

Holiness in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the concept of the holiness of God is carried over. The vision of Isaiah is recorded in the Apocalypse (4.8), the Lord addresses the Father as "Holy Father" (Jn. 17.11), and the command of Lev. 19.2 "Be holy, for I, Yahweh your God, am holy" is repeated (1 Pt 1.15ff). However, in the New Testament, the use of the word holiness, seems to centre on Jesus and the Spirit.

The use of the word "holy" in relation to Jesus is not very common (Mk. 1.24; Lk. 1.35; 4.34; Jn 6.69; 1 Jn. 2.20), though it probably reflects an ancient tradition, and is full of significance. It seems to be related to the reference to Jesus as "Son of God." In Mark the evil spirits address Jesus as "The Holy One of God" (1.24) and "Son of the Most High God" (5.7). In Luke, these two thoughts are also related. In his account of the conception of Jesus, the Angel says to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy." (1.35). The holiness of Jesus and his sonship are here related to the Spirit. A further indication of the relationship between his holiness and sonship is the fact that the confession of Peter "You are the Christ, the son of the living God" (Mt 16.16) becomes in John (6.69) "you are the Holy One of God."

It is the sonship theme which will be more clearly developed in the New Testament writings but the link with holiness is significant. The theme of sonship will be developed to show that Jesus is of the very nature of the Father. Indeed the principal revelation of the New Testament is that God is Father, Son and Spirit. It is in the revelation of the Father/Son relationship that believers come to know what God has called them to. Jesus then, comes to be presented as one with the Father (Jn 10.30; 17.11). The intimacy of the relationship between Father and Son is presented very explicitly by St. John. Clearly, Jesus is the presence of the Father, for to have seen him is to have seen the Father (Jn 14. 7,9). What the Father is has been made known in Jesus, and one comes into contact with the Father through Jesus. For John, this does not simply mean that Jesus is the messenger of the Father. Jesus is the actual presence of the divine to humanity and is the "way" humanity come to be involved with the divine. This will become clearer if we consider certain themes in John.

The prophet Hosea, in his unique development of the Old Testament concept of holiness, expressed it in terms of love. He saw love as the force behind the divine action, and this love was the thing that, for him, characterized God. The Johannine literature takes up this theme. In the first Epistle of John it is treated explicitly (1 Jn. 4.7-21). The key to it is the statement that "God is love" (1 Jn 4.8,16). This is a spelling out of Hosea's theme. The believer must abide in love, for the disciple of Jesus has been called to share the very nature of God (1 Jn 4.15-16). The believer lives in love, because God is love, and he is called to share the divine nature. This is what Christian love is all about. Listen to the words of Jesus: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.....This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (Jn. 15.9,12). Just as Israel was to be holy because Yahweh their God was holy, so Christians must love because their God is love. The love that the believer lives is a share in the love that has come from the Father through Jesus. Being a Christian is being caught up in the divine, and the divine is love. Jesus is the presence of the divine love (Jn 3.16; 1 Jn 4.10) and in abiding in his love, we are abiding in God. I suggest you read very carefully 1 Jn 4.7-21; Jn 15. 1-17; 14.15-23. The theme of love will be taken up again later in this lecture which will treat of union with Jesus.

This theme is important in John, and to the subject under discussion. This will warrant us spending a little more time on it. The line of thought expressed in John's teaching on love is found also in relation to other themes. We will consider them briefly. The author of first John offers another insight into the divine when he says "God is light". He is expressing the divine in terms of light. With this background, the references to Jesus in terms of light are far more significant. Jesus is the "light of men" (Jn 1.4), "the true light that enlightens every man" (Jn 1.9). He is able to say "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), and again "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (Jn 9.5). Jesus is the manifestation of the divine light, which will bring salvation to all people. This salvation will mean that the believer must "walk in the light as (God) is in the light" (1 Jn. 1.7). The Christian life is again presented as a share in the divine nature made known to us in Jesus. The Christian life is being caught up in the divine which is love and light.

