Throughout

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\(^1\) Jn. 17:3.


\(^3\) Forsyth, op. cit., p. 57.
the Fourth Gospel, the indications are that men know Christ by acknowledging his unique relationship with God and by responding to the claims he made. This is not to know God mechanically by Christ (as a mere intermediary) but in Christ--in a mutual awareness and indwelling, a participation and sharing of personality with personality, "an experience of similar thoughts, emotions, purposes, motives, desires, an interchange of the heart's deepest feelings and experiences."¹

The conclusion, then, is that ἐγνώσω, from the Johannine standpoint, comes through supernatural revelation which unites men at once with Christ and God. This revealed ἐγνώσως was that to which the author referred when he stated that he had been given an "understanding" (διάνοια) to know God.²

Carpenter has well summarized the import and implications of the definition of Life (and consequently, of knowledge) in John 17:3. To have Life, he says, is to possess "awareness" of the Father and the Son, to be joined in this marvellous union with the brotherhood of believers, keeping Christ's commandments and abiding in his love, as he kept his Father's commandments and abode in his love--this was to share in the life of the Son,


²I Jn. 5:20, quoted ante, p. 15.
to know God and Jesus Christ whom he had sent.

The gratuitous gift. Attention has been drawn to the fact that the eternal Life has its origin in the nature of God Himself. The classic passage of the Johannine literature, John 3:16, clearly sets forth and elaborates upon this idea. There is a direct, causal relationship among the key words of this verse: "God so loved...gave...eternal Life." These words show that the Life of the eternal realm was made possible for possession by men because it was motivated by infinite love (ἀγάπη). The words love, giving, and sending are practically equivalent in meaning when they are used with respect to God. These terms express an outgoing or extension. "He first loved us," the author explained—denoting that the gift of eternal Life sprang from the divine initiative. Hunter has defined ἀγάπη as "the downward movement of the Divine self-giving.... It is free, spontaneous, 'un-caused', indifferent to human merit." Therefore, eternal Life is entirely gratuitous and non-meritorious. Because

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2 Cf. ante, pp. 8-9.
3 Cf. e.g. I Jn. 4:9-10. 4 I Jn. 4:19.
ὁ Θεὸς ἄγαντι ἐστὶν, He gave the Son who in turn gave himself, in whom ἡ ζωὴ resides—or more correctly, who is ἡ ζωὴ. He is at once both the Life-gift and the Life-giver. "He who has the Son has Life." ¹

II. JESUS CHRIST: THE ETERNAL LIFE

For as the Father has Life in himself, so has he granted the Son also to have Life in himself. (Jn. 5:26)

Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the Life. (Jn. 14:6)

That which was from the beginning...the word of Life—the Life was made manifest...the eternal Life which was with the Father. (I Jn. 1:1-2)

In him was Life. (Jn. 1:4)

The life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth were the basis for the author's interpretation of eternal Life. He proceeded from the impression and conviction created in him by Jesus—that the earthly life of Jesus was the divine Life in every respect.

Every hour of his history belonged to the eternal order. Every word he spoke, every deed of obedience and love he did, was an outgo of Eternal Life. The Divine nature was in it. ²

¹I Jn. 5:12.
²Law, op. cit., p. 189.
He lived such a life of oneness with God and possessed such
a full knowledge of Him that he could rightly be interpreted
as the medium of Life, light, and truth to all men.1

The Logos concept in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel
is a profound interpretation of the incarnation of the eternal
Life. The Logos theology has ancient Hebrew antecedents that
are noteworthy here. W. J. Moore2 has pointed out that in
the Old Testament and Apocrypha both the word and wisdom of
God are creative, revealing, and personified.3 He has
further noted that in the Logos concept the word and wisdom
concepts have coalesced, resulting in a word-wisdom theology.
Philo, the Hellenizing Jew of Alexandria and a contemporary
of the writer of the Fourth Gospel, also had a Logos concept.
He interpreted the term λόγος with various shades of meaning
such as the reason and word of God, an intermediary which
was active in the creation of the world, the revealer of God

1M. R. E. Lyman, The Fourth Gospel and the Life of

2Class lectures in New Testament Theology, The
Divinity School, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa; Cf.
W. J. Moore, "A Study of the Concept of the Mighty Word in
Ancient Hebrew Literature," (unpublished Doctoral disserta-
tion, The University of Chicago, Chicago, 1938); Helmer

3Cf. e.g. Gen. 1; Prov. 1-9; Ezek. 7:1; Ecclesiasticus
1,24; Wisdom of Solomon 7,8,18.

The Johannine interpretation of the \textit{λόγος} is similar but transcends the Philonic representation. The distinctiveness of the Johannine interpretation lies in the association of the eternal Life with a specific human personality—the embodiment of the divine nature in Jesus of Nazareth, which the author described as, "the word became flesh."\footnote{Jn. 1:14.}

The author began the Prologue by stating the eternal existence of the Word, the natural union with God and hence the divinity of the Word, the agency of the Word in creation, and the illuminating and enlivening power of the Word.\footnote{Jn. 1:1-4.}

Then the author, in his interpretation, brought the \textit{λόγος} down from lofty theological heights into the realm of men. He stated that the \textit{λόγος} became incarnate and dwelt among mortals—full of grace, truth, and glory. Herein is the uniqueness of the Johannine concept: the eternal became invested with flesh and figuratively 'tabernacled' (ἐσχάτωσεν) among men of this temporal order. The glory of the eternal \textit{λόγος}—ἡ ὁμοιότητα—could be perceived not only spiritually and mystically but also intellectually and empirically. This is evident at the opening of the First Epistle, where
there is essentially a restatement of the Prologue of the Gospel: "That which...we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands...the Life was made manifest and we saw it." ¹

As the revealing Word, Jesus could state that he was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. This he said concerning the access of men to the Father. He would have his disciples know that he was the only Way to the Father, the embodiment of Truth about the Father, and the fullness of the Life which characterized the Father. As Truth (ἀλήθεια), he meant that his statements concerning the Father and his relationship to Him were agreeable with absolute reality; they were invariably trustworthy. Moreover, ἀλήθεια denotes not only objective reality but also a personal, moral attitude of sincerity. For this reason, Jesus could equate himself with ἡ ἀλήθεια. The Life with which Jesus identified himself is absolute and independent. He possessed the Life from an eternal source, the Father, with whom he shared it. In such a unique relationship, he indeed had the Life² in himself.

