

I am by no means so confident as to the interpretation of the Synoptic chronology. The most obvious, and perhaps the most probable, view is that St. John is tacitly but deliberately correcting an error of the Synoptists. But the greatness of the supposed error is very perplexing if any of the Twelve had any part in the redaction of any one of the three Gospels. . . . I think there is real force in what Westcott urges (*Introd.*, p. 344) against treating the Synoptic language as due to mere blunder or fiction, though I cannot be as hopeful as he seems to be that fuller knowledge would justify it in all particulars."

I would gladly express my adhesion to this judgment, with perhaps some emphasis on the point contended for by Dr. Westcott. It was really this (*e.g.* a verse like St. Luke xxii. 15, "With desire have I desired," etc.) which put me upon attempting the reconciliation which I now believe to have failed.

Another correspondent reminds me that in pointing out the parallels between the Synoptic sayings in Matthew xi. 27, Luke x. 22, and St. John, I should have bracketed the prepositions in [παρ]εδέθη, [ἐπι]γνώσκει, as St. John (like St. Luke in the case of γνώσκει) uses the simple and not the compound verbs, but there are a great number of parallels which are very close in sense (*e.g.* δοῦναι ἐξουσίαν, John i. 12, v. 27, xvii. 2; δοῦναι ἐν τῇ χειρὶ, iii. 35; εἰς τὰς χεῖρας, xiii. 3; also iii. 27, v. 22, 36, vi. 37, 39, etc.; and for γινώσκειν especially John x. 14, 15, xiv. 7, 9, 17, xvi. 3, xvii. 25, etc.). That this was not more fully verified before was due to an accident which I need not explain at length.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

III. ST. PETER.

WE shall now consider the teaching of the Book of Acts and of the Epistles of Peter.

The discourses preserved in the Book of Acts, while frequently mentioning the death of Christ, do not say much about its spiritual significance. The Apostles were more eager to proclaim that the Crucified had come forth living from the grave than to expound a recondite doctrine, which can be appreciated only by those who have already put faith in Him. We have however, in St. Peter's inaugural address on the Day of Pentecost and in an address by St. Paul, two important passages bearing most closely on the subject before us. These now demand attention.

In Acts ii. 23 Peter is recorded to have said, in reference to Christ, "whom, being delivered up by the determinate

counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." He thus asserts that the death of Christ was no mere calamity, but was an accomplishment of a divine purpose. In other words, he says that God foresaw that, if He sent His Son into the world to proclaim salvation for all who believe in Him, the Jews would give Him up to the Roman power to be put to death; and that, foreseeing this, God sent Him into the world in order that by His death He might accomplish a definite purpose. This implies that the death of Christ was a definite part of God's purpose of salvation; in complete harmony with His assertion in Matthew xvi. 21 that He must needs go away to Jerusalem to be put to death, with that in chapter xx. 28 that He came to give His life a ransom for many, and with all the passages quoted in my first and second papers.

In Acts xx. 28, in an address at Miletus to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, Paul is recorded to have said, "shepherd the Church of God (or, of the Lord) which He hath acquired (R.V. margin) for Himself with His own blood." Whatever be the correct reading, the blood here mentioned can only be that of Christ. The meaning of the verb *περιποιήσατο* may be studied in 1 Timothy iii. 13, "they who have discharged well the office of a deacon acquire for themselves a good degree"; in Isaiah lxiii. 21, LXX., "a people of My own, whom I have acquired for Myself that they may set forth My praises"; in 1 Maccabees vi. 44, "He gave Himself to save His people, and to acquire for Himself a name and power." The middle voice in all the above passages except the last, which has a still stronger form, indicates that those whom Christ acquired were henceforth to stand in special relation to Himself as His own possession. St. Paul asserts plainly that the death of Christ was the instrument which He used to save men and to bring them into His Church, and thus to unite

them to Himself. All this implies that the death of Christ was an essential link in the chain of man's salvation. Thus these recorded words of Paul are in complete harmony with the teaching of Christ already expounded.

It is worthy of note that the Epistle of James, which does not clearly announce salvation through faith, does not mention the death of Christ. This silence is full of instruction as suggesting a relation between these two doctrines. We shall find at a later stage of our inquiry that the salvation of sinners through faith becomes possible only by the death of Christ for the world's sin.

We come now to a document accepted with perfect confidence by all early Christian writers as written by the most conspicuous of those who were called to be Apostles during the lifetime of Christ, viz., the First Epistle of Peter.

In 1 Peter i. 18, 19 we read, "Knowing that, not with perishable things, with silver or gold, ye were ransomed from your useless manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even that of Christ." The word which I have rendered *ransom* is found also in Luke xxiv. 21, in Deuteronomy vii. 8 (LXX.), and in other passages quoted in my first paper. And it is cognate to the word used in the important assertion of Christ preserved in Matthew xx. 28. The word denotes, as we saw in my exposition of this last passage, always liberation, and usually liberation by price paid. In 1 Peter i. 18, 19, now before us, the ideas of liberation and price are very conspicuous. The Apostle reminds his readers that they had been set free from a way of living, without aim and without result, which they had accepted from their fathers, who themselves had lived this useless life. This description of their former life is unhappily true of the mass of mankind in all ages. They toil, but without worthy result. And the word *ransom* implies that this mode of life was a bond-

age from which they could not save themselves. But the Apostle says that deliverance has been effected, and that it has been costly. Its price has been, not silver or even gold, but precious blood, blood in some respects like that of the animals slain in sacrifice, but more costly, viz., the blood of Christ. The writer thus re-echoes and expounds the words of Christ in Matthew xx. 28, words which possibly he may have heard from the Master's own lips.