The same underlying thought is expressed in John's use of "truth". It is worth developing because it will bring this section to a conclusion, and lead into the next point to be considered. The author of first John

concludes his epistle in this way. "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding to know the truthful one. And we are in the truthful one, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the truthful one, God, and eternal life." (5.20). The Divine is seen in terms of truth, and so is the Christian life. The believer is "of the truth", an expression in Johannine literature often used to refer to origin, e.g. being born of God (1 Jn 5.19; 4.6; cf. 2.21;). The Christian should "live the truth" (1 Jn 1.6), "walk in truth" (2 Jn 4; 3 Jn 4), "know the truth" (2 Jn 1) and the truth actually abides in the believer (2 Jn 2). The Christian life, then, can be expressed in terms of truth, for this expression can be used to express the divine nature. Again, it is Jesus who is the presence of this reality to humanity, and it is through him that they share in it. "I am the way, the truth and the life" Jn 14.6). The role of Jesus, and the link between holiness and truth is brought out (Jn 17.17-19). Jesus prays to the Father: "Sanctify them (make them holy) in the truth; your word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I consecrate (make holy) myself, that they also may be consecrated (made holy) in truth." The words in brackets are meant to bring out that the same Greek word is used in each case, and that the verb is "to make holy". So, through Christ the truth, the believer is brought into the realm of the truth, and must live according to that truth.

As a transition to the next part of the lecture, a brief treatment of the Holy Spirit, it will be useful to see how the Johannine literature presents the Spirit within this framework of truth. The most significant contribution made by the Johannine literature to the theology of the Spirit is found in the figure of the Paraclete. It is interesting that in the so-called paraclete tests (Jn 14.16, 26; 15.26-27; 16.7-11, 12-15), the Paraclete is referred to three times as the "Spirit of Truth". If we accept the reference in Jn 4.24 to "worship in spirit and truth" as an example of hendiadys, meaning "the spirit of truth", we could have another reference to this title. Certainly, the title is used in the first Epistle of John, where it is opposed to the spirit of error (1 Jn. 4.6). The work of the Paraclete is conceived in terms of truth. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth: for he will not speak of his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; there I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." (Jn 16.13-15). It clearly emerges from this that the Spirit plays a role in John's thinking about the divine plan expressed in terms of truth. God is expressed in terms of truth, and the Christian life, as a share in the divine nature, is expressed in the same terms. The divine reality is brought to men through Christ, "the truth" (Jn 14.6) and the Spirit, who is also "the truth" (1 Jn 5.6).

Our emphasis on the theology of the Spirit, often causes us to neglect the important adjective which is so frequently associated with the Spirit in the New Testament. The usual designation for the Spirit is the "Holy Spirit". The Spirit is the spirit of holiness (Rom. 1.4), and thus brings all people to share in the divine life. The Spirit is the presence of God. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body." (1 Cor. 6.20). And again, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are." (1 Cor. 3. 16-17). The figure of the temple brings out the concept of holiness brought about by the Spirit.

The life which the Holy Spirit brings is a share in the sonship of Jesus. The relationship between Jesus as "Holy One" and "Son" has already been mentioned. Paul clearly presents the Spirit as the source of this sonship. "All who are led by the Spirit of God are Sons of God." (Rom. 8.14). It is the Spirit dwelling within who enables the believer to cry out "Abba Father" (Rom. 8.15; Gal. 4.6). Paul's emphasis on the Spirit as the source of the moral living of the Christian, i.e. his emphasis on "waiting in the Spirit" (Gal. 5.16), brings out even more clearly that the Spirit is the vivifying principle of the Christian life. Paul's use of the expression "in the Spirit" expresses his belief that the whole of Christian existence is lived under the guidance of the Spirit. The one who is reborn in Christ has come to live on a new spiritual plane. It is John who declares that "God is spirit", (Jn 4.24), but the thought is not foreign to Paul. Indeed, the world of the Spirit is the realm of the Divine, and we live in that realm because the Spirit dwells within us. The very source of divine holiness lives within the believer. Paul actually sees sanctification as coming from Christ and the Spirit, but his use of "in the Spirit" is almost the same as his use of "in Christ", There are not two different realities of salvation here, but two aspects of the same one.