¹ Jn. 1:1-2, in part.
² Ἰούνιος is commonly used by the author with the limiting article, ἡ. The article specifies the uniqueness of the Life but does not detract from its absolute quality. Ἁ Ἰούνιος stands separate from any alleged source, way, or means to Life apart from Jesus Christ.
III. THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal Life. (Jn. 5:39)

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and Life. (Jn. 6:63)

Lord, ... You have the words of eternal Life. (Jn. 6:68)

I know that his commandment is eternal Life. (Jn. 12:50)

The verbal transmission of the message of Life, whether oral or written, is the effectual medium through which men take cognizance of the Life. In the Fourth Gospel the Scriptures (αι γραφαι), the words (τα ρηματα) of Jesus, and the commandment (η ἐντολη) of the Father are the various ways whereby the message is expressed. Jesus made it clear to the Jews that the Scriptures which they revered bore witness to him. When he spoke of 'Life in the Scriptures', he meant that in them was a written revelation of the Truth, of which he was the personal revelation. The Scriptures could be conducive to Life in so far as and only if men saw in them the reflection of Jesus and proceeded to accept him.

Jesus stated that it was the Spirit which gave Life (το ζωοποιουν) in contrast to the powerlessness of the flesh (σαρξ). He classed his own verbal utterances, ρηματα, as spirit, which connotes reality (ἀληθεια) as living, powerful,
and Life-giving. The words which he spoke were God's words—words from the eternal realm concerning the eternal Life. The attitude of men toward his words of Life was, in essence, their attitude toward his person. To accept his message of Life was to agree that it had its origin in the Father and that the bearer of the message was the Son of God. Those who believed in Jesus were marked as his disciples if they continued (remained) in his word. Abiding in the word brought about a continual revelation of the truth, which made and kept them free from bondage to sin and darkness. On the other hand, those who rejected the words of Jesus, and consequently the Life, would be judged by the very message they spurned. His message was crucial and vital because it had been given to him by the Father—a message which he called a commandment, εὑρήκατος. To reject the commandment

1 Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 224; G. H. C. MacGregor has commented that "just as in the O. T. the word of God is not a mere utterance but rather a vehicle of power conveying to the man to whom it comes a portion of God's own Spirit, so Jesus' words 'are not so much the expression of his thought as the emanation of his actual being and power' (E. F. Scott); MacGregor, The Gospel of John (The Moffatt New Testament Commentary. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928), p. 161.

2 Jn. 8:47; 17:8.

3 Cf. Jn. 8:31 and 12:48 where λόγος means message or the words (ῥήματα) of Jesus collectively.

4 Cf. 1 Jn. 2:8; 4:21; 5:2-3.
which was initiated and sanctioned by God Himself was tantamount to a refusal of salvation.

IV. THE BELIEVER'S APPROPRIATION OF

ETERNAL LIFE

God...gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal Life. (Jn. 3:16)

He who believes in the Son has eternal Life. (Jn. 3:36)

He who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal Life. (Jn. 5:24)

That every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal Life. (Jn. 6:40)

That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have Life in his name. (Jn. 20:31)

I came that they may have Life, and have it abundantly. (Jn. 10:10)

We know that we have passed out of death into Life, because we love the brethren. (I Jn. 3:14)

The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead...will live. (Jn. 5:25)

I am the resurrection and the Life. (Jn. 11:25)

Faith: the subjective factor. The Johannine writings stress faith as the predominant factor or requisite in appropriating eternal Life. However, the nominal form πίστις occurs only once in the Johannine writings.¹ Instead, active

¹I Jn. 5:4.
belief or believing expressed by the verbal form \( \pi\nu\tau\varepsilon\varepsilon\upsilon\nu \) is the preferred idea. The choice of the verbal form denotes the vital significance of faith; it is faith in action--dynamic and efficacious.

The author used \( \pi\nu\tau\varepsilon\varepsilon\upsilon\nu \) both transitively and intransitively. Transitively used, it means to entrust or commit oneself to another.\(^2\) In the intransitive usage, which is more frequent, \( \pi\nu\tau\varepsilon\varepsilon\upsilon\nu \) means to give credence to or believe.\(^3\) Other verbs such as 'see' (\( \beta\lambda\varepsilon\varepsilon\iota\nu \)) and 'hear' (\( \alpha\kappa\omicron\omega\varepsilon\nu \)) were employed by the author to convey the same meaning of \( \pi\nu\tau\varepsilon\varepsilon\upsilon\nu \). \( \beta\lambda\varepsilon\varepsilon\iota\nu \) approaches the idea of intimate knowledge--a perception of the Son with the eyes of faith. \( \alpha\kappa\omicron\omega\varepsilon\nu \) means more than 'hearing' words; it denotes paying attention and responding to the truth perceived.

Belief is, in itself, essentially an intellectual judgment regarding the truth of a proposition.\(^4\) But beyond the idea of mental assent is the involvement of a positive response to and acceptance of the claims of a person, Jesus Christ. Tietze has commented that "the demand for assent to

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\(^1\) Of all the occurrences of \( \pi\nu\tau\varepsilon\varepsilon\upsilon\nu \) in the New Testament, the Johannine writings provide more than half the total number (57 out of 100); Law, \( \text{op. cit.} \), p. 258.


\(^3\) Cf. Jn. 1:7; 11:15.

\(^4\) Law, \( \text{op. cit.} \), pp. 261-62.
the claims of a person in the nature of the case involves a moral judgment, and carries with it an element of spiritual trust." ¹ Belief, then, is intellectual persuasion plus moral and spiritual presuppositions. It is a reaction in which the whole moral personality is, by necessity, involved. Says Law, "It is not belief under coercion of logical proof; it has its deeper source in the spiritual perception of spiritual realities." ²

In the Fourth Gospel the distinction between faith and works in relation to eternal Life is sharply made. "What must we do, to be doing the work [tά ἔργα] of God?", asked the Jews. Jesus replied, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³ Here the emphasis is not upon something that men must do but upon something that men must be--believers. ⁴ The viewpoint of the author has been well summarized by Smart. His statement is quite appropriate:

For John, a man becomes a Christian in order to do good; he does not do good in order to become a Christian. Christianity is not, for him, an attempt, to impose good conduct on bad men, but a way of making bad men good.⁵

¹ Tietze, op. cit., p. 16. ² Law, loc. cit.
³ Jn. 6:28-29.
⁴ Cf. The Pauline idea of justification by faith, pp. 56,71.
Resurrection: the transition to Life. In the Johannine theology, all men who dwell in the sphere of the material and who have not the eternal Life abiding in them are classified as 'dead'. Death is represented as the realm of lifelessness and spiritual darkness as well as the state wherein physical life or existence of the body has ceased. Over against this dual concept of death are the corresponding ideas of resurrection i.e., both the liberation of men from spiritual death in this life and the eschatological concept of resurrection from the dead.

