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A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

II.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS
OF FAITH.

THE Epistle to the Romans contains three great paradoxes, one in each of its main doctrinal sections. The paradox of the first section is justification by faith; the present paper may, it is hoped, contribute something toward its interpretation. The second section lays down the paradox that the Christian as such is not under law, but under grace. This will be the subject of a future paper. The third paradox is that of God in history (Rom. ix.-xi. and iii. 1-8); God's purpose is served even by man's sinful acts; by the fall of Israel salvation came to the Gentiles. It may be attempted, as a close to these studies, to consider this most difficult paradox of all.

I.

Before considering justification by faith, or, as St. Paul calls it, the righteousness of faith, there is an arduous problem to be dealt with. We must begin by considering the great difficulty of the Epistle—St. Paul's conception of the righteousness of God as the specific thing which the Gospel, and the Gospel alone, reveals. To understand what St. Paul meant by it, and how his conception of it supplies—as it certainly does in some way—the source of the righteousness accorded to sinful man in Christ—to understand this is to hold the key to this Epistle and to much else besides.

In the ordinary interpretation of the Epistle the righteousness of God appears as little more than a foil to His mercy. God redeems us—or accepts a ransom from His Son—in spite of His righteousness, that is, in spite of His strict

justice, which in itself only regards sinners as objects of punishment. This justice of God was not indeed unknown antecedently to Christ, but it was not fully realised. Only the stupendous fact that nothing short of the death of the sinless Son of God sufficed to win pardon for man taught us the full depth of God's just intolerance of sin. The death of Christ, then, not only did for us what we could never have done for ourselves—presented a perfect human obedience to God, carried the sins of our entire race into the holiest, and made them as though they had not been—but, in addition, it furnished man with an object lesson in the enormity of sin in God's sight, prevented our ever construing the pardoning mercy of God as easy indifference to guilt, manifested God as absolutely, rigidly just, in spite of His unrestricted amnesty to all who should believe in His Son—*εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ*.

Now the question is, not whether this is true, for in any case there is much truth in it, but whether it adequately corresponds to what St. Paul says of the righteousness of God as the specific and cardinal point of the gospel revelation. I think it can hardly be said to do so, even approximately. The gospel reveals the redemption of man by the atoning work of our Saviour: that is, the *εὐαγγέλιον*. If we regard that work primarily as the satisfaction, or the overcoming, of the strict justice of God by the work of Christ, then the *righteousness* (*i.e.* strict justice) of God is *assumed* by the gospel, not revealed, and what it reveals is not the justice of God, but the fact that His justice no longer bars the way to the pardon of the sinner. If we take the other ground indicated above, and find the revelation of God's righteousness, not in the fact of redemption, but in the safeguarding of that fact by a reminder of the conditions under which alone it was possible, then we identify St. Paul's cardinal revelation of the gospel with

what is, after all, a lesson to man, rather than "a mystery transacted in the highest heaven," with an exhibition of God's indignation against sin rather than a propitiation in the true sense of the word.

Once again, this ordinary interpretation misses the contrast, signally characteristic of this section of the Epistle, between the wrath of God and the righteousness of God. The two are contrasted as light and darkness; men lie under the wrath of God as in the valley of the shadow of death; and knowing only of His wrath, the *εὐαγγέλιον*, the joyful news which reveals the righteousness of God, strikes on them as the ray of a rising sun. The perfectly true and most necessary foil for the *εὐαγγέλιον*, the truth of God's hatred of sin, which most commentators on this Epistle find in the conception of God's righteousness, is really furnished by the conception of God's *wrath*. Man is already, before the gospel, confronted with this in its awful and solemn certainty; "the law worketh wrath"; man is arraigned before God as a culprit—*ὑπόδικος*—without a plea; the *εὐαγγέλιον* comes indeed as light into a dark place.

