

# Reconsidering Pauline Juxtaposition of Indicative and Imperative (Romans 6:1-14) in Light of Pauline Apocalypticism

---

TERESA KUO-YU TSUI  
National Chengchi University  
Wenshan District 116, Taipei, Taiwan

As has been generally recognized, Rom 6:1-14 receives its structure from the linking of the indicative (6:2-10) and the imperative (6:11-14).<sup>1</sup> The question arises as to why the indicative is followed by the imperative. As Günther Bornkamm observes, the joining of the indicative and the imperative, characteristic of the Pauline proclamation, seems contradictory: the believers are declared to have separated from sin in Rom 6:2, yet later they are admonished to separate themselves from sin (Rom 6:12-13).<sup>2</sup> As Bornkamm indicates, "the joining of

<sup>1</sup> To name just a few: M.-J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Épître aux Romains* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1916) 149; Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (BZNW 32; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967) 77-78; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (6th ed.; 2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1975) 1:315; L. Alvarez Verdes, *El imperativo cristiano en San Pablo: La tensión indicativo-imperativo en Rom 6. Análisis estructural* (Institución San Jerónimo 11; Valencia: Soler, 1980) 65; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (3 vols.; EKK 6; Zurich: Benziger, 1987) 2:19; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 256; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 380; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 6; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 321; Hendrikus Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1-14," *CBQ* 63 (2001) 664-82, here 664.

<sup>2</sup> Günther Bornkamm, "Baptism and New Life in Paul," in *Early Christian Experience* (trans. Paul L. Hammer; NTL; London: SCM, 1969) 71-86, here 71. As Bornkamm indicates, this kind of tension in joining the indicative with the imperative appears also in Gal 3:27; Rom 13:14; Col

such expressions as those which speak of the redemption that has happened to believers and the admonitions which then call for a resolute fight against sin and a laying hold of the new life” confronts us with the question: “Does not the indicative take away the impact of the imperative, and does not the imperative limit the certainty and validity of the indicative?”<sup>3</sup>

Bornkamm’s aforementioned question rightly points out the issue at stake.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, if the indicative conveys the salvation that has been accomplished for believers and has taken effect on them, then adding the imperative seems redundant.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, if the imperative is indispensable, then what is stated in the indicative becomes only an ideal,<sup>6</sup> or is even reduced to a possibility.<sup>7</sup> The former stance contracts a triumphant, enthusiastic understanding derived from an overrealized eschatology, while the latter stance lacks a present assurance of God’s salvific act in the Christ-event. In praxis, the former leads to inertia on

3:3; Gal 5:25. Owing to limited space, I will confine the scope of this study to the context of Rom 6:1-14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>4</sup> W. D. Dennison (“Indicative and Imperative: The Basic Structure of Pauline Ethics,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 14 [1979] 55-78, esp. 56-68) has offered a brief historical survey concerning the long dispute over this issue. See also Georg Strecker, “Indicative and Imperative according to Paul,” *AusBR* 25 (1987) 60-72, esp. 61-64.

<sup>5</sup> For example, according to Paul Wernle (*Der Christ und die Sünde bei Paulus* [Freiburg: Mohr, 1897] 103-4), the ethic of sinlessness in the indicative stands in contradiction to the ethic of the will in the imperative. Likewise, Heinrich Weinel (*Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments: Die Religion Jesu und des Urchristentums* [3rd ed.; Grundriss der theologischen Wissenschaften 3/2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1921] 322) opines that the indicative alone really corresponds to the moral religion of redemption; the imperative is seen as a relapse into legalism. Hans Windisch (*Taufe und Sünde im ältesten Christentum bis auf Origenes: Ein Beitrag zur alichristlichen Dogmengeschichte* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1908] 167-68, 212) also sees that the Pauline indicative is concerned with an actual deliverance from sin, while the Pauline imperative stands in an unresolvable contradiction to the concept of sinlessness in the indicative. A similar view is expressed by G. M. Styler, “Obligation in Paul’s Christology and Ethics,” in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: In Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule* (ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephan S. Smalley; London: Cambridge University Press, 1973) 175-87, esp. 181: “In Rom. 6 Paul is asserting our effective union with Christ, and arguing that no place is now left in us for sin.” This affirmation, as he continues, is muted by the phrases “consider yourselves alive” in v. 11 and “as dead people raised to life” in v. 13, which “betray the fact that our resurrection is not literal” (p. 182). In my view, Styler’s comment demonstrates the typical misunderstanding of Paul’s message in Romans 6 when Pauline apocalypticism is lost from sight.

<sup>6</sup> Heinrich Julius Holtzmann (*Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie* [2nd ed.; 2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1911] 2:164) indicates that the true grasp of reality belongs to the imperative, whereas the indicative, or the theory of sinlessness, is described as a “himmelstürmende Idealismus” (“heaven-storming idealism”). Cf. H. Lüdemann, *Die Anthropologie des Apostels Paulus und ihre Stellung innerhalb seiner Heilslehre* (Kiel: Universitätsverlag, 1872) 141. Lüdemann is of the opinion that the indicative expresses a bold anticipation of a condition that, in contrast to tenacious reality, can be translated only slowly into the concrete morality of individuals.

<sup>7</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968) 225.

the part of believers or to a "God-does-it-all" attitude in which believers imagine holiness through a kind of "spiritual osmosis," whereas the latter results in moralism or legalism.<sup>8</sup> Neither of these two stances offers a satisfying explanation for the Pauline juxtaposition of indicative and imperative, nor do they provide a sound theological reasoning to put into practice.