Belief in the future resurrection (ἀνάστασις) was common among many of the Jews including Jesus' followers. To be sure, Jesus himself not only believed in the future resurrection but also stated it in his preaching:

Do not marvel at this: for all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of Life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.

On the other hand, the concept of present resurrection (σωτοιχία) from death to Life was outstanding in the message of Jesus according to the Fourth Gospel. The occasion on which Jesus made clear this position was the death of Lazarus, his beloved friend of Bethany. Jesus assured Mary, the sister of the deceased, that Lazarus would rise again,

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1 Cf. Jn. 11:24.
2 Jn. 5:28-29; cf. Jn. 6:40,44.
a statement which she mistook as a reference to the future resurrection. But Jesus immediately replied that he was the resurrection and the Life. He was conveying the idea that he was \( \text{ὁ ζωοτότις} \), who could effect the bodily resurrection of Lazarus at that very moment,\(^1\) and moreover, who could extricate men in this life from spiritual death by endowing them with Life, over which physical death has no power.\(^2\)

Both the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle express the present resurrection of believers as a 'passage' or transition from death into Life.\(^3\) The believer is depicted as 'changing location' (\( \text{μεταβάνων} \)), a removal from the former living death into the succeeding eternal Life.\(^4\) The individual orders himself in a new walk of Life that is indestructible and deathless. The person who has the Life here and now will, as Jesus expressed it, never "see" or "taste" death.\(^5\)

The Johannine usage of \( \text{ἐχεῖν} \) in the present tense occurs frequently, with the emphasis upon the Life as a present possession. To the author, it was possible to have and

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\(^1\)Cf. Jn. 11:25b, "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."

\(^2\)Cf. Jn. 11:26a, "Whoever lives [i.e. quickened by \( \text{ζωοτότις} \)] and believes in me shall never die."

\(^3\)Cf. the Greek expression, p. 14 \textit{ante}.

\(^4\)Robinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 134.

\(^5\)Jn. 8:51-52.
hold the Life of Jesus as one's own. But even beyond this, 

was interpreted as a way of life. It meant living

rich and abundant Christ-Life as ample vindication of the

possession. Spiritual birth from above (ἀνωθεν) did not

translate the believer into the world to come; rather, the

Life of the world to come at once made ingress into him.¹

The ethical fruitage of eternal Life. There are certain virtues emphasized in the Johannine writings as marks or evidence that the eternal Life has been imparted. Law² has noted that there are three characteristics of eternal Life that are stressed in the First Epistle viz., righteousness, love, and belief of the truth about Jesus Christ.³

That is to say, the one who 'practices' righteousness gives evidence that he knows Jesus Christ, "the righteous."⁴ Love, the second test of Life, first of all is expressed in response to God and in extension, to all fellow men. The


³I Jn. 2:29; 4:7; 5:1. All three of these factors--

ο ποιεῖν δικαιοσύνην, ο ἀγάπην, and ο πιστεύων--have as their verbal complement, γενέθηκα. The use of the perfect tense denotes that the ethical fruitage is the necessary result of the impartation of the Life.

⁴This is the proper force of ο ποιεῖν. ⁵I Jn. 2:1.
author would have his readers comprehend that because "God is Love," the sharing of His Life involves the manifestation of the same type of love among men.\(^1\) The author judges that the one who does not express \(\delta\gamma\alpha\rho\nu\eta\) does not know God. Hate, the opposite of \(\delta\gamma\alpha\rho\nu\eta\) is equated with murder. And says the author, "You know that no murderer has eternal Life abiding in him."\(^2\) With the author, love does not stand for a passive emotion awakened by the impression that others make on us. It is an active principle, a determination of the will to do good, the highest good possible, to its object.\(^3\)

The third mark, belief, is a continuation of the initial faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Belief begets belief, so to speak, so that it cultivates a positive process—a state of being which perpetually signifies victorious Christian living.

V. THE ILLUMINATIVE ASPECTS OF ETERNAL LIFE

The Life was the light of men. (Jn. 1:4)
The true light that enlightens every man. (Jn. 1:9)\(^5\)

\(^1\) Cf. post, p. 43. \(^2\) I Jn. 3:15.
\(^3\) Law, op. cit., p. 252. \(^4\) Cf. I Jn. 5:1, 4.
\(^5\) This passage (and likewise I Jn. 1:7, 1:3, 5:20, and Jn. 15:4, 5, 9 infra) does not contain the expression eternal Life but was listed because of its especial relevance.
I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of Life. (Jn. 8:12)

If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. (I Jn. 1:7)

The moral significance of light. Just as in the case of love, light is a Johannine term that is employed to qualify the expression, eternal Life. Light was a term common to Gnosticism and other Hellenistic philosophies of the first century. It was used as a symbol for the reason, including all the intellectual and logical processes of the mind such as good sense, sanity, and intelligence. It was also used to symbolize Deity. In the strict philosophical sense, it was conceived of as an actual presence and pervasive influence at work in the world, dispelling darkness and ignorance and illuminating the lives of men.

In the Johannine usage, light is applied to Christ in contrast to the world of darkness. Those who believed on him were called the 'sons of light'. Naturally, the author would refer to a conflict when he saw the true light, as he describes the Word, begin to shine in the darkness. But he was careful to add, "The darkness has not overcome it." In

1Quimby, op. cit., pp. 146-47.
2Robinson, op. cit., p. 38.  3Jn. 12:36.  4Jn. 1:5.
fact, he saw light as so effective in dispelling the darkness that he said, "The darkness is passing away."¹

As previously noted, the Johannine theology employs light as an attribute of God, which denotes His spotless and radiant perfection. But light is also used to denote a sphere of radiation and illumination in which men live, a medium entirely moral and spiritual. It is the realm in which fellowship between God and man is realized. There is an ethic, a way of life, involved which the author expressed as 'walking in the light'. To 'walk in the light' means to perpetuate the qualities of the new Life in everyday life. It connotes the will to see all things in the divine light and to appropriate the revelation of divine truth as one's own. The converse of this is 'walking in the darkness'—the effort, instinctive or deliberate, not to see or the failure to acknowledge and respond to that which is revealed.²

**Judgment: the discriminatory function of light.** The basic meaning of the verb judge (κρίνω) is to separate or to discriminate. In a volitional sense, it means to evaluate or to come to a decision concerning right and wrong. In the Johannine writings, light becomes the medium of discrimination

¹ Jn. 2:8.
² Law, op. cit., p. 64.
as it shines in darkness, thus bringing about a crisis (κρίσις) or judgment. A volitional response automatically impinges upon those who see the difference between good and evil.