This is so evidently true that it has affected the exegetical tradition of the primary passage: chap. i. 17. It has been recognised as so impossible that St. Paul could have regarded the righteousness of God—understood as His punitive justice—as the specific revelation of the *εὐαγγέλιον*, the welcome message of Christ, that the great mass of interpreters have departed from the clear symmetry and parallelism of i. 16, 17, and have understood the phrase *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in the latter verse, not of the righteousness of God, but of the new God-given righteousness (in effect the justification, the pardon) of man. This gives a sense simple, and in itself perfectly true. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to whomsoever believeth, because in it there is revealed the pardon of man (the way

to favour with God, "*a righteousness of God,*" R.V.), on the ground and condition of faith. This sense, I say, is most true. But is it the sense St. Paul meant to convey here? Does it really sound the depth of his meaning? I think not. The main ground for thinking that it does is, in the language of iii. 21, 22, *δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως*, etc.; faith on man's part is the *instrument* (*διὰ*) of the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*, *i.e.* this *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* comes about by means of faith, which one could hardly expect to be said of *the righteousness of God*; and this consideration is fortified by such a passage as Philippians iii. 9 (A.V.). But yet the plain structure of the clear-cut clauses of i. 16, 17 has to be broken through if we are to rest satisfied with this plausibly easy explanation,¹ and other considerations throw a decisive weight into the scale. Chief among these is the fundamental Old Testament conception of the righteousness of God.

II.

The New Testament throughout presupposes a conception of God rather than builds a new conception from the foundations. In other words, it presupposes the Old Testament doctrine of God. The New Testament, of course, completes and advances upon the Old in this as in other respects. But unless we penetrate below the surface of the Old Testament, we can but imperfectly follow the meaning of the New.

It is characteristic, not only of St. Paul, but of our Lord, that they resolutely break with the Jewish traditional theology, and appeal from it to the Old Testament itself. This is conspicuous with respect to three fundamental Old Testament attributes of God—His holiness, His righteousness, and His "lovingkindness." Judaism rested upon

¹ See the article by Dr. Barmby, the lamented friend of the present writer, in the *EXPOSITOR* for August, 1896.

the idea of the *ceremonial holiness* of Jehovah, to which the ceremonial holiness of His worshippers must correspond. It conceived of God's *righteousness* as *retributive*, demanding legal righteousness on the part of His servants. God's lovingkindness (*hesed*, *pietas*) was construed in terms of national privilege, and its counterpart in the faithful was the fierce loyalty of the *hasidim*, the immediate spiritual predecessors of the Pharisees, "zealots for the law." Judaism, as a system of organized religious morality, was a remarkable phenomenon in the society of the ancient world. Judaism had grasped, in a very definite and narrow form no doubt, the leading Old Testament attributes of God, and that principle of reciprocity which brings each divine attribute into intimate relation with the personal religious life of the worshipper. But this relation, and the conception of God presupposed by it, was in each case brought within the ready apprehension of the scribe and his hearers, at the cost of being fatally narrowed and impoverished.

The great difference was that Judaism was stationary, while Old Testament religion was progressive. If the new revelation was to fulfil the promise of the old, Judaism must be set aside and continuity recovered with the religion of the Old Testament. And this was done.

The attributes of God in the Old Testament are not His abstract qualities, such as theology might deduce by analysing the idea of an absolutely perfect being. They are *revealed* attributes, *i.e.* in effect the concrete manifestations of the Divine character impressed upon the religious instincts of Israel by their *experience*—not by revelation in words, but by revelation in facts—"Our fathers have told us the mighty acts which Thou hast done in the time of old"; "I am Jehovah thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." To learn the Old Testament conception of God we must look for His char-

acter mirrored in the religious consciousness of Israel, as it was moulded by slow degrees throughout a long and varied course of history. The unchanging tenacity of Judaism is only the slowly-gained result of a long process; the clay was soft originally, and took impressions from everything it touched: "As the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in My hand, O House of Israel." Now the sterner attributes of God are certainly conspicuous in the Old Testament. The fundamental conception here is that of His Holiness. That is the formula which throughout the Old Testament appeals to religious awe. To gather up briefly the result of much that might be said on this subject, the idea of holiness is in its rude germ correlative to the instinct of danger. The Divine Being, together with all persons and things standing in close relation with Him, is dangerous, may not be tampered with without peril. The burning bush, the burning mount of Sinai, the ark gazed at at Bethshemesh or rashly supported by Uzzah, the vessels and sacrifices of the sanctuary, all are "most holy," most dangerous if approached without the prescribed precautions. In this sense the men of Bethshemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy God Jehovah?"