The Spirit then brings to humanity the divine life. That which is proper to God is shared with them. It is manifested in Christ, but the Spirit of Christ, who is also the Spirit of God (Rom. 8.9), effects this salvation.

It should be evident that the whole movement of the divine plan only reaches a climax when people are drawn to share in the divine life. So, just as this was present in the Old Testament, it becomes even clearer in the New. The emphasis placed on the theology of John should have made this clear. The Christian living in love, truth and light is sharing in the divine life. However, it is important to consider this point further.

Israel was a holy people because of its election by God. The Church, the new Israel, continues in its tradition. Its holiness is not unrelated to its relationship to Israel (Cf. Rom. 11.15-24). However, it is the theme of their common election which binds them together, thus relating holiness not to any intrinsic element of theirs but to their relationship to God. Paul brings out the relationship between election and holiness when he addresses his readers as those "called to be saints" (Rom. 1.7; 1 Cor 1.2). The source of this holiness is Christ who "loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." (Eph 5.26-27). The believer is sanctified "in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1.2; Phil. 1.1).

It is the People, the Community which is holy. The Church is a "community of saints" (1 Cor. 14.33), and it is quite common for Paul to refer to the individual Churches as "the saints" (Rom. 15.25; 1 Cor. 16.1,15; 2 Cor. 8.4; Rom, 1.7; 1 Cor. 1.2). The same thought is expressed in the application of Ex. 19.5-6 to the Church; "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people," (1 Pt 2.9). There is a certain cultic overtone in this presentation, a link between the "holy nation" and the "royal priesthood". The references to Jesus as "the holy servant" (Acts 3.14; 4.27,30), which relates him to the Servant of Isaiah (53.11), also has this cultic dimension. Isaiah's servant will bring salvation to his people through his sufferings. Jesus has brought holiness to his people by his sufferings. There is evident here the cultic presentation of salvation, which is fully worked out in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It carried over into the life of the individual believer, whose life is seen as a sacrifice offered to God (Rom 12.1; 15.16). The concept of the Christian community as a holy temple also brings out this cultic dimension of Christian holiness (Cf 1 Cor. 3.16-17; Eph. 2.21).

Part 2 Holiness as union with Jesus

Jesus Christ is the focal point of Christian holiness. The Spirit leads us to union with Christ, and it is only in union with him that we have access to the Father. This lecture will explore more closely what the New Testament teaches about the role of Jesus in the life of the Christian. Firstly, we must consider the relationship between Jesus and his disciples in the Synoptics. Within this section the doctrine of the First Epistle of Peter can be considered. This will be followed by a consideration of the doctrine of the Pauline and Johannine literature.

Synoptics

The accounts of Jesus' calling of his disciples can give some indication of the relationship to Jesus established by the call. In four accounts (Mk 1.16-20; 2.13-14; Mt 8.18-22; Lk 9.57-62), the word "follow" is used to describe Jesus' invitation and the disciples response. Each account is characterized by the call of Jesus and the response of the disciple. Jesus' call is "Follow me", and the response is described by the simple statement that they "followed" him. The simple call of Jesus is presented as an efficacious word which invites a response. The initiative is always with Jesus (Jn 16.15). Some have thought that the disciples followed Jesus in the way the disciples of the Rabbis followed them. However, this analogy is not adequate. With the students of the Rabbis, the initiative was with the student, asking to be taught. Also, they were asking to be instructed in the Law. Jesus chose his disciples, and they are not called to study the Law, but to a personal allegiance to him. His disciples are called to follow him personally.