The concept of a 'present' judgment is unique to the Johannine literature. There is also the idea of a future judgment, a concomitant of the future resurrection. But Jesus spoke of the believer as being relieved of that judgment due to his response to the light. (This, in itself, was a significant reinterpretation of the judgment concept.) The position of the non-believer Jesus also stated. Judgment became the fate of the one who turned his back on the light and remained in the darkness.

By nature, light is that which reveals; darkness, that which conceals. When light is manifested in darkness, it not only discriminates between the abstract realities of good and evil but also "separates those who are unable to take the required step from the few who, in the same measure at least, are willing to take it." Men by their response

1Jn. 3:19, "And this is the judgment [κρίσις], that the light has come into the world."

2 Jn. 5:24, "He does not come into judgment."

3 Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 344.
declare themselves and thus pronounce their own judgments.\textsuperscript{1}
The distinction between believers and non-believers naturally results in either salvation or condemnation. The interpretation of eternal Life as a present reality--i.e., the conception of a future thing as present--carries with it the correlative interpretation of future judgment as a present process.\textsuperscript{2} "He who does not believe is condemned already."\textsuperscript{3}

VI. \textit{KOINÒNIA}

Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (I Jn. 1:3)

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches...abide in my love. (Jn. 15:4,5,9)

We are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. (I Jn. 5:20)

Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of Life. (Jn. 6:35)

I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the Life of the world is my flesh. (Jn. 6:51)

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal Life. (Jn 6:54)


\textsuperscript{3}Jn. 3:18.
The water that I shall give him will become a spring of water welling up to eternal Life. (Jn. 4:14)

Definition of the term κοινωνία. At the outset of the First Epistle appears the word κοινωνία, a term which comprehends the vital content of the eternal Life. Κοινωνία has as its root κοινός, which means 'common'. The cognate verb, κοινωνέω, means to partake or share in something with others. Basically, then, κοινωνία means a participation or sharing in something with others. But it also connotes the idea of association among the persons who hold a thing in common. In English translation it is nearly always rendered 'fellowship'. This fellowship is with God and Jesus Christ. All believers share in the intimate knowledge of God through Christ. This communal participation in and sharing of the divine nature is κοινωνία.

Fellowship among brethren. The eternal Life which all Christians hold in common produces fellowship. This fact is reflected in the intense desire of the author to share the Life with others:

We...proclaim to you the eternal Life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete.1

1I Jn. 1:2-4.
Fellowship for him was grounded, so to speak, in the vertical relationship of men to God. This \textit{koinwvnia} with the Father and the Son motivated a corresponding communion along the horizontal among men, so that \textit{koinwvnia} could not be defined as a limited or esoteric type of experience.\textsuperscript{1} The author, on the contrary, conceived of \textit{koinwvnia} as an intra-community relationship, generated and perpetuated by divine love.

The Johannine concept of the \textit{koinwvnia} denotes the vital unity and solidarity of the Church. Fellowship among brethren is the frequently recurring theme in the First Epistle. Typical expressions are "fellowship with us," "our fellowship," "fellowship with one another,"\textsuperscript{2} etc. Very closely related to these expressions of the \textit{koinwvnia} are the admonitions of the author that his readers manifest \textit{ayámy} among themselves: E.g., "We should love one another,"\textsuperscript{3} "Let us love... in deed and in truth,"\textsuperscript{4} and "Let us love one another."\textsuperscript{5} There is remarkable agreement of passages in the Fourth Gospel with those cited here. Jesus urged his disciples to manifest brotherly love. These words are recorded

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. the very appropriate statement of Dodd. in \textit{The Johannine Epistles}, p. 7: "The Life that is shared exists only as shared."

\textsuperscript{2} I Jn. 1:3, 6-7.

\textsuperscript{3} I Jn. 3:11; 4:11.

\textsuperscript{4} I Jn. 3:18.

\textsuperscript{5} I Jn. 4:7.
in the Gospel:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.¹

The outstanding requirement of Christ, the dispenser of Life, is that men love one another in the same manner as he loved them. Men realize the richness and fullness of eternal life in proportion to the extent that they love one another after the divine ideal.² There is no Johannine κοινωνία without ἀγάπη. Ἀγάπη is the unifying principle and bond of fellowship, the signet of Christ-likeness and the evidence that the eternal Life is operative in the world.

Communion with God. Peculiar to the Johannine writings is the use of the phrase 'to abide in' (μένειν ἐν)³ to express the mystical union and communion of believers with God and Christ. Similar expressions that are related to this idea frequently occur, such as the Son is in the Father, the Father is in the Son, men are in the Son, the Son is in men, and men are in the Father and Son.⁴ Law has interpreted the concept of abiding in God as "the continuous and progressive action of that same self-reproducing energy of the

¹Jn. 13:34-35. ²Stevens, op. cit., p. 231.
³Cf. e.g. I Jn. 2:6; 3:24; 4:15.
Divine nature the initial act of which is the Divine Begetting.¹ In a sense, it is union with God but not as an absorption or deification. Communion is the better term, for it denotes a oneness of men with God through the sharing of ἀγαπή, an interaction between their personalities and His, a unity of spirit in which the individualities of men are not lost; rather, it is an experience in which God is at once immanent, yet distinctly transcendent.

The Johannine analogy of the Vine and Branches sets forth the vital union between men and Christ. Jesus said to his disciples:

Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches.²

This is a picture of the organic relationship which exists in Κοινωνία. Just as the physical vine supplies the life-giving nourishment for all of its branches, so it is between Christ and all believers. Even as there is no concept of a branch apart from the vine, which gives rise to and sustains the branches, likewise there can be no Christ-like believer

¹Law, op. cit., p. 198.
²Jn. 15:4-5, in part.
³There is a notable similarity of this Johannine analogy to the Pauline conception of the Church as an organism, the Body of Christ; cf. Rom. 12:4-8; I Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:21-23; Col. 1:18.
apart from Christ. There can be no continual impartation of 
from the One who initially quickened the believer, except 
he remain in this vital union.

The concept of fellowship as the perennial sustenance 
of eternal Life is also clearly illustrated in 'Bread of Life'
passages of the Fourth Gospel. The discourse of Jesus on 
the Bread of Life occurs in chapter six of the Gospel, imme-
diately following the account of the feeding of the five 
thousand. Jesus warned those who had been fed that nourish-
ment for the body should not be the sole object of their 
endeavors. He taught them the importance of spiritual bread 
or nourishment. In contrast to the temporal quality of the 
manna that had been given their forefathers in the days of 
Moses, he pointed out that he was the Bread of Life who pro-
vided eternal nourishment and fortification against death.