In fact, some commentators argue that Pauline juxtaposition of indicative and imperative should be understood as an antinomy in which one of the two expressions is inconsistent.<sup>9</sup> The past attempts to explain the tension that the Pauline antinomy presents, as W. D. Dennison evaluates, are not without their problems.<sup>10</sup> At the end of his study, Dennison himself proposes a union—continuity and intimacy in Paul's juxtaposition of indicative and imperative based on the eschatological conception of the Holy Spirit in place of the dialectical understanding of the Pauline antinomy.<sup>11</sup> Georg Strecker, while detecting two pre-Pauline lines of tradition that may account for the combination of the enthusiastic indicative of salvation and the obligatory imperative, still places the indicative-imperative juxtaposition in Romans 6 in the context of Paul's doctrine of justification and proposes a pneumatological understanding of this dialectical tension.<sup>12</sup> In my view, both of their solutions will find coherence only in Pauline apocalypticism, which is capable of doing justice to both the indicative and the imperative that Paul joins together firmly.<sup>13</sup> In other words, it is in rethinking the whole issue in light of Pauline apocalypticism that we can find the key to understanding the juxtaposition of indicative and imperative in Paul and resolve the tension therein. In this study, I will examine this issue in the context of Rom 6:1-14.

<sup>8</sup> See Moo, *Romans*, 391.

<sup>9</sup> See Rudolf Bultmann, "Das Problem der Ethik bei Paulus," *ZNW* 23 (1924) 123-40; Hans Windisch, "Das Problem des paulinischen Imperativs," *ZNW* 23 (1924) 265-81. "Antinomy" is defined by Bultmann ("Das Problem der Ethik," 123) as statements that contradict each other but still belong together. Bultmann makes a distinction between a logical contradiction and a true contradiction. The latter, which characterizes the Pauline antinomy understood dialectically, is legitimate for Bultmann since the eschatological justification unifies both indicative and imperative. The dissatisfaction with Bultmann's dialectical understanding of the Pauline antinomy has called forth subsequent reactions, for example, Dennison's study in 1979 and Strecker's study in 1987 (see n. 4). In my view, their studies have yet to say the final word on the issue, which needs to be rediscovered in light of Pauline apocalypticism.

<sup>10</sup> See Dennison's evaluation of the different positions in "Indicative and Imperative," 68-78.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-76.

<sup>12</sup> Strecker, "Indicative and Imperative," 68-70.

<sup>13</sup> That the indicative and the imperative are firmly joined is well affirmed by commentators. See Bornkamm, "Baptism and New Life," 71; Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) 175; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ*, 81; Alvarez Verdes, *El imperativo cristiano*, 238. All these commentators affirm that the indicative and the imperative are inseparable, while trying to explain the tension they observe in the juxtaposition of indicative and imperative.

I will first show that reading Rom 6:1-14 in light of Pauline apocalypticism will give us a different understanding of Paul's use of the indicative. That is, Paul's indicative expresses his apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ. The imperative follows the indicative, exhorting believers to cultivate this apocalyptic vision of the new life and live it out. The imperative οὕτως . . . λογιζεσθε ("in this manner . . . consider") in v. 11 signals the mental effort of appropriating the apocalyptic vision that Paul calls for on the part of the Roman Christians. This mental effort is reminiscent of "the renewal of the mind" in 12:2, with which Paul urges them to be transformed. Thus, second, I will consider 12:2 in relation to Romans 6. Third, based on the affirmation that the process of transformation in the present is undergone by way of the νοῦς ("mind"), I will discuss how this transformed mind of believers is related to their transformed life. Fourth, as we arrive at the understanding that Pauline apocalypticism provides the foundation for the integration of the perceptual transformation and the ethical actions, we will be able to reconsider the issue of Pauline juxtaposition of indicative and imperative.

### I. The Apocalyptic Vision of the New Life in Christ: Believers as Transformed People (Romans 6:11, 13)

In a previous study, I demonstrated that Rom 6:5 is to be understood in light of Paul's Jewish apocalyptic mysticism, conveying believers' present transformation in apocalyptic terms.<sup>14</sup> Romans 6:5 is embedded in the wider context of the indicative in 6:2-10, which also envisages believers' present transformation in the new life in Christ. The phrases νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ζώντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ("dead to sin and alive to God") in Rom 6:11 and ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζώντας ("as those who have been brought from death to life") in 6:13 summarize Paul's apocalyptic vision conveyed in the indicative in 6:2-10, namely, believers are transformed people. In what follows, some exegetical explanations for 6:11, 13 will be offered in order to see what Paul envisions believers to be in Christ.

Romans 6:11 serves as a summary of the indicative stated in the previous ten verses and paves the way for the imperative in 6:12-14. James G. Samra identifies λογίζεσθε (the present imperative) as the key word in the transition from vv. 2-10 to vv. 12-14: "This 'reckoning' is a conscious, ongoing (λογίζεσθε is present) mental decision which serves as a bridge between the 'indicative' of 6:2-10 and

<sup>14</sup> Teresa Kuo-Yu Tsui, "Transformation through the Divine Glory in Christ's Death and Resurrection: Rom 6:5 and Phil 3:10,21 in Light of Pauline Mysticism," *LS* 34 (2009) 65-80. In Rom 6:5, Paul speaks of believers' present transformation with Jewish apocalyptic, mystical language. That is, believers, who have been transformed through the divine glory in Christ's death (which put sin to death), will also be transformed through the divine glory in Christ's resurrection (which recreated them in a new life unto God). They are to become glorious, righteous people in anticipation of the future glory of the resurrection.

the 'imperative' of 6:12-14."<sup>15</sup> The verb λογίζομαι means "to reckon, to take into account, to evaluate, to think, to consider, to ponder, to let one's mind dwell on."<sup>16</sup> In Rom 6:11, λογίζομαι signals the conscious effort on the part of humans in appropriating salvation. C. E. B. Cranfield observes that λογίζομαι denotes "a deliberate and sober judgment on the basis of the gospel, a reasoning which is subject to the discipline of the gospel, . . . only recognizable as such by faith."<sup>17</sup> The result of λογίζομαι is to see oneself "as one is revealed to oneself by the gospel," and what one sees serves as the step to realize it in obedience.<sup>18</sup> Waltraud Verlaguet also comments that λογίζομαι concerns a seeing or realization that entails the whole existence of a person and sets one in motion. She remarks further that λογίξεσθε, translated into French as "regardez-vous," is equivalent to "un 'considérez-être' qui détermine l'être ainsi considéré," "une 'considération performative.'"<sup>19</sup> As a word that draws an inference from what precedes, οὕτως means "in this manner, thus, so"<sup>20</sup> and here is employed with reference to Christ. Verlaguet states, "C'est en référence au Christ, mort et cependant vivant, que le croyant est invité à 'se considérer', ce qui équivaut à l'être."<sup>21</sup>

