

*THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT.*

V. THE FURTHER TEACHING OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
ROMANS.

IN our last paper we saw that in the great exposition of the Gospel contained in the Epistle to the Romans the death of Christ is first mentioned in a dependent sentence following closely upon a comprehensive statement of St. Paul's fundamental doctrine of Justification through Faith. This collocation suggests that the two great doctrines of Justification through Faith and Justification through the Death of Christ are indissolubly connected; and that the latter is in some sense subordinate to the former. The precise relation of these doctrines is clearly stated in the enunciation of the second doctrine contained in Romans iii. 24-26. St. Paul teaches that Christ died not by accident but by the deliberate design of God, and that God gave Christ to die in order to harmonize with His own justice the justification of believers.

We also saw that this conception of the purpose of the death of Christ explains and justifies, and is the only explanation of, the teaching of the entire New Testament on this mysterious topic.

These results I shall now endeavour further to test and to elucidate by examination of other references to the death of Christ in the remainder of the Epistle to the Romans.

After the enunciation in Romans iii. 21-26 of the two great doctrines just mentioned, St. Paul goes on to discuss further in chapters iii. 27-iv. 24 the former of these doctrines, viz. faith as a condition of justification. He then discusses in chapter v. the blessed consequences of justification through the death of Christ. The transition from the

one doctrine to the other is made in chapter iv. 25: "who was given up because of our trespasses, and was raised because of our justification."

The word *παράδιδωμι*, which we may render *give up*, is frequently used in the sense of handing over to a hostile power or into some form of adversity. So Matthew v. 25, "lest the adversary *give thee up* to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and thou be cast into prison"; and chapter x. 17, "they shall *give you up* to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you . . . but when they *give you up*, be not anxious . . . brother will *give up* brother to death." The same word as a participle is used in chapters xxvi. 25, 46, 48, xxvii. 3 to describe Judas who gave up Jesus into the power of His enemies.

Very instructive is the reiteration in Romans i. 24, 26, 28, "for which cause God *gave them up* to uncleanness . . . to passions of dishonour . . . to a rejected mind." St. Paul means that God surrendered to the dominion and bondage of their own depraved nature those who turned from Him to idols.

On the other hand the same word is frequently used for treasure committed to the care of others. So in Matthew xxv. 14 we have a master who *gave up* his goods to his servants, went into a far country, and then came to demand an account of the money put in their charge. In each case the word means to hand over into the power or custody of another.

In Romans iv. 25 we read that Christ "was given up because of our trespasses." St. Paul thus asserts that in consequence of our sins He was surrendered to a hostile power. Similarly in chapter viii. 32: God "spared not His own Son, but *gave Him up* for us all." Notice here the preposition *ὑπέρ*, the most frequent term to describe the relation of the death of Christ to those for whom He died. Its meaning has been already explained on p. 186. In

Galatians ii. 20, with exultant gratitude St. Paul speaks of Him "who loved me and *gave up* Himself for me." The argument following in verse 21, "if righteousness be through law, then Christ died in vain," suggests irresistibly that he refers to Christ's self-surrender to death. Similarly, and in close agreement with Matthew xxvi. 2, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 45, 46, 48; xxvii. 2, 3, 4, 18, 26, St. Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians xi. 23 of "the night in which He was *given up*." This frequent use of the word in this connection leaves no room to doubt that in Romans iv. 25 St. Paul refers to the death of Christ. And he asserts that His death was in consequence of our sins.

In the same connection we have a similar but less definite word in Galatians i. 4, "who *gave* Himself for our sins that He may rescue us from the present evil age"; in 1 Timothy ii. 6, "who *gave* Himself a ransom for all"; and in Titus ii. 14, "who *gave* Himself for us that He may ransom us from all lawlessness." These passages recall the same word in John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that He *gave* His only-begotten Son in order that, whoever believeth in Him may not perish." The simpler word here used, *ἔδωκεν*, conveys the idea of free surrender; but does not suggest, as does *παρέδωκεν* in Romans viii. 32, the power into whose hands the surrendered one was given up.

The group of passages just discussed does not add much to our conception of the purpose of the death of Christ. But it affords further proof that St. Paul looked upon it as a result of a deliberate purpose and surrender of God. And it reveals the large place which this thought occupied in the mind of the great Apostle.

In Romans v. 1, the verse immediately following that which I have just in part expounded, St. Paul goes on to speak of "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." These words imply that prior to justification there was war between God and man and that through the agency of

Christ the hostility has been removed. Touching the exact nature of this hostility and the means of its removal, we seek further information.

