of my theory from a general point of view," they are altogether too brief and superficial to be taken seriously. What the Synoptic problem has long desiderated is *facts*: theories swarm; every possible theory has found advocates; we need one or two facts as stepping stones; and unless Semitic scholars have vastly more to say against the hypothesis than has yet been said, the existence of one (or perhaps two) primitive Aramaic documents embedded in our present Synoptic Gospels is a *fact*. Many scholars who have long studied the Synoptic problem, and who have accepted the theory tentatively, have found it most elucidating; and while it does not perhaps explain everything, it goes a very long way to reduce the *chaos* which has hitherto prevailed, to an approximate *Kosmos*.

J. T. MARSHALL.

ST. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

IX. THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

OF the four lessons which Jesus taught His disciples concerning the significance of His death, the first was that in enduring a violent death at the hands of men He should be suffering for righteousness' sake. In this earliest lesson the Master presented His approaching end under a purely ethical aspect, and consistently therewith He spoke of it not as an isolated event, but as a fact falling under a general law according to which all who are faithful to the Divine interest in an evil world must endure suffering. From this point of view it is obvious that it is not for the death of Christ alone that a *rationale* is wanted. The question may legitimately be raised, What is the final cause of the sufferings of the righteous generally? a question on which the thoughts of Old Testament prophets, psalmists and sages had been much exercised. There is

need of a theodicy along the whole line. Does the same theodicy suffice for the case of Jesus and for that of all His fellow-sufferers? May we reason about the latter as Paul reasoned about the former and say, if death be the penalty of sin, there are only two alternatives: either all who suffer, suffer for their own sins—the theory of Job's friends; or some who suffer, suffer redemptively, for the sins of others—the theory hinted at in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah interpreted historically as referring to the afflictions of God's faithful ones in Israel?

The ethical aspect of Christ's death is hardly touched on in the Pauline literature. What the apostle might have done had he written copiously and systematically on the subject one cannot guess, but it is certain that in the epistles which form the basis of the present study he contemplates the death of Jesus by itself apart, and exclusively from a religious and theological view-point. His whole aim in all his statements regarding that event is to point out the significance for faith of a unique experience befalling One believed to be personally sinless, who could not therefore be conceived as in His Passion suffering for His own sin. What we have to do now is as far as possible to ascertain the meaning and estimate the value of these statements.

In our rapid survey of the four principal epistles we lighted on certain texts bearing all the appearance of being forms of language into which the brooding thought of the writer on the death of Jesus had finally crystallised. Among the great Pauline *logia* relating to that theme, fall to be classed those which speak of Christ being made a curse and sin for us that we might become curse-free and sinless.[1] To these, as not less important, must be added the word in *Romans* iii. 25, in which God is represented as publically exhibiting Jesus in His death in a propitiatory

[1] *Gal.* iii. 13; 2 *Cor.* v. 21.

capacity. Having already used the passage in which that text occurs for the purpose of throwing light on the righteousness of God, and the faith which justifies, we may begin our study of St. Paul's teaching concerning the significance of Christ's death by returning to it to consider the instruction which it contains on the latter topic.

The word ἱλαστήριον has given almost as much trouble to commentators as θυμιατήριον in *Hebrews* ix. 4, though not for the same reason. In the latter case there would be little doubt as to the meaning were it not that the true rendering, "the altar of incense," *seems* to involve the writer in an inaccuracy as to the location of that piece of furniture in the tabernacle. In the case of the former, the difficulty arises from the paucity of material of kindred character in the Pauline literature to guide us in interpretation. On first thoughts one is inclined to assume that the term ἱλαστήριον is employed to represent Christ in His death as a propitiatory sacrifice or sin offering. But then it is noticeable, and has indeed been insisted on by expositors of weight,[1] that St. Paul makes very little use elsewhere of the Levitical sacrificial system in the formulation of his doctrine of the cross, and there is force in the remark that that system would be far less congenial to his mind as a vehicle of thought than prophetic utterances concerning the suffering servant of Jehovah such as those contained in *Isaiah* liii. Then, further, it has to be considered that in the Septuagint the term in question is not employed to denote the sin offering. It is rather used as the Greek equivalent for the Kapporeth, the lid of the ark, or the mercy-seat. Accordingly the older interpreters assumed that the apostle followed the Septuagint usage, and found in the text the, in many respects attractive, idea that in Christ God had provided for a sinful world the mercy-seat of the new dispensation, a mercy-seat sprinkled with Christ's

[1] So Weiss and Pfleiderer.

precious blood, like the lid of the ark with the blood of the victim on the great day of atonement. Those who, like most recent interpreters, reject this sense as fanciful, and not suitable in an Epistle written to Romans, have to choose between two other alternatives, either taking ἱλαστήριον as a noun signifying definitely a propitiatory victim, or as a neuter adjective signifying generally means of propitiation.