When Jesus drew the analogy of bread (inclusive of all mate-
rial nourishment) to typify himself, he meant that he was 
the Bread of eternal Life which men ingest and assimilate. 
Hence, to eat of this Bread meant to live eternally (ἐις τὸν 
αἰῶνα). The spiritual strength from the Bread of Life pro-
vides permanent satisfaction for the soul as well as the 
energizing power and indestructible quality of spirit.

\[1\text{Cf. the quotations, supra.}\]
no temporal circumstance or event can destroy.

After Jesus had referred to himself as the Bread of Life, he then proceeded to identify the Bread with his flesh. He also pointed out the necessity of 'eating the flesh' and 'drinking the blood' of the Son of Man. His audience interpreted these terms literally and disputed the implications among themselves. It is true that the language of Jesus is extremely materialistic in symbol, but not so in meaning. "It is the spirit that gives Life," said Jesus; "The flesh is of no avail." This statement reveals that there was a more substantial import to his former words than was apparent on the surface. The consumption of his flesh and blood must be explained as tantamount to abiding in him and living the same kind of Life he had with the Father. On the contrary, men have no Life in them if they do not partake of his 'flesh and blood', the spiritual essence of his Life.

The 'living water' which Christ gives to men is the expression correlative to Bread of Life. In chapter four of the Gospel, is Jesus' comparison of the spiritual Life which he bestows to a spring (πηγή) of water that wells up into

1 Cf. Jn. 6:51b, quoted ante, p. 41.
2 Jn. 6:63.
eternal Life. The picture is that of the perpetual gushing of an inexhaustible supply of water. The purpose of the illustration, of course, was to convey the idea of the abundant and exhilarating nature of eternal Life, an experience which fulfills the deepest spiritual needs of men.
CHAPTER IV
THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING IN GENERAL
ON ETERNAL LIFE

I. SYNOPTIC TEACHING

The Synoptics versus the Fourth Gospel. New Testament scholars have found good reason for classifying the Fourth Gospel apart from the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). A comparison of the Synoptics with the Fourth Gospel shows that there are marked differences in both contents and form of teaching. The Synoptics, on the one hand, are primarily historical accounts that provide the story of the life and ministry of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel, however, contains a mixture of historical data and theological interpretation.¹ The Johannine viewpoint is bent on evaluating and extracting the meaning of the person and work of Jesus. The Synoptics abound with parables and didactic discourses,² whereas the Fourth Gospel contains no parables but instead παραμίαν,³ which approach the nature of allegories.

¹The Synoptic writers also interpreted as they wrote, but they were less concerned than the author of the Fourth Gospel with the interpretation of facts.
²Cf. e.g. Matt. 5-7; 13; Mk. 4, etc.
³Cf. ante, p. 7.
The crucial problem that scholars consider when the Fourth Gospel is compared and contrasted with the Synoptics is whether the two are in essential agreement despite their different portraits of Christ. Temple has advanced a very convincing argument in the affirmative, concluding that there is no incompatibility between the Synoptic and Johannine portraits because, he says, "The Synoptic portrait is substantially Johannine."¹ He maintains that although the vital implications and significance of Jesus' ministry are not drawn out in detail by the Synoptists, yet they provided the basic picture of the historical Jesus with which the Fourth Evangelist worked. That is to say, the Synoptic picture was a step in the direction of the Johannine interpretation, which fully apprehended and declared it.

The kingdom of God as eternal Life. In the Synoptic Gospels, that which most closely approximates the Johannine doctrine of eternal Life is the kingdom of God concept. Jesus began his public ministry by proclaiming, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand."² The kingdom of God (βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ) likewise became the theme of the

²Mk. 1:15.
preaching of Jesus' disciples. It was the subject which Jesus frequently treated in his teaching discourses. The term 'kingdom of God', as Jesus interpreted it, meant the reign of God over men. For Jesus, the kingdom of God consisted in the reign of divine love in the hearts of men who were bent on yielding their lives in His service.

The kingdom of God is both a present and future concept in the Synoptics. Most New Testament scholars give due consideration to each of these aspects of the kingdom.

There are several pertinent references in the Synoptics to the kingdom as an entity present and operative within and among men. The reference previously cited (Mk. 1:15) relative to Jesus' initial preaching is noteworthy again here. The Greek of that passage (in part) is ἡ γεννημένη βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ. The meaning is that the kingdom of God has come near or has arrived in this finite realm. Jesus substantiated the presence of the kingdom among men by noting that it was by the Spirit of God that he cast out demons, which activity was proof of the supernatural presence of the kingdom.² Luke records a further clarification by

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¹For example, both the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5-7 and the series of parables in Matt. 13 have as their central motif, the kingdom.

Jesus of the kingdom:

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation... for behold the kingdom of God is within you [ἐντὸς ὑμῶν].

Here the kingdom is explained as invisible—a mystical presence 'within' (ἐντὸς) their spirits. But Jesus also referred to the converse of this, viz., that men are in the kingdom; they enter in here and now. The kingdom experience brings with it blessings both temporal and eternal, that is, in this world and in the world to come. This messianic salvation, as Stevens has called it,

may be defined as perfect blessedness both here and hereafter. It is a fellowship with God which guarantees security and peace in this world, and in the world to come, eternal Life.

It is a possession whereby men are "rich toward God"

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1 Lk. 17:20-21, Authorized Version.


3 Lk. 16:16; cf. Mk. 9:45,47, "to enter Life" and "to enter the kingdom of God." Because these two expressions are used interchangeably within the same context, they indicate that the kingdom experience is eternal Life. To enter the kingdom is to enter Life.

4 Mk. 10:30.

(εἰς θεόν πλούτειν) — a figurative expression of the eternal Life.

The description by Jesus of the citizens of the kingdom and their influence in the world further corroborates the present aspect of the kingdom. The familiar Johannine term 'light' is applied to Jesus' disciples. They are called "sons of light" and the "light of the world". These terms designate the disciples as representatives of the kingdom who reflect the light of Jesus and illuminate a world of darkness. Just as the Κοινωνία was regarded by the author of the First Epistle as an expression of outgoing love, according to Jesus the light of the disciples must also be shared. Jesus illustrated the light in this manner:

A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

The disciples were to function as φώσφοροι (lightbearers) and in so doing, propagate the kingdom and help dispel the darkness.