In verse 5 St. Paul speaks of "the love of God," of which in verse 6 he gives an historical proof, viz. that "for ungodly persons Christ died." The significance of the death of Christ as a manifestation of the love of God, he expounds by comparing it with the greatest sacrifice which occasionally man will make for man. The love thus manifested, St. Paul then makes a sure ground of hope of future salvation. From the costliness of the blessing already received, he infers that greater blessings await us. In this argument, as stated in verse 9, he sums up what we have already received in the phrase "justified in His blood." This is a compact restatement of the teaching in chapter iii. 24, 25, where we read that justification comes through redemption which is in Christ whom God set forth in His own blood. The summing up in chapter v. 9 implies most clearly, (as does chapter iii. 25,) that our pardon was in some sense brought about by the violent death of Christ on the cross.

In Romans v. 10, which is evidently a restatement, in a form suggested by the words "peace with God" in verse 1, of the argument in verse 9, the phrase "reconciled to God through the death of His Son" is given as an equivalent of "justified in His blood." And in verse 11 we read "through whom we have now received the reconciliation." Similarly in 2 Corinthians v. 18-20 we read "who reconciled us to Himself through Christ . . . the ministry of the reconciliation . . . God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself . . . Be reconciled to God." In all the above passages we have the same word *καταλλάσσω*; and the same grammatical construction, viz. men the direct objects of reconciliation, "who reconciled *us*," God its indirect object, "reconciled *to God*," and in 2 Corinthians v. 18, 19, God the Author and Christ the Agent of reconciliation.

In Ephesians ii. 16, the assertion "He is our peace" is expounded to mean that Christ's purpose was "to reconcile both (*i.e.* Jews and Gentiles) to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it." St. Paul thus teaches that there was hostility between man and man and between man and God, and that in order to destroy it and bring about peace Christ died on the cross. This thought he embodies in strong language by representing the cross as the instrument by which Christ destroyed the enmity and made peace. In Colossians i. 20-22 the same purpose and the same instrument are ascribed to God: "He was pleased to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace by the blood of His cross." The Christians at Colossæ were themselves once aliens and enemies; but "God hath reconciled them in the body of His flesh through His death." In these passages we have a stronger form of the verb used in Romans v. 10, ἀποκαταλλάσσω, suggesting perhaps restoration of a lost friendship. As before, sinners are the direct, and God the indirect, objects of reconciliation. In the Epistle to the Colossians, God is again its Author. That in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is attributed to Christ, creates no difficulty. For, whatever the Father does, He does through the agency of the Son.

In the above passages we have another conception of the death of Christ in its relation to man's salvation, viz. as a means of reconciliation to God. And, like the conception embodied in Romans iii. 26, also this conception is in the New Testament peculiar to St. Paul. It implies clearly that God gave Christ to die in order to break down a barrier between Himself and man erected by man's sin, and that the means used for this end was the death of Christ.

This teaching deserves further attention. Already we have seen that in Romans v. 10 the words "reconciled to God through the death of His Son" are given as an equivalent to "justified in His blood" in verse 9. And we

have seen on page 361 that the word *justify* as used by St. Paul has no direct reference to any inward change in man's disposition towards God but only or at least chiefly to a changed relation of guilty man to the Righteous Judge. Moreover, in Romans i.-v. we read nothing about the effect of the death of Christ on the moral life of man. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians v. 19, the assertion that "God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" is at once followed and supported by the words "not reckoning to them their trespasses." And the exhortation "Be reconciled to God" in verse 20 is in verse 21 supported by the statement that "Him who knew no sin, on our behalf He made to be sin." In other words, St. Paul's teaching that believers are reconciled to God is an inference from his teaching that they are justified.

This inference is strictly correct. Every man who breaks laws is at war with the state: for he is using his powers to injure it. And the state is at war with him. The king's officers arrest and punish, and if needs be his soldiers shoot down, the king's own subjects, whose welfare he greatly desires, when they disturb the public peace. He is compelled to treat them as enemies; and they have to count upon him as their enemy. And, if transgression involves war, forgiveness brings peace. The pardoned transgressor no longer has reason to fear the power of the king. All this we cannot but transfer to our conception of God's government of the world. Consequently those whom in Romans v. 9 St. Paul has described as "justified in His blood" he may in verse 10 correctly speak of as "reconciled to God through the death of His Son."