This οὕτως . . . λογίζομαι, the mental effort of dwelling on the revelation by Christ, can bring a new state of affairs with regard to perception. N. T. Wright comments, "When I have completed the 'reckoning', I have not brought about a new state of affairs in the real world outside of my mind; the only new state of affairs is that my mind is now aware of the way things actually are."<sup>22</sup> The perception is transformed through the act of οὕτως . . . λογίζομαι, whereby one's eyes are opened up to a new way of looking at reality. The Roman Christians are exhorted now to consider themselves through the Word who precedes them and has already justified them. Since the Word is Christ, described in the previous verse (v. 10) as the one who died to sin and lives to God, to consider themselves in the same way as Christ is to set themselves into the movement toward the new life of being dead to sin and alive to God. It is the true life they are called to live in Christ Jesus.

Paul's use of λογίξεσθε in the present imperative gives the clue that the men-

<sup>15</sup> James G. Samra, *Being Conformed to Christ in Community: A Study of Maturity, Maturation and the Local Church in the Undisputed Pauline Epistles* (LNTS 320; London/New York: Clark, 2006) 114.

<sup>16</sup> BDAG, 475-76.

<sup>17</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:315.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Waltraud Verlaguet, "La mystique de Paul—le Paul des mystiques," *Foi et Vie* 45 (2006) 53-70, here 69.

<sup>20</sup> BDAG, 597.

<sup>21</sup> Verlaguet, "La mystique de Paul," 69.

<sup>22</sup> N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, vol. 3, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 252. Cf. Morris, *Romans*, 256: "Paul is arguing that his readers should come to see the truth of their situation."

tal effort of appropriating Christ, which Paul urges on the part of believers, is an ongoing process. They are to consider themselves dead to sin and alive to God constantly. The perceptual change that has been initiated is a never-ending, ever-deepening process, whereby believers are forever reminded of who they are in Christ.<sup>23</sup>

The manner in which believers consider themselves in the same way as Christ constitutes the “de-centering” of a looking at the self.<sup>24</sup> Shifting their gaze onto the gospel, they are given a new realization, a different way of looking at themselves. Such a perceptual shift changes life. In other words, in the act of οὕτως . . . λογιζομαι dwells a life-changing vision as revealed by the gospel in believers. That is, they are transformed people, those who are dead to sin and alive to God (6:11). Believers as transformed people are also spoken of in the context of Rom 6:13, which characterizes them as those who have been brought ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας, “from death to life.”<sup>25</sup>

How is the phrase ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας to be understood? First of all, does the word ὡσεὶ in v. 13 mean “as, like,” or “as if”? Some commentators hold that Paul uses ὡσεὶ in the sense of “as, like,”<sup>26</sup> “as you really are,”<sup>27</sup> not “as if (you were),” to speak of the reality that believers are to do Paul’s imperative “as” ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας. In contrast, Ernst Käsemann sees the word ὡσεὶ in the sense of “as if,” which preserves Paul’s eschatological reservation: “Christians participate provisionally in the resurrection of their Lord only in the form of new obedience. Conversely, their service makes known the fact that resurrection power has already taken possession of them and set them in the new life and the new aeon.”<sup>28</sup> A middle position is provided by C. K. Barrett, who tries to combine the sense of “as in fact you are” and “as if you were” in his interpretation of ὡσεὶ: on the one hand; Christians have been raised from the state of death; on the other hand, they are not yet raised to the final resurrection.<sup>29</sup> As Barrett states, “The Roman Christians are manifestly not living the resurrection life of freedom from sin; they are,

<sup>23</sup> As Moo also comments (“Exegetical Notes: Romans 6:1-14,” *Trinity Journal* n.s. 3 [1982] 215-20, here 219), v. 11 signifies a “constant reminding ourselves of ‘who we are.’” Cf. Morris, *Romans*, 256.

<sup>24</sup> Verlaquet, “La mystique de Paul,” 70.

<sup>25</sup> Moo also notices (“Exegetical Notes: Romans 6:1-14,” 220) that v. 13, where Paul reminds believers that they are people who have been brought from death to life, is comparable to v. 11..

<sup>26</sup> Morris, *Romans*, 258.

<sup>27</sup> Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, 178.

<sup>28</sup> Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 177. See also Brendan Byrne and Daniel J. Harrington, *Romans* (SacPag 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) 198; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1979) 139: “to live as though you had already entered the resurrection life.”

<sup>29</sup> C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC; London: Black, 1957) 128. Byrne (*Romans*, 198) also expresses this overlapping situation of the believers: “in contrast

however, commanded to live as if they were already free from sin, since in truth it no longer has any claim upon them; to live as if they were not, in this age, under the bondage of sin and death."<sup>30</sup> In my evaluation, Barrett's view is in fact similar to Käsemann's in that Barrett also entertains the tension of "already . . . not yet" and keeps the eschatological reservation in Paul.

As we can see, the meaning of ὡσεῖ, whether in the sense of "as, like" or of "as if," has to do with how one understands the phrase ἐκ νεκρῶν ζώντας. In Käsemann's interpretation, the phrase ἐκ νεκρῶν ζώντας refers to the resurrection from the dead, and so he construes the word ὡσεῖ in the sense of "as if." The meaning of ἐκ νεκρῶν is crucial in determining the sense of ὡσεῖ and remains to be clarified.