This means that the call to discipleship is not just a call to mission. It is primarily a call to share the life of Jesus. The mission follows from this sharing. "And he appointed twelve to be with him, and to be

sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons". (Mk 3.14). It is the "being with Jesus" that is the foundation of everything else. In the early part of his public life, Jesus went out to the crowds, but in the face of their lack of response, he turned more and more to the formation of his disciples. He did not demand of them that they serve him. On the contrary, he served them. He had not come as one who was to be served, but as one who would serve, (Lk 22.27; Mk 10.45), and the disciples were to experience his willingness to serve. (Jn. 13.1-11). They were to share in it (Jn 13.12-17; Lk 22.26-26). Jesus describes his relationship with his disciples in a very tender way. They are his "friends" (Jn 15.14-15), "those who have continued with me in my trials" (Lk 22.28). They are his real family (Mk 3.31-35).

Jesus makes radical demands on his disciples. Only those who are ready to give up mother, father, son or daughter are worthy to answer his call (Mt 10.37-39; Lk 14.26-27; Mk 8.34-35). The response of Peter and Andrew (Mk 1.18), James and John (Mk 1.20), and Lev (Mk 2.14) bear witness to the radicality called for. They just left everything. There is no time to bury one's dead, (Mt 8.21-22), nor even to bid farewell to one's family (Lk 9.61). "No-one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk 9.62). The disciple who loses enthusiasm is like salt which has lost its taste. "Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored. It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill; men throw it away." (Lk 14.34-35). Those who have received a call from Jesus must consider its consequences very carefully. They must be like the rich man who thought well about whether he could afford to build the house before he embarked on the project, or like the king who carefully measured his chances before entering battle. After giving these examples, Jesus said, "So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." (Lk 14.33). Not everyone whom Jesus called responded. The rich young man received the same invitation as the disciple, "Follow me", but "his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth." (Lk 10.22).

Perhaps the most radical demand of Jesus is the command to carry his cross. "If any would come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mk 8.34). Jesus prepared his disciples before he made this demand of them. Only when they had come to the stage where they could confess "You are the Christ", did he begin "to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things." (Mk 8.29-31). There is little doubt that Jesus considered his suffering as an integral part of his mission, and those who shared his life would be asked to share his suffering. It is within the context of the sufferings that their mission will bring on the disciples, that the Lord asserts that "a disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master." (Mt 10.24-25). The disciple must walk the path that Jesus walked. He makes this clear when he assures the Sons of Zebedee that they will drink the cup that he must drink, and endure the baptism that he must endure (Mt 10.35-40).

It is possible that the dialogue between Jesus and Peter on the occasion of the first prophecy of the Passion could shed light on this theme. Peter is not able to understand that the Messiah must suffer, and he attempts to dissuade Jesus. The Lord rebukes him, with the words, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Mk 8.30). In the original Greek, the words are reminiscent of the words used by Jesus to Peter on the occasion of his call, "Come after (behind) me." Could it be that in rebuking Peter, the Lord is reminding him of his call, and saying that rather than standing between Jesus and suffering, he must be ready to follow him in it? Peter certainly came to recognize the importance of this imitation of Jesus. In the First Epistle of Peter, which could well be from the hand of the Apostle, this theme is central. The Epistle is the only writing of the New Testament that develops an explicit reference to Jesus as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Is 52.13-53.12. Cf 1 Pet 2.18-25). The Servant suffers for his people, and through suffering brings them to salvation. For the author of this epistle it is the suffering of Jesus that is important. He prefers to say Jesus suffered rather than that he died (4.1; 2.21; 3.18). It is through his sufferings that he brings salvation (1 Pet 1.18-19; 2.21,24). The purpose of the author of First Peter in introducing these ideas is to remind his readers that they should expect to share in these sufferings: his readers are "partakers of Christ's sufferings" (4.13), and he sees himself as a "witness to the sufferings of Christ" (5.1). They should not be surprised at this suffering. "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed" (4.12 Cf. 1.6-9).