Once more. St. Paul teaches in Romans iii. 26 that God gave Christ to die in order to harmonize with His own justice the justification of those who believe in Christ. If so, by the death of Christ is removed an obstacle to justification which has its root in the moral nature of God. This

implies that God has something against the sinner which makes needful for his salvation this costly sacrifice. And in the light of this divine hostility to sin and in some sense to the sinner so long as he persists in sin, must be interpreted the assertion "we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." In other words, by the death of Christ is removed not only the sinner's hostility to God but the sinner's exposure to God's anger against all sin.

The sinner's hostility to God is expressly mentioned in Romans viii. 7: "the mind of the flesh is enmity to God." But to this aspect of sin we have no reference in the first five chapters of the Epistle. In them St. Paul is dealing with sin only as exposing man to punishment.

To the above exposition may be objected the grammatical construction, already noticed, of the word *reconcile*, viz. that God is never said to be reconciled to the sinner, but always the sinner reconciled to God. From this, some have inferred that the only obstacle to peace is in man.

That this inference is incorrect, we learn from the use elsewhere of the same word. In Matthew v. 23, 24 we find a cognate and equivalent term *διαλλάσσω*. A man coming to sacrifice remembers that his brother "hath something against" him. Here, manifestly, the obstacle to peace is not in the sacrificer but in the offended one. Else there would be no need to leave his gift and go away in order to be reconciled. For, any personal animosity against the other man, the offerer might himself at once lay aside. Our Lord evidently means that he must go and do his utmost to persuade the offended man to lay aside his feelings of hostility. Yet the offerer is bidden, "be reconciled to thy brother." Similarly, in 1 Corinthians vii. 11, a woman separated from her husband is bidden either to remain alone or to "be reconciled to her husband." A Christian woman could have no option about laying aside

any hostile feelings of her own. The only question for her is whether she can persuade her husband to lay aside his hostility to her. Very instructive is 1 Samuel xxix. 4, LXX. Some Philistines objected to David going with them to war. They said that he was a servant of Saul; and asked, "wherewith will he be reconciled to his master? will it not be with the heads of these men?" They feared that he would try to regain the favour of Saul by betraying and destroying the men with whom he had taken refuge. Yet this supposed removal of the anger of Saul is described as David being reconciled to his master. Of any enmity of David to Saul, there is no mention or thought. A similar use of the word *καταλλάσσω* is found in Josephus, *Antiquities* bk. v. 2. 8. These examples prove that St. Paul's language does not imply or suggest that the hindrance to peace removed by the death of Christ was wholly or chiefly in man.

On the other hand, in 2 Maccabees i. 5 we read, "may God hear your petitions and *be reconciled* to you, and not forsake you in the evil time." So chapter vii. 33, "if the Lord be angry for a short time, He will again *be reconciled* to His own servants": also chapter viii. 29.

This double use of the same phrase warns us that St. Paul's words now before us do not in themselves determine whether the hindrance to peace removed by the death of Christ is in man or in God. This must be determined by the context. And we have seen that in the Epistle to the Romans the context determines that in the phrase "reconciled to God through the death of His Son" St. Paul refers wholly or chiefly to the sinner's deliverance from the righteous anger of God.

To express this meaning, the grammatical construction used by St. Paul is very appropriate. For the phrase, "God has reconciled us to Himself" emphasises the truth that reconciliation began with God and is His work; and

that He is only the indirect object of it, whereas man is its direct object. For man is chiefly affected by it. The real hindrance is in man's sin; and this hindrance God removes by the gift of His Son to die. But, as St. Paul has plainly taught, the reason why this hindrance can be removed only by means of the death of Christ is in God, and specially in His justice.

The phraseology of St. Paul which refuses to make God the direct object of *reconciliation* is in complete harmony with the phraseology of the New Testament and of the LXX. which, as we shall see in a subsequent paper, refuses to make God the direct object of propitiation.

Notice carefully that the propitiation and reconciliation and the harmonizing of forgiveness with the justice of God are ever attributed to the Father's love. He provided, at infinite cost to Himself, the means which His own justice demanded as the necessary condition of the justification of the ungodly. To represent the Father as implacable and as pacified only by the intercession and death of Christ, is to contradict both the letter and the spirit of the teaching of St. Paul.

The references to the death of Christ in Romans vi. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, we shall postpone till a later paper, in order to place them in relation to other important teaching in the third group of the Epistles of Paul.