A. J. M. Wedderburn's observation is insightful in this respect. He points out that the phrase ἐκ νεκρῶν in Rom 6:13 at first sight seems to echo the language of resurrection in v. 9—that is, Christ is raised ἐκ νεκρῶν. But the phrase ἐκ νεκρῶν in these two verses should be construed differently in view of the immediate contexts. In v. 9, where the phrase is used with the verb ἐγείρω ("to raise"), it must be translated as "from (among) the dead," whereas in v. 13 it means something like "passed from the state of the dead."<sup>31</sup> The dead in v. 13 are not the company that they have left but are themselves in the former state that they now have left behind. Thus, v. 13 should not be translated as "since you have risen from the realm of the dead to life."<sup>32</sup> Instead, ἐκ νεκρῶν in v. 13 is to be understood as the state from which believers must be saved, a state of lostness, a former sinful existence, a state of death, which is replaced by life.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, ζώντας should be seen in view of v. 11, referring to the state of "being alive to God" of believers in this life.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it is best to construe ἐκ νεκρῶν ζώντας as living people brought from the death of sinful existence, and ὡσεῖ in the sense of "as, like."

With v. 13 Paul urges believers to present themselves to God as transformed people ὡσεῖ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζώντας, that is, living people brought out of their sinful

to the old situation, where they really had to submit to sin's rule, now and hence forth they are free ('in Christ') not to do so."

<sup>30</sup> C. K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Hewett Lectures 1961; London: Black, 1962) 105.

<sup>31</sup> A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against Its Greco-Roman Background* (WUNT 44; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987) 44. As Wedderburn indicates, ἐκ in the former instance has the nuance of "with a group or company from which the separation takes place" (BDAG, s.v. ἐκ §1b), while in the latter instance ἐκ should be understood as "of situations and circumstances out of which someone is brought" (ibid., §1c).

<sup>32</sup> Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection*, 45.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.; see also C. Clifton Black, "Pauline Perspectives on Death in Romans 5–8," *JBL* 103 (1984) 413–33, here 424, in which he describes "death [as] an antecedent, existential experience from which we have been liberated, in order that we might now yield our members as instruments of righteousness."

<sup>34</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 386.

past in which they were dead. The power of resurrection has delivered them up from the state of death, that is, their former existence under sin's dominion. Their "living" (ζῶντας) is a reality here and now, specified in v. 11 as being dead to sin and alive to God, and in v. 4 as walking in newness of life.<sup>35</sup> They live in the eschatological "now," in which they are alive to God under Christ's lordship.

In a nutshell, the revelation of the gospel gives birth to a new perception in believers, spoken of in the context of Rom 6:1-14, that they are transformed people who are dead to sin and alive to God (v. 11), and who have been brought from death to life (v. 13). They may now walk in newness of life (v. 4). In other words, in view of the revelation of God's apocalypse in the Christ-event, Paul in the indicative in 6:2-10 expresses his apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ, which envisions believers as transformed people. Paul then uses the imperative, exhorting believers to get hold of this apocalyptic vision through λογίζομαι. The mental effort of consciously embracing the apocalyptic vision in Paul's imperative here is picked up again in 12:2 by the phrase "the renewal of the mind."<sup>36</sup> It is to this "renewal of the mind" that we now turn.

## II. The Renewal of the Mind (Romans 12:2; cf. 6:11): Cultivating the Apocalyptic Vision of the New Life in Christ

As demonstrated above, Paul in Rom 6:11 urges a mental effort of cultivating the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ on the part of believers with οὕτως . . . λογίεσθε. Dwelling on the apocalyptic vision constitutes a de-centering of looking at oneself and, at the same time, a new way of seeing oneself as revealed by the gospel. Such a consideration transforms the mind anew. In Rom 12:2 also, Paul speaks of transformation through the renewal of the mind. Both passages (6:11 and 12:2) affirm that the process of transformation in the present is underway by way of the νοῦς.

The perceptual transformation through the νοῦς signaled by λογίζομαι in Rom 6:11 is best formulated, in our contemporary terms, as the emergence of a modified consciousness of self.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, the renewal of the mind in Rom 12:2 is concerned with the emergence of a new moral and religious consciousness; it

<sup>35</sup> Boers ("Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1-14," 680) also notices that v. 11 shares parallel features with v. 4e: both are introduced with οὕτως καί, and both express the newness of life in Christ.

<sup>36</sup> Commentators note the connection of Romans 6 and 12 via similarities in vocabulary. See Franz J. Leenhardt, *L'épître de saint Paul aux Romains* (CNT 6; Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1957) 170; Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 106; Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 3:3; Michael Thompson, *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1-15.13* (JSNTSup 59; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 79. But none of them notices that in both places Paul emphasizes this mental aspect, which in my view plays an important role in transformation.

<sup>37</sup> Verlaguet, "La mystique de Paul," 69.



does not refer merely to the intellectual aspect, though certainly it does embrace intellectual pursuits.<sup>38</sup> As H. N. Ridderbos indicates, the renewal of the mind concerns “not so much a matter of thinking in an intellectual sense, but of the new moral and religious consciousness, of the new insight into who God is and what his will is according to his revelation in Christ, and of permitting oneself to be determined thereby.”<sup>39</sup> John T. Koenig is of the same opinion: “τῆ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός defines a metamorphosis which consists of opening oneself again and again to a life-giving vision from the Spirit of God.”<sup>40</sup>

A further examination of Rom 12:2 will show that the renewal of the mind as the way to transformation comes from acquiring and cultivating the apocalyptic vision. The term ἀνακαινώσις (“renewal”) is a cognate of καινότης (“newness”), denoting restoration by the power of Christ, through whom the new creation is inaugurated. The verb ἀνακαινίζω (“to renew”), frequently used in the context of baptismal regeneration, suggests here the meaning of recovery of righteousness through conversion.<sup>41</sup> In Romans, the term ἀνακαινώσις in 12:2 picks up καινότητι ζωῆς (“newness of life”) from 6:4 and καινότητι πνεύματος (“newness of Spirit”) from 7:6.<sup>42</sup> It suggests that the renewal of the mind has to do with the newness revealed and perceived.

The use of νοῦς in the singular is parallel to that in the expression ἀδόκιμος νοῦς (“reprobate mind”) in Rom 1:28.<sup>43</sup> There the original capacity to recognize and respond to truth (1:20) was distorted because of sin (1:28; 7:23, 25). In 12:2, however, the renewal of the mind reverses the ἀδόκιμος νοῦς with the result that

<sup>38</sup> Morris, *Romans*, 435. According to Johannes Behm (“νοῦς,” *TDNT* 4:951-60, here 958), in Rom 12:2 the term νοῦς refers to “the inner direction of [Christians’] thought and will and the orientation of their moral consciousness” in need of being constantly renewed.