The importance of this teaching of First Peter is that it shows how the Early Church developed a theology of suffering based on the imitation of the suffering of Jesus. The origin of this theology is the teaching of Jesus himself.

The teaching of the Synoptics gives an insight into how the disciples related to Jesus. Though the Synoptic authors give an insight at times into how they should relate to the Risen Jesus, generally speaking they are concerned with the relationship of the disciples to Jesus as they knew him when he was with them on earth. With Paul, we come to a figure who did not know Jesus in this way, and who relates to him as the Risen Lord. Perhaps this is the significance of his words, "Even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard Him thus no longer." (2 Cor 5:16). Paul is opposing a knowledge of Jesus as he walked the earth to a knowledge of him as the one who has risen in glory. As the Risen Lord he is able to enter into a relationship with his disciples which goes far beyond any relationship that was possible while he was still on earth. It is now no longer an imitation of Jesus, but rather a configuration to him, a deep personal union which involves the believer in the mysteries of Christ's life.

To understand the importance of this union with Jesus in the theology of Paul, it is necessary to look carefully at the accounts of his conversion to Christianity. The story of what happened on the road to Damascus is well known, and, it is so important that Luke offers three accounts of it (Acts 9:1-9; 22:5-16; 26:10-18), all substantially the same. Two points come through very strongly in each of these accounts. The first is the initiative of God in calling Paul. Paul is very conscious of this. "When he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me..." (Gal 1:15-16). This awareness of being singled out by divine providence comes through strongly. It is present in his relationship to the risen Jesus, who, he tells us "loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal 2:20). A look into his theology of union with Jesus will reveal just how deep his own personal union with the Lord was.

The second element in the incident, and perhaps the more central, is that in this incident Jesus is revealed to Paul. In the text quoted in the previous paragraph (Gal 1:16), the initiative of God is in revealing to Paul his Son. It is in this experience that Paul comes to know Jesus. Paul cries out, "Who are you Lord?", and the answer comes back, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:4-5). It is important that the Jesus whom Paul comes to know is seen in relationship to those who believe in Him. It is the Christian community whom Paul is persecuting, yet the Lord could say "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me." In persecuting the Christian, Paul was persecuting Jesus himself (Cf Lk 10:16). This close bond between Jesus and the believer was to leave a very big impression on Paul, and it was a theme that was to become central to his theology. In exploring it, we are in touch not only with the heart of Paul's theology, but also with the essence of all Christian holiness.

Paul's sacramental teaching will help us to develop his thoughts on the union between the believer and his Lord. An elaborate exposition of his teaching on Baptism would require a detailed consideration of a great number of texts (Rom 6:1ff; Gal. 3:26-27; Col 2:1ff; 1:13f; 2:15; 1 Cor 6:11; 12:13; 1:11-17; 10:1ff; 15:29; 7:14; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:30; 4:30; 4:5; Col 2:11f). A brief summary is all that we require here. The heart of his baptismal theology is that in this sacrament the believer is drawn to a share in the saving mysteries of Jesus' life. It is through his death and resurrection that Jesus brings mankind to share the life of the Godhead. It is involvement in these key mysteries which is the primary effect of Baptism. (Rom 6:1ff; 1 Cor 1:13; Col 2:12). However, these mysteries can only be understood in so far as they are acts of the person of Jesus, and it is to him that the primary relationship is made. The believer has "put on Christ" (Gal 3:26), and can even be said to be Christ's (Gal 3:29). Perhaps the most important stress is that the Jesus the believer puts on is "alive". This sacrament is an entry into a new way of life, and the life that we now live is one "hid with Christ in God". (Col 3:3; Cf Rom 6:4; Col 2:13). The intimacy of the believer with Jesus is apparent from the first moment of his Christian existence. Indeed, Christian existence is this intimate union.