In Romans vii. 4, the unsaved are compared to a married woman, who is forbidden by the law to be united to anyone other than her still living husband; and the justified, who are set free by death, viz. by the death of Christ, are compared to a woman set free by death, viz. the death of her first husband, from the law which forbade her second marriage. This comparison is of great importance. For it implies, especially the words "dead to the law through the body of Christ," that through the death of Christ has been removed a hindrance to our saving union with Christ

having its root in the Law of God. It is thus a remarkable coincidence with the assertion in Romans iii. 26 that God gave Christ to die in order to harmonize with His own justice the justification of believers. For the Law is the authoritative utterance of the justice of God. A legal barrier is therefore a barrier which has its foundation in the justice of God. In other words, Romans vii. 4 is but a restatement, in view of the law of God which was ever present to the thought of St. Paul, of the fundamental teaching in Romans iii. 24-26.

The same idea meets us again in Galatians ii. 19: "through law I died to law, that I may live for God: I am crucified with Christ." This can only mean that through a legal process they who believe in Christ have escaped from the condemnation of the law, and from the hindrance which it presented to their salvation. That the death of Christ is the mysterious means of this liberation from the claims of the law, is made quite clear by the words "crucified with Christ" and by the argument following, "if through law cometh righteousness, then hath Christ died to no purpose."

The relation between the death of Christ and the law of God, meets us again in Galatians iii. 13, 14, where we read that through His death upon the cross and the curse involved therein Christ bought us off from the curse pronounced by the Law upon all who fail to obey all its commands, in order that through faith we may obtain the blessings promised to Abraham. This implies that the Law presented a hindrance to the fulfilment of the promise, and that this hindrance was removed by the death of Christ.

Similar teaching is found in a later group of the Epistles of St. Paul. In Colossians ii. 13 we read that God has made us "alive together with Christ, having forgiven us all trespasses." This forgiveness, involving spiritual resurrec-

tion, St. Paul further describes by saying that God blotted out the handwriting which with its decrees was against us; and adds that He nailed it to the cross, and thus took it out of the way. Evidently he means that through the death of Christ upon the cross God removed a barrier to our salvation which had its foundation in the written law. In Ephesians ii. 14 we read of the middle wall of partition which Christ has broken down; and of the enmity which He has made inoperative by making inoperative the law of commandments in decrees. St. Paul adds that Christ's purpose was to reconcile to God both Jews and Gentiles, formerly at enmity each with the other and both with God, by means of the cross; and that by the cross Christ had slain this enmity. These somewhat difficult words imply that the enmity between man and God was removed by means of the death of Christ: and the context suggests that in so doing Christ made inoperative the condemnation of the written law.

These five very different passages reveal the firm hold on the thought of St. Paul of the idea that through the death of Christ was removed a hindrance to the salvation of men having its root in the Law of God. And, since the Law is the authoritative expression of the justice of God, this teaching is implied in, and implies, the teaching in Romans iii. 26 that God gave Christ to die in order He might be "Himself just and a justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." We have also seen in this paper that the same fundamental teaching is embodied in another mode of expression familiar to St. Paul, viz. that through the death of Christ sinners have been reconciled to God. These different modes of presenting one fundamental conception of the relation of the death of Christ to our salvation, are decisive proof that this conception was actually held by the great Apostle; and they reveal its controlling influence over his thought and life.

The remaining teaching of the Epistle to the Romans need not detain us. In chapter xiv. 9 we read that "for this end Christ died and lived, in order that both of dead and living He may be Lord." This implies that Christ died of His own deliberate will, and with a definite purpose. So in verse 15 we read, "destroy not him for whom Christ died." These passages are in complete harmony with others already expounded.

To sum up. So far as we have yet examined it, St. Paul's teaching about the death of Christ is a logical development of one fundamental idea, viz. that God gave Christ to die in order to remove a hindrance to the salvation of sinful man which has its root in the justice of God. And we have already seen that this conception of the purpose of the death of Christ explains the teaching of all the other writers of the New Testament.

In my next paper we shall consider other teaching of the great Apostle on the same subject.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

THE NOBLEMAN'S SON AND THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

(JOHN iv. 46 ; MATT. viii. 5 ; AND LUKE vii. 1.)

At the threshold of the ministry of Christ, and in the very act of passing from seclusion to His immortal publicity, we saw Him pause to bless the marriage of two obscure and forgotten villagers. It was a natural and exquisite inauguration of His career, a pure and fit expression of the love in the heart of Jesus.

But no sooner does His work begin to grapple with the sad conditions of humanity, no sooner is a "Saviour" manifested, than salvation is demanded from evils far direr and