<sup>39</sup> Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (London: SPCK, 1977) 228.

<sup>40</sup> John T. Koenig, “The Motif of Transformation in the Pauline Epistles: A History-of-Religions/Exegetical Study” (Th.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1970) 168. See also Heinrich Schlier, “Vom Wesen der apostolischen Ermahnung nach Römerbrief 12:1-2,” in idem, *Die Zeit der Kirche* (4th ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1966) 74-89, here 88: “Die Verwandlung . . . ist also primär und fundamentale eine Erneuerung der Vernunft, die für Paulus nichts anderes als ‘Hinblick auf die Wirklichkeit’, ‘Durchlass zur Wirklichkeit’ ist.”

<sup>41</sup> Johannes Behm, “ἀνακαινίζω,” *TDNT* 3:452; see also Käsemann, *Romans*, 329.

<sup>42</sup> See Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:609; Moo, *Romans*, 756-57 n. 69; Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004) 389; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 733.

<sup>43</sup> Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 130. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor (“Pauline Morality: Moral Discernment,” *Doctrine and Life* 21 [1971] 127-34, esp. 130-31) observes that Paul uses “mind” in the singular to signify his primordial concern for unity in the community. The “being-renewed-mind” refers to the consciousness of the community, which assimilates the behaviors proper to their “being-in-Christ.” Horace E. Stoessel (“Notes on Romans 12:1-2: The Renewal of the Mind and Internalizing the Truth,” *Int* 17 [1963] 161-75, here 164) also refers to this “collective usage” of νοῦς as descriptive of a “common mind” of the group. Jewett (*Romans*, 733) confirms the same idea.

believers might be able to “approve” (δοκιμάζω) the will of God.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the renewal of the mind further elaborates Paul’s use of λογικός in 12:1, which is best translated as “understanding, or reasonable.”<sup>45</sup> The quality λογικός, characteristic of the one who is in the “right mind” or in the right orientation to God, is employed as opposed to the ἀδόκιμος νοῦς in its foolishness of willfully avoiding the truth, “typical of one who is ‘fashioned according to this world’ (Rom 12:2).”<sup>46</sup> This “right-mindedness” is the result of the renewal of the mind, whose newness comes from appropriating the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ. Robert Jewett explains that it is in light of the converted community’s experience of the new creation brought by Christ that the mind is restored to make a realistic appraisal of ethical choices, which then shape the transformation that Paul has in view here.<sup>47</sup>

The use of τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός (“the renewal of the mind”) in the dative is specified as the way with which the believers are urged to be transformed (μεταμορφοῦσθε). Negatively speaking, the renewal of the mind concerns the restoration of the capacity to recognize and respond to truth; positively speaking, it involves gradually opening oneself to a life-giving vision of the Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit (cf. Rom 7:6).<sup>48</sup> The present imperative passive verbs συσχηματίξασθε (“be conformed to”) and μεταμορφοῦσθε (“be transformed”) (Rom 12:2) give clues to the meaning. The passive voice shows that something can be done to believers. The imperative mood suggests that those who are already in the Spirit are still called upon to resist evil by submitting to the Spirit’s working (cf. Rom 8:9-13; Gal 5:25). Though transformation is the work of the Spirit, believers have a responsibility therein, that is, to let themselves be transformed, to respond to the leading of the Spirit. The present tense indicates that the effort urged on the part of believers is to be put forth constantly.<sup>49</sup> The present tense also shows that the transformation “has to be continually repeated, or, rather, it is a process which has to go on all the time the Christian is in this life.”<sup>50</sup>

The verb μεταμορφόομαι is used in contrast to συσχηματίζομαι in the same verse, which expresses conformity with this world. Although some recent commentators do not see a difference between Paul’s use of συσχηματίζομαι and

<sup>44</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 757.

<sup>45</sup> See Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:605: “The intelligent understanding worship, that is, the worship which is consonant with the truth of the gospel, is indeed nothing less than the offering of one’s whole self in the course of one’s concrete living, in one’s inward thoughts, feelings and aspirations, but also in one’s words and deeds.” Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 733.

<sup>46</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, “Pauline Morality,” 130; cf. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 81.

<sup>47</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 733.

<sup>48</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:609; Johannes Behm, “ἀνακαινώσις,” *TDNT* 3:453.

<sup>49</sup> Koenig, “Motif of Transformation,” 165-66; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:607.

<sup>50</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:607.

μεταμορφόομαι here,<sup>51</sup> I think that the distinction between σχῆμα and μορφή preserved in these compounds is meaningful. As noted by J. B. Lightfoot, σχῆμα ("scheme, outward appearance") and its derivatives retain the idea of "instability, changeableness," whereas "the great and entire change of the inner life, otherwise described as being born again, being created anew, is spoken of as a conversion of μορφή always."<sup>52</sup> The former refers to the world's way, which is of the external and fleeting fashion; the latter, on the contrary, involves the inmost nature, which is neither merely outward nor easily dissolving.<sup>53</sup> In Richard Chevenix Trench's words, in Rom 12:2 Paul exhorts the Roman Christians: "Do not fall in . . . with the fleeting fashions of this world, nor be yourselves fashioned to them (μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε), but undergo a deep abiding change (ἀλλὰ μεταμορφούσθε) by the renewing of your mind."<sup>54</sup> It is indeed not accidental that Paul uses μεταμορφόομαι to express the transformation undergone by way of the renewal of the mind. Such a process entails the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ, which belongs not to this world but to that which is glorious from the world to come. And the resultant perceptual transformation, as a complete change under otherworldly influence, is best characterized by μεταμορφόομαι. The transformed mind is not of this world.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the transformation forged by the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ is far from fleeting but rather enduring.