The future aspect of the kingdom is a part of the general eschatological emphasis in the Synoptics. Jesus made references to the kingdom as coming with power and to

1Lk. 12:21. 2Lk. 16:8; Matt. 5:14,16. 3Matt. 5:14-15.
the future entrance of men into it.\(^1\) He spoke of men as inheriting the kingdom when it appears in the future. In Matthew 25 (with parallels in Mark 13 and Luke 21) is an apocalyptic scene in which Jesus, the Son of Man, comes in the clouds with power and glory to receive the kingdom for the Father. And although an imminent παρουσία (appearance) is depicted, various signs are listed which adumbrate the fact that "the kingdom of God is near [ἐγγύς]."\(^2\)

Concomitant with the idea of the future kingdom are the references in the Synoptics to ἐως as future. Jesus referred to a way in this life that leads to ἐως in the world to come.\(^3\) The one who renders sacrificial and faithful service to Christ in this life will inherit (κληρονομισμα) eternal Life.\(^4\) The righteous, at the consummation of the kingdom, will "go away into eternal Life."\(^5\) It is evident that in the Synoptics, eternal Life is the terminus ad quem of Christian experience. The stress is upon ἐως as an ideal state of blessedness at the end of the age. There is a vast difference between this future ideal and the type of

\(^1\)Mk. 9:1,47.  
\(^2\)Lk. 21:31; cf. ἡγγίκεν, the perfect of ἐγγίζειν, supra.  
\(^3\)Matt. 7:17; note ἐις τὸν ἐως.  
\(^5\)Matt. 25:46.
religious experience in this world, which is depicted as confronted and hampered by hardship. Life in the future kingdom is entirely positive and devoid of limitation.

The Synoptics record the typically Jewish viewpoint of deeds or works as prerequisite to the possession of eternal Life. A certain wealthy Jew questioned Jesus concerning what he could do in order to inherit eternal Life. 1 Jesus referred him to the Decalogue, and in so doing indicated, apparently, that he was sympathetic with the Jewish adherence to the Torah and that such observance would result in eternal Life. But when the man reported that he had kept the commandments since his youth, Jesus specified unselfish and devoted discipleship in the kingdom—deeds which would transcend mere observance of the Torah and fulfill its spirit and ideal through outgoing service and love.

II. PAULINE TEACHING 2

Mystical 3 aspects of salvation. The Pauline Epistles

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2 The close relationship between the contents of the Pauline and Johannine literature is readily acknowledged by most scholars. Especially is the agreement noticeable with respect to Christology (cf. e.g. Jn. 1:1-18 and Col. 1:15-19; 2:9). Goodspeed, in comparing the two sets of writings, has gone so far as to say that "the Gospel of John begins where Paul left off"; cited by Titus and Colwell, op. cit., p. 125.

3 Mystical (spiritual), as distinct
provide insights into vital religious experience that are, in many instances, unparalleled. Paul stresses the immanence of God and Christ through the Holy Spirit in the lives of men. For him, men are temples of the Spirit, who indwells them and controls their actions. But it is really Christ who is present through the Spirit, because he says:

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is Life because of righteousness.

The phrase ὁ δὲ θεὸς μέσος σας is similar to Paul's expression, "For to me to live is Christ." Paul was so aware of the indwelling presence of Christ that he could state that the Life was really not his own (i.e., himself as the source) but was Christ living in him: "Christ lives in me," he says, "and the Life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Here Paul is not only justified (declared righteous) by faith but is also quickened and kept alive continually through faith and trust in Christ who is indeed alive.

from legal (cf. Rom. 3:21-28) or ethical (cf. Rom. 12:1) aspects.

1 I Cor. 3:16; 6:19.
2 Rom. 8:9-10, Authorized Version.
3 Phil. 1:21.
The Pauline expression 'in Christ' denotes the vital fellowship of men with Christ as they experience his Life. Paul speaks of the κοινωνία of God's Son, of his sufferings, and of his body and blood (the Lord's Supper). For Paul, to be 'in Christ' meant to partake not only of the supernatural presence of the Spirit but also of the sacrificial type of life and service Jesus lived. Fellowship with Christ involved conformity to the entire pattern of his life. Whether such conformity entailed suffering and humiliation or consolation and elevation in the Spirit, it was all part of being 'in Christ'. The individual whose life was "hid with Christ in God" was the one who was transformed by the power of the κοινωνία.

Paul has given much attention to the 'knowledge of Christ' in relation to the intimate nature of Christian experience. He employs γινώσκω (like the author of the Fourth Gospel) to express an intensely personal and spiritual apprehension of Christ. Moreover, he freely uses the nominal

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1 Cf. Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 1:30; etc.; The words 'in Christ' or 'in the Lord' occur 164 times in Paul's writings.

2 I Cor. 1:9; Phil. 3:10; I Cor. 10:16; cf. Phil. 2:1, κοινωνία πνεύματος.

3 Cf. II Cor. 4:7-11.

4 Cf. II Cor. 12:2-4.

5 Col. 3:3.
form γνῶσις which, with Christ as the object, he evaluates higher than anything else: "Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." He also referred to the γνῶσις as "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" and as "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

Despite the intimate nature of the γνῶσις which Paul experienced, he was always cognizant of the fact that it was not as complete as he desired. There is evidence that he viewed the knowledge as a goal toward which he was moving as he progressed in Christ. His extreme desire was that he might know Christ fully— an accomplishment for which he diligently strived. He yearned to apprehend (καταλάβεω) in the same manner as he was apprehended by Christ—the desire to know as he was known. He admonished the Colossians to increase (αὐξάνεω) in the 'true knowledge' (ἐπίγνωσις) of God. And in his letter to the Ephesians he referred to a future time when believers would "attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of

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1 Phil. 3:8, in part.
2 Eph. 1:17.
3 II Cor. 4:6.
4 Phil. 3:10-12.
5 Col. 1:10.
There are references in the Pauline literature that set forth marked changes in the lives of men who have appropriated eternal Life. Just as in the thought of the Johannine literature, the theology of Paul is characterized by a moral dualism of light versus darkness. Paul designated believers as children of light, admonishing them to walk in the light of the Lord as apposed to the former darkness. Paul was keenly aware of the transition that takes place when a man becomes a Christian, a change which he referred to as deliverance from the dominion of darkness, a transference of believers into the kingdom of the Son of God. "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation"; therefore, Paul exhorts believers to conduct themselves in "newness of Life", to dissociate themselves entirely from the sphere of death. They have died to the old state of sin in the act of accepting Christ and the ensuing counterpart of this 'death' is resurrection to Life with him. It involves not only 'walking in the Spirit', that is in outward behavior, but also being spiritually-minded, which is Life and peace.

For Paul, the Life of the world to come is the ideal.