What is true of the beginning of the Christian life is even more true of its climax in the Eucharist. It is a real communion (koinonia) with the Body and Blood of the Lord (1 Cor 10:16; 11:27). The depth of this communion should be clear from the fact that it not only relates the believer to Jesus, but also to other believers. It is the "one loaf" which effects this unity. Their communion with Jesus makes them one. Paul's teaching on the "body of Christ" can assist us here. He describes the Church in terms of a body. The image was known among the philosophers of his time, and was used to describe the unity and diversity of the state. It expresses how the state, which consisted of many individuals, could be one. Does Paul use it in this sense, and is this non-religious background the milieu from which he took the image? Paul does use the image in the way

mentioned, but it could be that this is not his primary usage. His problem was not how the many could be one, but rather how the one could be many, i.e. how in persecuting the Christians he had persecuted Christ. The origin of the body image in Paul could well be Christian, i.e. the body theology of the early Church, which is its eucharistic theology. Thus he would be showing how the one Jesus could be present in his many disciples, because they are all one with him, and with each other, through their eucharistic sharing.

Paul describes very clearly this life opened up by the sacraments of Christian initiation. The believer has been "conformed to the image" of Jesus (Rom 8.29). So much so, that the intimacy of the union can be described as life itself: "for me to live is Christ" (Phil 1.21). "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2.20). Christ himself is the one who lives in the Christian. St. Paul develops a language to describe this new way of life. It expresses the involvement of the believer in the life of Jesus by a series of verbs which begin in the Greek with the prefix "sun" meaning "with". The subject of these verbs is the believer, and the verb expresses that the action is a share in the action of Jesus himself. The Christian suffers with (*sunpaschein*: Rom 8.17); is crucified with (*sunstauroo*: Rom 6.6; Gal 2.19); is buried with (*sunthapto*: Rom 6.4; Col 2.12:3-1); is risen with (*sunegiro*: Eph 2.6; Col 2.12, 3.1); is glorified with (*sundoxazo*: Rom 8.17); is made alive with (*sunzoopoio*: Eph 2.5; Col 2.13); sits with Jesus in the heavenly places (*sunkathizo*: Eph 2.6). The union of believers in Jesus is brought out by using some of these words to describe the common action of Christians (1 Cor 12.26; 2 Cor 7.6).

Paul's use of the expression "in Christ" suggests that it was a favourite phrase of his. It occurs very frequently, and points particularly to the deep union between Jesus and the believer (Phil 3.7-9; Gal 3.26; Rom 6.11; 1 Cor 1.2; Eph 3.12; Col 2.6). For Paul, it points to the intensely personal dimension of the Christian life, and it is clear that the person who is "in Christ" has a new power, strength and confidence which stems from Christ himself. (Phil 4.13; Eph 6.10; Phil 2.24; Philemon 8; Gal 5.10; 2 Thess 3.4). The texts where the expression is used as a formula suggest a relationship with the Lord which could be described as mystical. Whatever the context, the union with Jesus is the focal point of the expression. The phrase should not be considered in isolation, but rather in the light of the teaching of Paul that has already been outlined above. With this expression, he is simply summing up what has been said in a variety of other ways. It can be linked with certain other expressions, such as "putting on Christ" (Gal 3.26-29; Rom 13.14; Col 3.9-10; Eph 4.22) and "of Christ" (Gal 3.29; 5.24; 1 Cor 1.12). The whole goal of Paul's effort is that he might be found to be "in Christ" (Phil 3.7-9).

Paul's life then was a growth in that initial insight of his conversion. He came to experience in the fullest possible way what the Lord meant when he said "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9.5). It is probably this realization that prompted him to offer to his readers his own example (1 Thess 1.6; 1 Cor 4.15-16). He puts before them his own imitation of Jesus, in order that they may come to share a similar union with him. For Paul, one brings others to the Lord through one's own deep experience of him.