The word αἰών ("age") in Rom 12:2 also reflects Paul's apocalyptic orientation, referring to the evil power that seeks to seize those set free by Christ.<sup>56</sup> According to Jewett, Paul's exhortation μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ in Rom 12:2 echoes the apocalyptic urgency underlying his ethics in 1 Cor 7:31: "the σχῆμα of this world is passing away."<sup>57</sup> Romans 12:2 thus articulates the imperative apocalyptically: instead of allowing themselves to be molded by the σχῆμα of this world, believers now yield themselves to the direction of the Spirit. They are to allow themselves to be continually transformed and remolded in such

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 605-8; Moo, *Romans*, 756; contra Morris, *Romans*, 435; and James D. G. Dunn, *Roman 9-16* (WBC 38B; Dallas: Word, 1988) 712.

<sup>52</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations* (4th ed.; London: Macmillan, 1903) 130.

<sup>53</sup> William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (5th ed.; ICC; New York: Scribner, 1899) 353; Lagrange, *Épître aux Romains*, 294.

<sup>54</sup> Richard Chevenix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (11th ed.; London: Kegan Paul, 1890) 264.

<sup>55</sup> See Morris, *Romans*, 435: "Christians have been introduced into the life of the world to come; what a tragedy, then, if they conform to the perishing world they left." See also Johannes Behm, "μεταμορφόω," *TDNT* 4:759: "In conduct, . . . they must not follow the forms of life in this aeon but the very different form of life in the coming aeon."

<sup>56</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 732; see also Dunn, *Roman 9-16*, 713.

<sup>57</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 732.

a way that their lives “here and now may more and more clearly exhibit signs and tokens of the coming order of God, that order which has already come—in Christ.”<sup>58</sup>

To summarize, both Rom 6:11 and 12:2 affirm that the new life operates in believers by way of the illumination of the *voûç* through Christ.<sup>59</sup> The illumination of the *voûç* through Christ does not originate in the exercise of the human intellect but entails an emergence of religious consciousness, which opens oneself up to the life-giving vision of the Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit, who guides believers’ process of transformation. Believers are first engaged by the life-giving vision of the Spirit; this results in their renewed mind, which subsequently guides their actions in daily life. How the transformed mind is related to ethical action is the main theme of the following section.

### III. The Way to Transformation: Living the Transformed Mind

The life-changing vision as revealed by the gospel, whereby believers consider themselves in the same way as Christ (Rom 6:11), is essential in guiding believers in their daily lives as transformed people (6:11, 13) to walk in newness of life (6:4). There is a perceptual change that takes place, in which believers acquire the new vision, the new perception, or the new way of knowing.<sup>60</sup> What dictates the way they look at reality is no longer *κατὰ σάρκα* (“according to the

<sup>58</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:608; see also Lagrange, *Épître aux Romains*, 294; Morris, *Romans*, 435.

<sup>59</sup> Ridderbos (*Paul*, 228) speaks of the new life as the illumination of the *voûç*.

<sup>60</sup> Studying the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, Christopher Rowland points out that acquiring the new way of knowing plays a prominent role in apocalypticism, which is essentially concerned with the revelation of the divine mysteries—that which is usually hidden from normal human perception (*The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* [London: SPCK, 1982] 9-22; idem, “Apocalyptic, Mysticism, and the New Testament,” in *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag* [ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer; 3 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996] 1:405-30). J. Louis Martyn also has addressed the relationship between apocalypticism and epistemology in Pauline studies; see esp. “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Corinthians 5:16,” in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (ed. W. R. Farmer, C. D. F. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 269-87; idem, “Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *NTS* 31 (1985) 410-24. According to Martyn (“Apocalyptic Antinomies,” 424 n. 28), apocalypticism involves “the conviction that God has now given to the elect true perception both of present developments (the real world) and of a wondrous transformation in the near future . . . the birth of a new way of knowing both present and future, and . . . the certainty that neither the future transformation, nor the new way of seeing both it and present developments, can be thought to grow out of the conditions in the human scene.” Paul is in line with the Jewish apocalyptic tradition in which the apocalyptic seer thinks of another dimension to human existence that is normally hidden from sight but revealed to the favored few.

flesh") (2 Cor 5:16; cf. 1:12).<sup>61</sup> Rather, the freedom that they perceived in the revelation of the new creation rules. The way they look at themselves and at the world is thus de-centered and replaced by a new way of knowing. As demonstrated above, this new way of knowing in the context of Romans 6 is spelled out in Paul's apocalyptic vision as summarized in 6:11, 13: believers are "dead to sin and alive to God," "brought from death to life."

This perceptual shift cannot take place without the power of the Word, which precedes believers and engages them. It is God's powerful invasion in the apocalypse of the Christ-event that makes possible the perceptual transformation in believers. According to Martyn, Paul sees that God has intervened in human history by a powerful invasion through the sending of the Son (Gal 4:4).<sup>62</sup> God's apocalypse in the Christ-event draws human beings into the orb of God's sovereignty, where God's power works through human beings to accomplish God's purpose. Paul's proclamation centers on the sovereignty of God at the turn of the ages: that is, the inauguration of the new aeon in the midst of the old aeon that is passing away.<sup>63</sup> In the sovereignty of God, one's eyes are opened up to see the new creation and one's place in it as God's sovereign act of election. Having acquired the apocalyptic vision at this juncture of the ages, believers are to live in the present their new perception, their transformed mind.<sup>64</sup>

Apocalyptic perception thus has a prominent place in the ethical life of believers.<sup>65</sup> The transformed mind shaped by the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ is prior to the ethical action and serves as the basis of it. The apocalyptic truth that Paul proclaims does not depend on any human decision and cannot be compromised by human work.<sup>66</sup> Rather, it is the spring whence the

<sup>61</sup> See Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages," esp. 284-86, where he describes this perceptual shift in the context of 2 Cor 5:16.

<sup>62</sup> Continuing the thesis developed by Ernst Käsemann ("The Beginning of Christian Theology," *Journal for Theology and the Church* 6 [1969] 17-46) and J. Christiaan Beker (*Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* [Edinburgh: Clark, 1980]), Martyn ("Apocalyptic Antinomies," 411, 421 n. 4) affirms that Paul's theology is thoroughly apocalyptic.

<sup>63</sup> Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages," 274.