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1 Eph. 4:13.
2 Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:13.
3 II Cor. 5:17.
4 Rom. 6:4; 8:6.
religious experience. But from his doctrine of salvation as treated above, it is clear that he conceived of the Life as having a definite beginning in this life. Believers have been granted a pledge or guarantee (ἀπραγίαν) of the Life to come. Dodd has defined an ἀπραγίαν as "a sample of goods guaranteed to be of the same kind and quality as the main consignment." Thus, when Paul speaks of the ἀπραγίαν of the Spirit, he means that believers have in this life a 'foretaste' of the Life of the world to come. This 'foretaste' is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, in whom believers are sealed (σφαγίαςευ), i.e., are "marked by God as his."

Eternal Life as future. Although the presence of the Holy Spirit is a 'foretaste' of consummate salvation, the eternal Life from the Pauline viewpoint is an inheritance that will be fully attained in the future. These words are typical of Paul's outlook:

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we

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1 II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14.
3 Eph. 4:30.
groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling.... For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety... that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by Life.  

He also speaks of laying up a good foundation for the future in order that one might "take hold of the Life which is Life indeed." The faithful believer waits patiently for the time when he will become an heir of the Life. Paul himself was "looking for that blessed hope," and the appearing of "Christ who is our Life."  

In view of the fact that believers have been reconciled to God through the death of Christ, then because he is alive Paul says, "We shall be saved by his Life." Righteous living in this life will pay eternal dividends. Just as the planting of seed results in a harvest at a future date, likewise, "He who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal Life." Paul specifies that "to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality he [God] will give eternal Life." It is the life of sanctification which finds its end in eternal

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1 II Cor. 5:1-4; cf. II Cor. 4:7-11.  
2 I Tim. 1:19.  
3 Cf. Titus 1:2; 3:7.  
4 Titus 2:13, Authorized Version.  
5 Col. 3:4.  
6 Rom. 5:10.  
7 Gal. 6:8.  
8 Rom. 2:7.
III. TEACHING IN THE REST OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT

Acts of the Apostles. The teaching on eternal Life in the book of Acts must be viewed against the background of the phenomenal beginning and spreading of the New Testament Church and as a part of the apostolic preaching. In brief, the book of Acts records the supernatural entrance of the Holy Spirit into the life of the Church with the result that there was born in the hearts of the early Christians an unprecedented desire to preach the gospel to the furthest regions of the known world. The main burden of the κήρυγμα (proclamation) was that God had visited and redeemed his people through the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, the resurrection fact formed

1 Rom. 6:22, ἔχετε τὸν καρπὸν ὑμῶν εἰς ἁγιασμὸν, τὸ δὲ τέλος διὰ τοῦ δικαίου. The investigator translates: "You have your fruit unto sanctification and finally, eternal Life." Cf. Westcott and Hort, op. cit., Lexicon, p. 191.

2 New Testament scholars distinguish between the earliest preaching, the κήρυγμα, and the ethical and moral implications developed from it, the διδαχή (teaching); cf. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments.

3 Ibid., p. 47.
the basis of his preaching. The resurrection was a mighty attestation that Christ was alive and operative in the Church. In another speech, Peter designated Jesus as the "Prince of Life" (ἀρχηγὸς θῆς ζωῆς) whom God had raised from the dead.² The title denotes that he is the author and source of Life. It carries the same meaning as the Johannine expression, "In him was Life."

The apostolic κήρύγμα was eschatological in emphasis. The disciples looked forward to the consummation of the Messianic age at the return of Christ when there would be "times of refreshing"³ and the ideal Life would be experienced in its fullness. The "words of this Life" (τὰ ρήματα τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης), the disciples were convinced, must be heralded to men in this life. The κήρυγμα always closed with an appeal to faith and repentence. Those who refused to repent and rejected the message of Life denied themselves salvation. Paul told the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy

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⁵Cf. e.g. Acts 11:18, ὁ θεὸς τῆν μετάνοιαν εἰς ζωὴν ἐδωκέν.
of eternal Life, behold we turn to the Gentiles." Paul was ordained by the Lord as a "light for the Gentiles,"—"to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light." To gain spiritual sight was to have the illumination of Life.

Petrine Epistles. The Petrine teaching on eternal Life, like that in the Epistle of James, contains certain ideas that are similar to Johannine thought although the term ἀμώμητος is employed only twice with respect to eternal Life. According to I Peter, believers "have been born anew [ἀναγέννησθαι], not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living word of God." The familiar Johannine dualism of light opposed to darkness is employed. Believers have been called out of darkness, says Peter, into the "marvellous light" (ἡ ἀμώμητος φως) of Christ.

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3 The Epistle of James sets forth both the present and future aspects of eternal Life despite the fact that ἀμώμητος (as eternal Life) is used only once (1:12). As a present fact, the Life is conceived of as beginning here and now through the implanting of the "word of truth" (1:18) in the hearts of men (1:21). Salvation is to be enjoyed and realized through a combination of faith and works (1:22 ff; 2:14 ff.). The future aspect is emphasized through reference to the kingdom, of which believers are heirs (2:5). And he who faithfully endures trials in this life "will receive the crown of Life which God has promised to those who love him" (1:12).
are united with him in vital knowledge. This knowledge was the means of their release from the defilements of the world.¹ The knowledge is further conceived of as a process through which Christians move toward maturity. They are exhorted to desire that 'spiritual nourishment,'² whereby this maturity may be attained, to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."³ Knowing God and Jesus Christ becomes the medium of grace and of "all things that pertain to Life."⁴

There is a pronounced eschatological emphasis in the Petrine writings, especially in II Peter. In II Peter, for example, there is mention of future entrance into the eternal kingdom and of the anticipation of new heavens and a new earth.⁵ The Life of the world to come is the prize hoped for, and it will be ushered in at the end of the age.

**Apocalypse.** The teaching on eternal Life in the

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Although the Apocalypse is classed as 'Johannine' in various senses of the word, the teaching of the book on eternal Life is given at this point rather than with the Fourth Gospel and First Epistle. The presentation of arguments for and against joint authorship, Apostolic or otherwise, between the Apocalypse and the Johannine writings is not the primary concern of the investigator at this point. Instead, the investigator assumes
book of Revelation is embedded in an apocalyptic and eschatological framework. The Apocalypse depicts the ideal status of the kingdom of God. By means of profuse symbolism the beatific conditions and nature of the ultimate inheritance of Christians—eternal Life—is portrayed. In the vast majority of instances, ἀνάμνησις occurs in connection with a symbol which gives significance to the term.

The person who will inherit eternal Life, according to the author, is the one who lives faithfully and victoriously in this life. It is the one who 'overcomes' that is granted the right "to eat of the tree of Life."  