The Johannine literature offers another deep insight into the Early Church's understanding of the close bond between believer and Jesus. Again, the treatment offered here will not be exhaustive, but will attempt to isolate some important points. To begin, recall what was said in the second lecture about the themes of love, light, and truth in the fourth Gospel. In our exposition of these themes, it was pointed out that the Christian life is a share in the divine life which comes to the believer through Christ. The figure of Jesus is central to this presentation of the mystery of salvation, and union with Jesus is the only way to share in it.

The Johannine literature explores this union with Jesus in a unique way. One of the problems which troubled the Johannine community was the delay in the coming of the Lord. He had said that he would return, but he had not come. The author of the Gospel is at pains to point out that the life of Jesus is not just a past event, but one which endures and is a reality in the midst of his own community. He wishes to change the vision of his readers from a future expectation of Jesus to an awareness of his presence in the midst of believers. He attacks this problem in chapter 14 of the Gospel. He begins the chapter by quoting what seems to be a snippet of traditional material embodying an outlook which we could describe as a future one, i.e. an expectation that Jesus will return in the future. "In my Father's house there are many abodes; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you also may be" (vv.2-3). In the course of the Chapter he gradually changes the focus of the reader, and this reaches a climax in v.23: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him." For those who love, Jesus has already come. It is not a question of

Jesus coming and taking the believer to his Father's house. Rather, Jesus and the Father have come to dwell with him. There is a play on words here. The word "abode", translating the Greek word "mone", occurs in the New Testament only in these two places and is the key to interpreting this chapter.

To fully understand the message of chapter 14, it is necessary to reflect further on the reality conjured up by the word "abode". The Greek word used (mone) is related to the verb "abide" (Greek: menein), and the meaning of the two is closely related in John's theology. For this reason, I have deliberately chosen to translate them as "abode" and "abide", in order to bring out the relationship. You will find that most modern translations are not consistent in their translations of these words. While the Johannine literature only uses the word "abode" in the two places mentioned in chapter 14, the verb "abide" is used very frequently and is considered very much a Johannine word. It points to a very important theme in John, a theme which is referred to as his immanence theology. It refers to the divine indwelling which is the constitutive principle of Christian existence and is John's way of expressing the deep union which faith brings about between God and the believer.

The image of the vine and the branches (Jn 15.1-11) brings this out very well. Look for the mutual abiding of Jesus and the believer. "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. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my way may be in you, and that your way may be full." (vv.4-11). Christian life is this deep mutual indwelling of Jesus and the Christian (Cf Jn 6.56). Notice too, how this abiding is related to love. We will return to this point.

A further insight into this concept and its relationship to love emerges from a consideration of the First Epistle of John 4:7-21. Within this important section on love, the word "abide" occurs very significantly. "No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (vv.12-16). The life of love is a mutual abiding of God and the believer, or, perhaps better, the mutual abiding of God and the believer is a life of love. However we look at it, it is the deep union of the two which is the central focus of the teaching. The only difference between this exposition and chapter 14 of the Gospel is that the latter is more Christ-centred, which is in keeping with the whole tenor of the Gospel, while the former is more God-centred, which is in accord with the whole tenor of the Epistle.

With these texts in mind, let us return to chapter 14. We have already suggested that the context is one of bringing home to believers that Christ has already come and lives within them. In vv.15-23, this coming of the Lord to his people is put within the framework of love. "If you love me you will keep my commandments" is the refrain (v.15; 21; 23). Within the context of this love, we find Jesus' affirmation that he will come. Even more, where this love is, he and the Father have already come. Reflect on this in the light of the theme of love in John outlined in the previous lecture.

This chapter offers an insight into the trinitarian nature of this relationship. When John presents the relationship between Jesus and the believer, he does so by seeing it as a share for the believer in the relationship which already exists between Jesus and his Father. In v.10, the Lord says to Philip: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me." In v.20, after developing his theme, he says "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." Through Jesus, the believer shares in the life of the Father and Son. This is the meaning of his prayer: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou has given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.....that they may be all one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee....." (Jn 17.11, 21). This is the significance of the reference to the "Father's house" in v.2 and to the Father's coming in v.23 of chapter 14. The union with Jesus brings the believer to an intimate relationship with the Father.