This, I say, is the idea in its rude germ—a germ traceable in the history of religion all over the world, and persistent in all the Old Testament history of the conception of ceremonial holiness. But what was distinctive of the idea in its Old Testament form was the readiness with which it became the vehicle of ethical teaching.

The idea of Jehovah as morally holy, invested sin with the terrors of sacrilege. To dwell near Jehovah, or enter into reciprocal relation with Him, involved a moral demand (Ps. xv. 1, etc.); and when it is necessary to express most strongly the divine intolerance of sin and the certainty of punishment, it is the divine holiness that is appealed to: "He is an holy God, He is a jealous God, He will not

forgive your transgressions nor your sins" (Josh. xxiv. 19). The idea of *transcendence*, which is implicit even in the crudest conception of divine holiness, was from very early times conceived by the teachers of the chosen people as *moral transcendence*, demanding on the part of the worshipper not only ceremonial but moral conditions of approach—in a word, complete moral self-dedication (Josh. xxiv. 15, 21, 24; Lev. xix. 2).

There are passages in the Prophets where the idea of divine holiness reaches an even loftier level. The absolute transcendence of God will be shown not in His stern retribution, but in His unlooked-for mercies. "I will not execute the fierceness of My anger: I will not destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee" (Hos. ii. 9). "The Holy One of Israel, the Saviour" (Isa. xliii. 3; cf. lvii. 15 *seq.*).

But such passages are the exception. It is, on the whole, with the divine holiness that the divine wrath against sin, and the punishment of the sinner, are in the Old Testament organically connected. (Compare Amos ii. 7; Isa. i. 4, v. 24; Lev. x. 2, 3.) The divine "jealousy" and "holiness" are associated ideas (Josh. xxiv. 19 *supra*), and the "jealousy" of God is closely akin to His wrath against sin. The whole progress of Old Testament revelation shows the powerful part played by the conception of holiness, refined and spiritualized as it was by many channels of divine teaching, in vindicating and enforcing the sterner moral attributes of God.

On the other hand, there is that most profound and tender attribute of God, His mercy, lovingkindness, graciousness, mirrored in the holiness, loyalty, piety of His people (Ps. xviii. 25)—all synonyms for rendering the same Hebrew word, *hesed*, the quality *pietas*, *hasid* the concrete, *pius* the parental *pietas* of God, the filial *pietas* of His servants, the sure "mercies" of David, "thy holy

one" who is not to see corruption—words specially prominent in Prophets and Psalms, and which emphasize a *reciprocal* relation of God to His people—on His part, a character which has commanded unswerving trust; on theirs, a character instinct with personal devotion and trusting fidelity, true in the midst of apostasy, like the *hasidim* who fought under the Maccabees.

III.

Now the Old Testament conception of God as righteous has more in common with the latter than with the former range of ideas. It occurs almost exclusively in the Prophets and Hagiographa, never in the legal portions of the Pentateuch. Speaking generally, the punitive aspect of the divine righteousness occupies in the Old Testament a very subordinate place. We have the great punitive prophecy of Isaiah v. 16, etc., "God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness," where, however, the scourge is thought of as the necessary step to salvation. Again, the judicial righteousness of God is linked with His anger in Psalm vii. 9, 11. But punitive *righteousness* is most commonly coupled with the idea of "avenging" or delivering the innocent party to the cause (Ps. lxxii. 2, 4, xciv., xi., ciii. 6, ix. 4).