Manifestly the passage before us means that the bloody death of Christ upon the cross was the costly means by which the servants of Christ have been rescued from bondage to an inherited and useless way of life. The costliness of the means of deliverance implies that man's liberation was not otherwise possible. In other words, it implies, in harmony with the plain teaching of each of the four Gospels, the absolute necessity of the death of Christ for the salvation of men.

In 1 Peter ii. 21 we read that "Christ suffered on your behalf": *ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*. And the mention in verse 24 of "His body on the wood" teaches clearly that the suffering referred to is His death on the cross. The preposition *ὑπὲρ* with the genitive conveys simply the idea of benefit, without stating what the benefit is. It is used in reference to the death of Christ in Mark xiv. 24, Luke xxii. 19, 20, John vi. 51, x. 11, 15, xi. 50, 51, 52, xv. 13, already expounded. As conveying simply the idea of benefit, *ὑπὲρ* differs from *ἀντί*, which is used in Matthew xx. 28, "to give His life a ransom instead of many," and which conveys the idea of substitution, of one thing put *instead of* another. This being the difference between them, either preposition may be used to describe the relation of the death of Christ to those for whom He died. But each conveys its own significance, and that only. Christ died on our behalf, *i.e.*, for our benefit; He died in our stead; for, had He not died, we must.

In the verse now before us, the writer asserts that Christ suffered death upon the cross for our benefit. What the benefit is, and wherein lay the need for this mysterious and costly mode of doing us good, we learn from the verses following. In verse 22 we read that Christ was Himself sinless; and in verse 24 that He "bore our sins in His body on the wood." This implies that the awful sufferings endured in the sacred body nailed to the timber of the cross on Golgotha were a consequence of "our sins." The aim of these sufferings, or in other words the benefit to be thereby obtained for us, is at once stated, viz., "in order that, having been removed from our sins, we may live for righteousness." We have here another plain assertion that Christ died with a definite aim, viz., in order that we may escape from the penalty and bondage resulting from our past sins, and may live a new and righteous life. The actual result of the death of Christ is then added: "by whose wound ye have been healed."

In close agreement with the above, we read in 1 Peter iii. 18, that "Christ suffered once for sins, a just man on behalf of unjust men, in order that He may lead us to God, put to death in flesh, but made alive in spirit," etc. These last words prove that the Apostle again refers to Christ's suffering on the cross. We are told expressly that His death was occasioned by the sins of men, that it was endured with a definite aim, viz., "in order to lead us to God."

In the light of this passage we may expound 1 Peter iv. 1, "since Christ hath suffered in flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind"; and verse 13, "ye are sharers of the sufferings of Christ." For, as we read in chapter ii. 21, Christ is our pattern even in His suffering of death; and they who share the loyalty to God and the love to man which prompted Him to lay down His life in order to save men are sharers of His sufferings and will be sharers of His glory and joy.

It is now evident that the teaching of the four Gospels about the significance and aim of the death of Christ is reproduced, and with still greater clearness and fulness, in an epistle written probably by one of the most intimate associates of His life on earth. That His death is spoken of as the costly price of man's salvation, implies its absolute necessity for this end. This necessity is traced to man's sin. And we are told that He died with a definite aim, viz., to bring men into right relation to God, and to enable them to live a righteous life.

The evidence for the genuineness of the Second Epistle which claims to be from the Apostle Peter is far less satisfactory than that for the First Epistle. But, whatever be its authorship, it is an embodiment of early Christian thought. And I notice in passing that in 2 Peter ii. 1 we read of some who "deny the Master who bought them." We have here again the idea of purchase already found in the first two Gospels and in the First Epistle of Peter. And we are told that Christ died even for some who will ultimately perish, for the persons referred to are "bringing upon themselves quick destruction."

We have now examined briefly the four Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the Epistles of Peter, documents differing very widely both in phraseology and modes of thought. And we have found everywhere the same account of the occasion and aim of the death of Christ. From various points of view, all these documents represent it as the means of man's salvation, and as absolutely needful for this end. The need for this costly means of salvation, they find in man's sin. And they teach that He died, not by accident, but by His own free choice, and with a deliberate purpose of thus working out for men a salvation otherwise impossible.

It is also worthy of note, that in the ritual of the Old Covenant, the shedding of innocent blood is a conspicuous

feature; and that sometimes the language of the New Testament about the death of Christ is coloured by sacrificial associations. As examples, I may quote John i. 29, 1 John ii. 2 taken in connection with chapter i. 7, 1 Peter i. 19, ii. 24, iii. 18. On the other hand, salvation by means of the death of the innocent is almost or altogether absent from the spiritual thought and life which find expression in the Book of Psalms.

Why it was needful that, in order to save men from the due consequences of their own sins, Christ should die, the documents we have examined do not teach. They thus prompt a question more pressing and difficult than those which they answer. For an answer to this question we shall turn to the teaching of one who, so far as we can judge, understood the mystery of the agony upon the cross much better than did the disciples who were with Christ in the garden, better even than did the beloved Apostles who saw Him on the cross. In our next paper I shall endeavour to expound the all-important teaching of the Epistle to the Romans.

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THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY LAND.

II.

THE LOW HILLS OR SHEPHELAH.

OVER the Philistine Plain, as you come up from the coast, you see a sloping moorland break into scalps and ridges of rock, and over these a loose gathering of chalk and limestone hills, round, bare and featureless, but with an occasional bastion flung out in front of them. This is the so-called Shephelah—a famous theatre of the history of Palestine—the debatable ground between Israel and the Philistines,