'Eating of the tree of Life' is illustrative of eternal sustenance and existence, the antithesis of which is the Johannine idea of 'perish' (ἀπολλύνω). The Life-sustaining nourishment is also represented by the expression 'water of Life'. To the one who thirsts will be given drink "from the fountain of the water of Life."  

The word for fountain, πηγή (spring), denotes the inexhaustible source and eternal satisfaction of the position of Beyschlag, who says that "we must consider them for Biblical Theology separately, inasmuch as, even though the author should be the same, they give expression to a different view of the world"; quoted by Stevens, Theology of the New Testament, pp. 526-27.

1 Rev. 2:7; cf. 22:2, 14.
Elsewhere, there is employed the term "river of the water of Life,"\(^2\) conveying the same idea.

There are frequent references to the fact that the redeemed have their names written in the "book of Life."\(^3\) This term is indicative of the assurance of salvation viz., eternal safety and spiritual well-being. It denotes by implication that God is cognizant of the personal worth of each believer, who can with confidence trust that the inheritance has been made secure. The inheritance is referred to as a "crown of Life."\(^4\) The term is suggestive of a coronation scene where the one who has been "faithful unto death" (after the similitude of the athlete who has won the race) is awarded the crown (στέφανος) for reaching the goal.

\(^1\) Cf. ante, p. 47.  
\(^2\) Rev. 22:1.  
\(^3\) Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8, etc.  
\(^4\) Rev. 2:10.
IV. CONCLUSIONS

From the survey in chapter four, it is evident that the doctrine of eternal Life is common to the New Testament in general. The teaching on eternal Life is expressed in various ways—e.g. the kingdom of God in the Synoptic Gospels, salvation in Acts, Pauline writings, etc.—all of which deal with the basic meaning of ζωή. The expression 'eternal Life' and equivalent ideas throughout the New Testament fall into both of two thought-patterns, i.e., present and future concepts, the latter of which is stressed exclusively in the Apocalypse. Because the New Testament as a whole has a marked eschatological emphasis with the view that life in this world is to a great extent preparatory for the Life of the world to come, it seems that the 'future' aspect of the Life is by far the predominant one.

In the Synoptic Gospels the expression 'Life' or 'eternal Life' is used, in certain instances, as an alternative for the term 'kingdom of God' or 'kingdom of heaven'. This is occasionally evident from a comparison of parallel accounts in the Synoptics.¹ Likewise, within a particular Gospel, the terms "to enter Life," "to inherit eternal Life," "to enter the kingdom of God," and "be saved" are

used synonymously. In the Pauline writings such terms as "kingdom of his beloved Son", "earnest of the Spirit", "fellowship" and "in Christ" are used with respect to the Life as present. The future aspect is seen in the usage of such terms as "hope" and "promise" as well as other ideas relevant to ultimate salvation. In Acts the eternal Life is conceived of as resident in Christ (the "Prince of Life") and in the ἐνίκησις (the "words of Life"). The Petrine Epistles contain the idea of the new birth ("born anew") and knowledge of God, which are typical of the present aspect of eternal Life. The "eternal kingdom" is the corresponding future concept. The term "implanted word" is used in the Epistle of James to denote an idea similar to that of the new birth. James' reference to the "crown of Life" and allusion to the kingdom as an inheritance are strictly futuristic. Attention has been drawn to the fact that the eschatology of the Apocalypse sets the viewpoint on eternal Life therein. This means that the future concept in the Apocalypse is not inherent in the symbols tree, water, etc. but is rather derived from the eschatological framework in which these terms are found.

When the Johannine conception of eternal Life is

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compared with the New Testament teaching in general, the similarities are evident and the differences, even more so. One major common area is the dualism of light versus darkness, which is used basically in the same sense in most of the New Testament as in the Johannine literature. But in the Johannine literature, light means more than the moral antithesis to darkness. It has a discriminatory function or the power to bring about judgment. This profound conception of judgment as the inevitable accompaniment of the revelation of light has no parallel in the rest of the New Testament. The Fourth Gospel, in using light and Life synonymously, advances beyond other parts of the New Testament where this association is true only by implication. The Johannine idea of knowing God is paralleled in both the Pauline and Petrine Epistles. But only in the Fourth Gospel is 'eternal Life' equated with the intimate knowledge of God. The gratuitous nature of eternal Life is an idea common to the New Testament as a whole. However, John 3:16 relates the gift of eternal Life to its source, infinite and divine love, like no other New Testament passage. The expression correlative to John 3:16 is the unparalleled expression of the First Epistle, "God is love." The idea that the eternal Life is a gift from God relates to the Johannine teaching on faith. The author of the Fourth Gospel, like Paul, views faith as
the primary human requisite to appropriation of eternal Life. The Pauline doctrine of 'justification by faith' is not strange to the Johannine idea that 'believing' is the 'work of God' \(^1\) instead of deeds. The Synoptics record the Jewish viewpoint of works as necessary to the possession of eternal Life whereas the Epistle of James stresses works as the complement or evidence of 'having believed'. The Johannine concept of 'present' resurrection to Life from spiritual death is not taught with equal force in the rest of the New Testament. The Pauline idea of "newness of Life" in Rom. 6 is perhaps nearest to the Johannine concept. On the other hand the concept of 'future' resurrection (also present in the Fourth Gospel) is stressed predominantly by the other New Testament writers.

The Johannine and Pauline ideas of fellowship (κοινωνία) are basically equivalent. The Johannine term "abide in" Christ is matched by the Pauline term "in Christ". Paul's concept of κοινωνία with Christ in sufferings is not stressed in the Johannine literature. The Fourth Gospel is unlike Paul in presenting Christ as the "Bread of Life", the sustenance of the κοινωνία. The First Epistle emphasizes κοινωνία among brethren, an aspect which Paul treats in

\(^1\) Jn. 6:28-29.
connection with the concept of the Body of Christ.¹

The conception of the eternal Life as a present possession that transcends time is the one thing which, more than any other factor, marks the Johannine writings most distinctly from the rest of the New Testament. To be sure, the present aspect of salvation is an element shared by the New Testament writers as a whole, but the author of the Johannine writings unites this world with the world to come by comprehending the particular in the universal and by estimating all things in the light of eternity. The predominant usage of ἐχεῖν to denote that the believer has eternal Life here and now is unlike other parts of the New Testament. For the author of the Johannine writings,

the past, the present, and the future are fused into one life; the life of the Incarnate Word, the life eternal of the disciple in the community of the faithful controlled and inspired by the Spirit, and the perfected life when Christ shall have been manifested and we shall see him as he is.²

¹I Cor. 12:12-27, especially verses 25-26.

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**B. OTHER MATERIALS**