It is improbable that St. Paul, in his use of the expression "righteousness of God," can be building upon the very few Old Testament passages which link together what he is so strongly contrasting, namely, the divine righteousness and the divine wrath, especially as his language in Romans i. 16, 17 is demonstrably coloured by some of the much larger class of passages which present God's righteousness in a different and more characteristic light. To begin with, we find in passages like Jeremiah x. 24 (cf. Dan. ix. 16) God's righteousness *counteracting* His punitive

anger (see Ps. vi. 1, xxxviii. 1). In such cases punishment is merely subsidiary to a further purpose, which Jehovah pursues because He is righteous. This purpose is the ultimate salvation of His people—a purpose manifested in His “righteous acts” in the time of old (Judg. v. 11; 1 Sam. xii. 7; perhaps Ps. xxii. 21), and confirmed by each successive fulfilment of express or implicit promise. “Thou madest a covenant . . . and hast performed Thy words, for Thou art righteous” (Neh. ix. 8).

The generic idea of righteousness as a personal quality is that of conformity to personal obligations. The form which this conformity assumes depends upon the obligation in question, which in turn depends upon the position of the moral agent. A lawsuit, *e.g.*, aims at establishing the rights of the parties; the successful party comes out triumphantly *δίκαιος* (Ps. li. 4). The judge is the “avenger,” in one sense, of the law; in another sense, of the innocent or injured party (Ps. lxxii. 2, 4). Now God in Himself is subject to no “obligation” except that of His own inscrutable Being—that is His “Law.” But it has pleased Him to enter into relations with men, and to manifest a purpose and a will in regard to them. So far as this is true God has imposed an “obligation” upon Himself, to which, in virtue of His righteousness, He will adhere. Hence the relation of God to His people is represented in the Old Testament as a *covenant*, with the divine righteousness as its underlying principle, and the righteousness of faith (Rom. x. 6; cf. Hab. ii. 4) as its correlative, a conception to which St. Paul makes appeal as against the purely contractual relation of legal righteousness on man’s part, retributive righteousness on God’s part, to which Judaism had narrowed it down.

The righteousness of faith, as St. Paul perceived and claimed, finds utterance in the Old Testament; and its correlative, the saving righteousness of a God who differs

from all other gods in this one thing, that He will accomplish for them that wait for Him (Isa. liv. 4, R. V. ; 1 Cor. ii. 9 ; comp. lxiii. 1 with xlv. 20), occupies a place of great prominence in the Old Testament theology.

This is, I am convinced, the link which explains the prominent correlation, in the Prophets and Psalmists, of God's righteousness and God's saving power—a correlation which was certainly in St. Paul's mind when he wrote Romans i. 16, 17. . . . τὸ εὐαγγέλιον· δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν . . . Δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται κτλ. : comp. Psalm xcvi. 2, ἐγνώρισεν κύριος τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ . . . ἀπεκάλυψεν τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ : also Isaiah li. 5, 8, lvi. 1, and numerous other passages, some already quoted. The correspondence of language has been long admitted. What is here contended is simply that it is based on a profound correspondence of *thought*, to which justice has yet to be done. This impression may be deepened by the consideration of many other passages, especially in the Psalms and Prophets, which tend to couple the divine righteousness with the divine *pietas* (*hesed*) and its cognate attributes (e.g. Ps. xxxvi. 10, xxxiii. 4, 5, xl. 10, lxxxix. 16, 17, cxliii. 1 ; Jer. ix. 24 ; Hos. ii. 19). Genesis xix. 19 (LXX.) is one of an interesting group of passages specially relevant to the associations attaching to *δικαιοσύνη* in Biblical Greek, which led to its being used in some cases to translate *hesed*.

The correlation thus amply manifest in the religious consciousness of prophet and psalmist, between God's righteousness and His saving grace, turns rather upon the truth of God as it appeals to faith than upon the exact nature of the salvation or deliverance looked for from time to time. The history of the latter exhibits a long ascent from deliverances mainly physical (though there is a moral side from the first, e.g. in the deliverance from Egypt) toward the hope for such deliverance as is assured in the

name Jesus (Matt. i. 21). But to St. Paul, *the faith* to which appeal was made was all along the same (Rom. iv. 17-24).