<sup>64</sup> See Alexandra R. Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation: Paul's Apocalyptic Word in 1 Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) esp. 149-69. Brown speaks of the perceptual transformation as the basis of the ethical life. According to her, Paul's apocalyptic discourse promotes a new way of being in the world by eliciting a new way of knowing "according to the cross."

<sup>65</sup> Brown (*Cross and Human Transformation*, 154) speaks of "an ethic of apocalyptic perception," relating Paul's apocalyptic epistemology to his view of daily life.

<sup>66</sup> As Martyn indicates ("From Paul to Flannery O'Connor with the Power of Grace," in idem, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* [Edinburgh: Clark, 1997] 279-97, here 283), Paul's apocalyptic theology should not be domesticated by the term "ethics," since apocalypticism is first and foremost an epistemological category. He thus cautions against a simplistic use of the term "decision."

Christian ethical decision and action originate. In Alexandra R. Brown's words, "for Paul the action that follows perceptual transformation is not a human decision to do what the Word says . . . but rather a living out of what the Word has done in the saying"—that is, "to live the freedom one sees."<sup>67</sup>

Thus, the driving force for Christian ethics is nothing else than the apocalyptic perception, shaped by the apocalyptic truth that Paul proclaims in the indicative. In reflecting on the significance of Pauline apocalypticism for theological ethics, Nancy J. Duff also concludes that what characterizes Christian ethics is not knowing what is good but knowing who is our Lord. She comments, "Christ is not a static ideal or principle. Christ is the living Lord who draws us into a new orbit of power."<sup>68</sup> First and foremost, it is to be drawn into freedom by the revelation of the new creation. Believers are then compelled to "dislocate from the world of sin and death and to be relocated in the new creation."<sup>69</sup> They are no longer enslaved to the powers of "the present evil age" (Gal 1:4). They are called to define themselves by their concrete actions, which sphere of power directs their lives. That is to say, believers, having been drawn into the reign of Christ, lead their ethical lives accordingly, and their actions then signify the new aeon that has captured them.<sup>70</sup>

The power that captured them is not the power defined by this world. Rather, it is the power of divine love manifested in the crucified One. Earlier in the letter, Paul identifies the crucified One as the One who rectifies the ungodly (4:5), who did not die only for the righteous but even for sinners (5:8), who himself died to sin and lives to God (6:10). God's invading apocalypse of love in the crucifixion of the Messiah manifests the power of God's grace and calls faith into existence.<sup>71</sup> Faith, in which believers' eyes are first opened up to God's apocalypse by grace, further nurtures their apocalyptic vision. Without the eye of faith, they cannot see, as Paul does, the apocalyptic vision that new life has been inaugurated through Christ's death and resurrection. What the indicative envisions remains hidden, even concealed to the mundane eye.

In the present, believers are being called proleptically by Paul's apocalyptic vision into the realm of freedom announced by that vision. The recognition of God as love compels believers to live out the freedom they have perceived with the action of love. Being seized by the Word, believers cannot but live out the salvation that the Word brought forth to them. Doing otherwise would be a

<sup>67</sup> Brown, *Cross and Human Transformation*, 167, 169.

<sup>68</sup> Nancy J. Duff, "The Significance of Pauline Apocalyptic for Theological Ethics," in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards; JSNTSup 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) 279-96, here 291.

<sup>69</sup> Brown, *Cross and Human Transformation*, 154.

<sup>70</sup> Duff, "Significance of Pauline Apocalyptic," 292.

<sup>71</sup> Martyn, "From Paul to Flannery O'Connor," 288.

betrayal of the One who calls them upward to the goal in Christ Jesus (cf. Phil 3:14). The only proper response to the One who captured them into the divine orb is to live out with fidelity what has been revealed to them and has moved them as the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ. This means that believers are constantly to cultivate this apocalyptic vision so that their actions will be rooted in that real source whence Christian ethics originates. Their transformed life is founded on their transformed perception shaped by the apocalyptic vision. It is by means of actively hearing the gospel preached that believers, in the spirit of gratitude and celebration, continuously appreciate this apocalyptic vision as a gift of faith, further cultivate it, and make it bear fruit in ethical life.

From this ethic of apocalyptic perception, we have come to understand that Paul's apocalyptic vision, which the indicative announces, initiates a perceptual shift on the part of believers; his imperative exhorts to concrete actions in accordance with the perceptual shift and thus strengthens the perceptual shift. This insight will shed light on the Pauline indicative-imperative juxtaposition, which is reconsidered in the next section.

#### IV. Pauline Juxtaposition of Indicative and Imperative Reconsidered

As demonstrated above, in the scheme of Pauline apocalypticism, the indicative does not mean that sin and death have been empirically eradicated; rather, it envisages an apocalyptic vision in which sin and death have lost their lordship to Christ. Believers, having their perception transformed by the apocalyptic truth that Paul proclaims, have henceforth the freedom to live as transformed people. As a consequence, their actions flow from the freedom they have perceived and reflect the quality of this freedom. The renewed mind is the foundation of their life of transformation. The way to transformation ultimately lies in acquiring and cultivating the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ, which has engaged them in Paul's proclamation.

In my view, when the seeming antinomy in the indicative-imperative juxtaposition is reconsidered in light of Pauline apocalypticism, the issue is resolved. Pauline apocalypticism can best explain the indicative-imperative juxtaposition. In fact, seen in light of Pauline apocalypticism, the indicative and the imperative are not merely juxtaposed but rather are firmly joined as a coherent and dynamic whole. Paul's joining of the indicative and the imperative is rooted in his apocalypticism as an integration of epistemology and ethics.<sup>72</sup> The indicative conveys Paul's apocalyptic vision revealed by God's apocalypse in the Christ-event. It

<sup>72</sup> Brown (*Cross and Human Transformation*, 167) also speaks of an integration of epistemology and ethics in the context of 1 Corinthians, where she defines epistemology and ethics as knowing and acting according to the cross.

then sets in motion a perceptual transformation that takes place on the epistemological level, which makes possible a change in the actual ethical life.<sup>73</sup> In other words, Paul's apocalyptic vision, which the indicative conveys, liberates believers' perceptions and motivates their behaviors, while Paul's imperative exhorts believers to behaviors befitting the apocalyptic vision that has already set believers in motion.