A further insight into the trinitarian dimension of this union with Jesus can be found in the reference to the Paraclete in vv.16-17 of chapter 14. The context is the one already outlined, where Jesus affirms that he will come again to those who love and keep his commandments. There is no space here to develop the theme of the Paraclete in the Gospel, and it is a difficult theme. However, I see the Paraclete as the Spirit of Jesus, making the risen Jesus present to his community, so that through the Paraclete Jesus carries on the work he began in their midst. The Paraclete abides with the believers as Jesus does (Jn 14.17,25). The First Epistle clearly teaches that the sign whereby we know that God abides in us and we in him is that he has given us his Spirit (1 Jn 3.24; 4.13). It is in this sense, that I see the Paraclete as the presence of Jesus, affirming that the mutual abiding of Jesus and the believer is a reality.

Imitation of Jesus, in the sense of a deep personal involvement with him, is at the heart of New Testament spirituality. In the period immediately following the New Testament, this truth found concrete embodiment in the Christian ideal of martyrdom. The martyr came to be seen as the ideal Christian, the one totally conformed to Christ. In a religion in which the crucifixion is central, it is perhaps not unexpected that the death of the martyr came to be seen as the ideal for all. The seeds of this thought are contained already in the New Testament. Luke offers a foundation for such an approach. He inserts into the Lord's call to discipleship the word "daily", which emphasises that the Christian must follow in the footsteps of the Lord in his daily life (Lk 9.23). Luke's presentation of Simon of Cyrene, carrying the Lord's cross after him, is a presentation of what the Christian life is all about (Lk 2.26). In his account of the martyrdom of Stephen, he presents the scene against the background of the death of Jesus. Only Luke records the Lord's words which ask for forgiveness for his persecutors, and which commend his spirit to the Father. Luke puts these same words on the lips of Stephen, showing that Stephen, like the Sons of Zebedee, has drunk the cup which the Lord drank (Mt 20.22-23).

Within the New Testament, the martyr came to hold a special place. This was probably seen most clearly in the references to them in the Apocalypse (6.9ff; 7.14-17; 11.11ff; 20.4ff). However, the literature of the second century abounds with reference to the martyrs, and I want briefly to draw out what they saw essential. We will have to be content with a few phrases from Ignatius of Antioch. He is being taken to Rome to die as a martyr, and on the way, he writes to the Christian churches. His letter to the Romans, especially chapters 3-6, is of particular interest. Listen to him: "Just pray that I may have strength of soul and body so that I may not only talk (about martyrdom), but really want it. It is not that I want merely to be called a Christian, but actually to be one." (3.2). The martyr is the real Christian. "I am God's wheat and I am being ground by the teeth of wild beasts to make a pure loaf for Christ." (4.1). There is a Eucharistic reference here, because Ignatius is seeing in his death the event that is celebrated in the Christian community at the Eucharist: the self-giving of the believer in union with the death of Jesus. This is the reality of martyrdom, and this is why he longs for the food of martyrs. "I take no delight in corruptible food or in the dainties of this life. What I want is God's bread, which is the flesh of Christ, who came from David's line; and for drink I want his blood: an immortal love feast indeed" (7.3). Through his death, he will become a "real disciple of Jesus Christ"; "God's sacrifice" (4.2). In martyrdom, he expects to find Jesus. "Come fire, cross, battling with wild beasts, wrenching of bones, mangling of limbs, crushing of my whole body, cruel tortures of the devil - only let me get to Jesus Christ' That is whom I am looking for - the One who died for us. That is whom I want - the One who rose for us." (5.3-6.1). Martyrdom is the fulfilment of the longing of every Christian: to be configured totally to Christ. It is the fullness of that union with Jesus which we have presented as the constitutive principle of the Christian life. After the time of the martyrs, the early church was to see this ideal fulfilled in virginity, and then in the monastic life.