The prevalent interpretation of St. Paul's conception of God's righteousness—*e.g.*, in iii. 25, 26—explains it as that which constrains God to punish, His avenging justice. The view suggested in this paper is that St. Paul, influenced directly and consciously by the thought and language of the Old Testament, regarded the righteousness of God as that which pledged Him to save—not as though the inherent, abstract righteousness of God could necessitate His intervention for the salvation of man, but because God had from the first made Himself known to man as a Saviour, because His whole antecedent dealings with His people had tended to evoke trustfulness on man's part, were one promise of salvation, and only when that promise was carried out was His righteousness an accomplished fact—*εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα*, righteous *and* therefore righteous-making.

This question has yet to be fully thought out. Signs are not wanting that the prevalent interpretation of i. 17 will not maintain itself in the future.¹ And if so, the righteousness of God in that verse will not suffer itself to be divorced from the righteousness of God in iii. 25, 26. And if so, again, it will be necessary to satisfy St. Paul's conception of the righteousness of God, not as the obstacle redemption has had to overcome, but as the operative cause of our redemption—as the very core and central point of the gospel message, the *εὐαγγέλιον*. And this will, I think, be done by bringing to bear on St. Paul's thought a deep, wide, sympathetic induction from a critically, reverently read Old Testament.

¹ See, in addition to Dr. Barmby's paper already referred to, Dr. Sanday's discussion in his Commentary, and Häring's essay (Tübingen, 1896).

IV.

The direct purpose, then, of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ was, to St. Paul, not the overcoming, but the realisation of the righteousness of God; but that meant also the salvation, and therefore the righteous-making of man—*εἰς τὸ εἶναι, κτλ.*

How, then, do these two stand related? or rather, how is it that they are so closely related that St. Paul in his language seems at times to glide from one to the other without any consciousness that he is speaking of (what to us appear) two such very different things?

In i. 16, 17 the righteousness of God and the salvation of man are indissolubly connected; or rather the revelation to man of God's righteousness is his salvation. How so? The answer lies in the words *πάντι τῷ πιστεύοντι*, and again *ἐκ πίστεως*. The mere abstract speculative knowledge of God's righteousness in Christ, however deeply conceived, will not remove the cloud of God's wrath from the soul, will not justify man. The gospel is God's power unto salvation to whomsoever *believeth*; the righteousness of God is revealed, as the welcome message, only to those who approach God by the way of faith, *ἐκ πίστεως*; and *εἰς πίστιν*, the revelation comes *to faith*; where faith is not, it does not come at all.

St. Paul might have said, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, etc.," because in it the *salvation* of God is revealed from faith to faith. But, true as that would be, it yet would not convey all that lies in the word "righteousness." Salvation might have been revealed from God suddenly, unprepared for, to a race who had experienced no previous dealing of God with them in the past; salvation is a divine act simply; there is no reciprocity about it. But the *righteousness* of God, as St. Paul received the idea from the Old Testament, was saturated

with the idea of reciprocity, of the faithfulness of God and the trust of man in close constant living response one to the other. The righteousness of God came home only to his pious loyal ones, to the faithful; to others it had no meaning (Ps. li. 14, lxxi. 15, 16; contrast lxix. 27). Again, while an unknown, unpledged God might conceivably save, to speak of such salvation as an act of righteousness implied a long past, the word was charged with the implicit prophecy and promise of the whole course of Israel's history.

Self-fulfilment of God's declared character, reciprocity as between God and man—these were the two thoughts, as it appears, most prominent in St. Paul's view of the gospel as the revelation of the righteousness of God. Of these two ideas, the first has been discussed; we turn to the second.

The Old Testament conception of God as righteous, as we have seen, has its full significance only when viewed in relation to the thoughts, expectations, feelings, which His people have learned to entertain about Him. Reciprocity clings about it, it has affinity with the conception of the divine "pietas," *hesed*, and through it with the idea of the *hasid*, the typical Old Testament saint. In the Old Testament the righteousness of God and the righteousness of the faithful are reciprocally correlated, and the medium of their correlation is faith—*ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται*. St. Paul has seized a fundamental characteristic of Old Testament religion quite passed over by the Judaism of his day. And this Old Testament correlation of the righteousness of God with the righteousness of the faithful, in St. Paul's hands, becomes applied to the New Testament. *Faith* sees in the redeeming work of Christ the fulfilment of the divine promises, the complete self-realisation of the Divine Personality as it had impressed itself on the mind of inspired faith and of a prophet people, and, thus seeing it, it

becomes an impulse of self-surrender, of complete confidence in the forgiving, reconciling love of God, which transcends in its certitude of possession even the highest faith of the Old Testament saint.