The antinomy that past commentators have seen reflects their misunderstanding of the indicative when it is understood apart from Pauline apocalypticism. They confound the indicative as what has been realized or accomplished empirically. Consequently, the imperative seems superfluous. When, conversely, the imperative is deemed to be indispensable, the indicative becomes insignificant. The salvation that the indicative announced then appears less assured.

In order to resolve the antinomy, Protestant commentators have relocated the indicative to the level of imputed righteousness, or imputed justice.<sup>74</sup> The indicative then appeals to believers, in Douglas J. Moo's words, "to translate that judicial *fact* into day to day reality."<sup>75</sup> In a similar vein, Strecker states, "Paul does not promote an ethic of sinlessness. Instead, he derives from the imputed sinlessness before God the task of acting blamelessly and innocently as children of God."<sup>76</sup> In my opinion, the imputed justice that Protestant commentators have in view is akin to what we designated as the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ, though in their terms it lacks a dynamic understanding that is possible only when reflected apocalyptically. Moreover, the judicial category is actually not alien to Pauline apocalypticism; rather, it is embedded therein.<sup>77</sup> It informs the apocalyptic vision or the life-giving vision of the Spirit, which initiates the transformation by engaging and propelling believers in the first place. The actual existence of believers has been transformed as opposed to what the theology of imputed justice supposes believers' existence to be.

Therefore, I propose to speak of the apocalyptic vision of the new life in

<sup>73</sup> See *ibid.*, 15-16.

<sup>74</sup> According to Jack T. Sanders (*Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975] 55-56), the indicative states what God imputes to human beings, and the justified fall under the derived imperative to live in accordance with the existence God has imputed to them. Dennison ("Indicative and Imperative," 78) comments that "what we do . . . is grounded solely upon the imputation of the obedience and sanctification of Jesus Christ. The imperative must always be viewed in this light."

<sup>75</sup> Moo, "Exegetical Notes: Romans 6:1-14," 219 (*italics his*).

<sup>76</sup> Strecker, "Indicative and Imperative," 69.

<sup>77</sup> Martinus C. de Boer ("Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology," in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament* [ed. Marcus and Soards], 182) contends that there were two tracks of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology (i.e., cosmological apocalyptic eschatology and forensic apocalyptic eschatology) that were prominent in Paul's time and influenced his thought. The elements of forensic apocalyptic eschatology clearly dominate in Rom 1:1-5:11, on which the theology of imputed justice is based.



Christ in place of the judicial category. In this way, one can avoid the pessimistic implications of the theology of imputed justice.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, one can prevent seeing salvation as a static, already-accomplished fact that demands an impossible effort on the part of believers to be translated into concrete morality. Rather, we will be reminded that the apocalyptic vision that Paul's gospel proclaims emerges from Paul's apocalypticism, which puts forward human transformation in a dynamic process in response to God's salvation as revealed in God's apocalypse. In other words, seeing imputed justice in the light of Pauline apocalypticism, we will be guided by a dynamic understanding of salvation in which God's apocalypse is co-opted by human appropriation toward the final completion.<sup>79</sup>

In light of Pauline apocalypticism, we see that the indicative expresses Paul's apocalyptic vision, which initiates the perceptual change on the part of believers. Following the indicative, Paul immediately elaborates the imperative to exhort believers to the conduct that befits what they perceive in the indicative. When believers live out the new perception in their ethical lives, "[t]he indicative is realized in the concrete world of the imperative by which it is demonstrated that the indicative actually is a reality." In other words, "[t]he outworking of the imperative in everyday existence reveals that the indicative is truly operating."<sup>80</sup>

## V. Conclusion

In this study, I took as my point of departure the conundrum of why Paul juxtaposes the indicative and the imperative in the context of Rom 6:1-14. The tension or the Pauline antinomy that past commentators have seen in the juxtaposition of indicative and imperative can be resolved only by reading the passage in light of Pauline apocalypticism. The apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ, which the indicative conveys, captures believers into the reign of Christ characterized by freedom and serves as the locus whereby Paul articulates the imperative that subsequently guides believers' actions. This can be seen in the context of Rom 6:1-14, where Paul, following the indicative of vv. 2-10, urges believers to get hold of the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ through λογίζομαι, leading up to the concrete actions exhorted in vv. 12-14. The indica-

<sup>78</sup> The theology of imputed justice as suggested by Protestant commentators has been known to be pessimistic in that it supposes that sinful human nature is not altered by God's justifying deeds. Being justified is an imputed existence according to which believers must live their lives. It thus is a nearly insurmountable task for believers to translate imputed justice into reality.

<sup>79</sup> The tension of "already . . . not yet" in Christian life is well reflected in Paul's juxtaposition of indicative and imperative: the indicative, or the apocalyptic vision of the new life in Christ in Romans 6, conveys the aspect of "already" in salvation; the imperative expresses the idea of "not yet," which then requires the ongoing effort of appropriating the apocalyptic vision on the part of believers to be transformed.

<sup>80</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 321.

tive, which conveys what Paul envisions believers to be in Christ, can be summarized as νεκρούς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ (6:11) and ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας (6:13). A perceptual change has taken place in perceiving the indicative, which is to be continuously cultivated as Paul's exhortation in 6:11 (οὕτως . . . λογίζεσθε) shows. The use of λογίζεσθε in the present imperative signifies that believers are consciously to embrace the apocalyptic vision constantly. This is confirmed by Paul's imperative in 12:2, where believers are admonished to be transformed by the renewal of the mind. Again, the perceptual transformation undergone in the renewal of the mind is suggested as the way to transformation. That the transformed mind forms the basis of the transformed life demonstrates the integration of epistemology and ethics in Pauline apocalypticism. Understood in light of Pauline apocalypticism, Paul's juxtaposition of indicative and imperative can no longer be seen as an antinomy; rather, both indicative and imperative are well integrated in Pauline apocalypticism as a coherent and dynamic whole.

Copyright of Catholic Biblical Quarterly is the property of Catholic Biblical Association of America and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.