V.

We have, then, as the revelation of which the gospel is the vehicle :

- (1) The righteousness of God, and
- (2) What St. Paul calls "the righteousness of faith," or "the righteousness which is of God 'upon' faith (Phil. iii. 9).

I have said, I think, quite enough to show that the latter is founded upon the former, that there is the closest correlation between them, and that faith is the medium of their correlation, *εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ*.

What I have hardly done more than hint at is the precise nature of this close link which unites them. How is it that the atoning work of Christ, viewed as the self-fulfilment of a God pledged, by His revealed character, to save, conveys righteousness to every soul that apprehends it by faith? That it does so, is St. Paul's unquestionable teaching. What he meant by this teaching—what, in other words, St. Paul meant by justification by faith—is a question which still confronts us.

St. Paul takes it as presupposed in his gospel (read *γὰρ* in iii. 28) that man is justified by faith without works of law. The latter two words are not a limitation of the statement—Luther's "durch den Glauben allein" was a quite allowable paraphrase. The works of grace are, it is true, not works of law. St. Paul *does not* say that man is justified without the fruits of the Spirit (*ἔργα χάριτος* is not a Pauline phrase). But such works, he clearly holds, follow justification, in the sense that justifying faith is pre-

supposed by them, not they by it. Only the link between the *δικαιοσύνη πίστεως* and the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*, obscure in i.-v., is more apparent when we see the righteousness of faith *at work*. We then see that it is based upon the mediation of the Son—"faith of Jesus" takes the place of Abraham's "faith of God"—and it assumes the character of filial loyalty, a loyalty impossible except through recognition of the character of the Father.

"Justification by faith" is a hard saying, for the same reason that the other two paradoxes of this Epistle are hard sayings. All three alike seem to the superficial glance—nay, they have actually led men to think—that St. Paul regarded conduct as a matter of indifference in God's sight.

But here at least, as regards justification by faith, it is only a superficial study of St. Paul that can carry away any such impression. Only on the basis of his fearful arraignment of human sin, his lurid picture of mankind all alike under the wrath of God, is the fabric of justification by faith erected. *Χωρίς ἔργων*—works are of no account—but why? Simply *because* God will—if St. Paul's gospel is true—search out the secret things of men, and judge them according to their works. Because conduct is of such absolute importance in God's sight, for that very reason, if man is to be reconciled with God, it must be on some ground irrespective of his doings—on the ground of faith alone.

St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith alone may be expressed thus: Absolute forgiveness of sin to all who enter through Christ into the filial relation to God. Justifying faith unites man to Christ, and therefore, while not presupposing works, is charged with the promise and potency of a new life of practical righteousness. "This grace wherein we stand," the "righteousness of faith," has, with St. Paul, these two aspects:—

(1) Negatively, and in relation to the past, it is justification, *i.e.* forgiveness. The *ἀσεβής*, the utterly rebellious

sinner, by throwing himself upon Christ, is in God's sight righteous. His sin is treated as though it had never been.

(2) Positively, in relation to present and future, it is union with Christ, a new power to live in loyal fellowship with God. The two are sides of the same thing—one can be distinguished from the other, but they cannot exist apart. Only to those “in Christ Jesus,” to those who by union with Him are set free from the law of sin, is there no longer any condemnation (viii. 1).

What then is this faith which unites man to God through Christ? or rather how is it conceived by St. Paul in this Epistle? I think the question is best handled by considering the *object* of faith as conceived by him. As to this, two widely different ideas have prevailed—that of *implicit faith*, distinctive of Roman Catholicism, and that of confidence in personal salvation, the doctrine which runs through many forms of Protestant revivalism.

On the theory of implicit faith the proper object of faith is simply doctrine, and that as revealed by Divine authority. Moreover, as it is impossible for the majority to accurately examine all doctrines, and test the evidence for their divine authority, it is enough that they should be convinced that what the Church teaches is divinely revealed, and not necessary that they should know in all particulars what the Church does teach. In the earlier middle ages it was regarded as incumbent, indeed, upon the *praelati*, the leaders of the Church, to know accurately the doctrines of the faith and their authority, but the masses were to be content with implicit belief in what the “*praelati*” put before them as the doctrine of the Church, without more than a vague knowledge of more than a very few particulars. Peter Lombard¹ supports this by Job i. 14: “*Boves arabant, et asinae pascebantur iuxta eos.*”

¹ Lib. iii. Sent. *Dist.* v. 25. The “*boves*” are the *praelati*, or working minds of the Church, the “*simplices*,” the mass of the laity, correspond to the “*asinae*,” who are content to browse beside them.

Under the influence of nominalism, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the scope of implicit faith became greatly enlarged. In the obviously nominalist (and probably anti-Hussite) story which Luther tells of the Doctor of Prague,¹ faith has become wholly merged in submission to ecclesiastical authority.

In post-Reformation times, the Jesuit doctrine of the *sacrificium intellectus* took its place as the ripe and logical application of the same idea of faith. I might in a different connexion attempt to show how this idea of faith, which thus becomes the mere submission of intellect to authority, hangs together with the Jesuit theology of the omnipotent Church, the "societas perfecta"; and how it carries with it inexorably the entire system of probabilism and Jesuit moral theology. But this is not our present question. The point is that it originates in a view of faith which, if it finds some points of contact with St. Paul, yet leaves out of account the characteristic Pauline conception of faith. Faith regarded as submission of the intellect to authority is a thing which can be, and is, exercised by masses of men irrespective of their moral character, and it does not demand a death to sin, or imply a new life. Those who adopt this view of faith must reject justification by faith as a paradox and nothing more. The "fides carbonarii," as Luther notices, does not carry with it forgiveness of sin, it could not fit in with the conception of ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη.

But what of revivalist faith? Does St. Paul teach that

¹ As a learned doctor of the University, overflowing with controversial learning, crossed the bridge of Prague, he met a charcoal-burner. He asked him, "What do you believe?" "What the Church believes," was the reply. "Ah, but what is it that the Church believes?" "The Church believes what I believe." "But, my good man, what is it that the Church and yourself believe?" "Why, sir, the Church and I believe the same thing." The doctor retired in disgust. But later on, when he came to his death-bed, and was asked by the priest in what faith he desired to die, his reply was, "In fide carbonarii." The doctor's conversation on the bridge betrays a touch of Hussite realism.

if you believe with emotional certainty that you personally are the object of God's saving grace, you are thereby justified? What St. Paul would miss here is, I think, the element of self-surrender, of absolute trust in God, as distinct from trust in a real or imagined condition of our own soul.

The object of faith with St. Paul is the love of God (Rom. v. 5), and not the certainty of our own conversion. "Abraham believed God," and to us also faith will be reckoned for righteousness, who believe on Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Faith, in Old Testament and New Testament alike, has close relation to the character of God as revealed by what He has done. Abraham "was fully assured that what God had promised He was able also to perform." Faith is not, to St. Paul, either belief of something or confidence in anything relating to our own mental state, but trust in a Person. That is its core and essence; trustful, filial apprehension of the character of God. It is therefore, in the first instance, *individual* in its character. Founded on the knowledge of what God has done for us (and here we have the source of the doctrinal side of faith), it raises each one who believes (*πάντα τὸν πιστεύοντα*) to direct individual dependence on God.

St. Paul taught justification by faith, and justification by faith is as vital to the Christian life, as portrayed by St. Paul, as is oxygen to the air we breathe. Without it, the Christian life and polity and worship sink back into legalism, drift away from the New Testament. He did not teach justification by faith as the only doctrine or principle of his gospel. Those who have tried to do so in later times have produced a moral narcotic, not the gospel of St. Paul. We cannot breathe pure oxygen. It is not air, but a poison.

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