In our perplexity it may be well to see if we cannot to a greater extent than has been thought possible make St. Paul his own interpreter. For this purpose it is important to observe that in *Romans* iii. 21–26, he resumes the thought of *Romans* i. 17, 18. At least it is quite certain that *Romans* iii. 21 resumes the thought of *Romans* i. 17. In the latter text the apostle had spoken prelusively of a righteousness of God which he had not at that point the opportunity of further explaining, his mind going off immediately on the topic of the world's sin. The sin-section ended, he returns to the theme at *Romans* iii. 21, and tells his readers what the righteousness of God to which he had alluded really is. Now this being the fact with regard to the topic of the *righteousness* of God, is it not every way likely that the same thing holds true regarding the other topic, mentioned in *Romans* i. 18, and that the apostle has in his mind the *wrath* of God when he speaks of God as publicly setting forth Christ as ἱλαστήριον in His blood? The suggestion needs only to be made to commend itself; but confirmation, if needful, may be found in *Romans* v. 9, where we find God's wrath and Christ's blood associated in the apostle's thought. But if at *Romans* iii. 25 the apostle reverts to what he had said in *Romans* i. 18, then it is natural to suppose that in the death of Jesus he sees two things: a *revelation* of Divine wrath, and a *means of averting it.* Both point in the direction of a sacrificial victim; not necessarily after the analogy of Levitical sacrifices, for

the apostle may have had in view the human sacrifices with which Greek and Roman story makes us familiar. That would be indeed a bold collocation; but boldness is what we expect from St. Paul, not to mention that what he says in *Romans* v. 7, about one man dying for another, tends to show that he would not have regarded the use of heathen instances in illustration of the Gospel as improper or inadmissible. His appeal is to general human history.

The fact basis of the idea that Christ suffered death as a sacrificial victim is that His blood was shed (*ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ αἵματι*). His death was a violent one, and looking away from subordinate, human causality, the apostle sees in it only the hand of God; it was God that put Jesus to death as a lamb slain for the sin of the world. And by this act God in the first place, as St. Paul views the matter, demonstrated, revealed his wrath against sin. For this I take to be the revelation of wrath whereof the apostle speaks in *Romans* i. 18. Commentators have been at a loss to know what the revelation consisted in, or how it was made, and in their perplexity have taken refuge in the unnatural vices of the pagans as the divinely appointed penalty of sin. It seems to me that we should find both the revelations spoken of, of righteousness and of wrath, in the death of Jesus. By that death, according to the apostle, God shows what He really thinks of sin. Apart from that death, men might be inclined to ask: If God be so angry at the wickedness of the world, why does He not make some signal display of His indignation? To judge from appearances, one would say He did not care. Men go on sinning, from bad to worse, and He makes no sign. Paul replies: Look to Calvary, there is the sign. God's wrath against sin is such that He inflicts that bloody, cruel death on His own Son occupying the position of a propitiatory victim.

While assigning to Christ's death the double function of revealing and averting Divine wrath, like the thunder-storm

which at once reveals and heals electric trouble in the air, the apostle has in view chiefly the latter aspect. His aim is not to proclaim the fact that Christ was slain as a sacrifice, but rather to emphasize the gracious purpose for which He suffered. Therefore ἱλαστήριον is to be taken as an adjective rather than as a noun, because so understood the word makes the gracious purpose more prominent. The apostle leaves the revelation of wrath in the background, and brings to the front the revelation of love, providing a way of escape from wrath. He says here in effect what he says further on in express terms: "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us!"[1] He means to accentuate the love of God, not His wrath, or even His righteousness. He does indeed speak of God's righteousness—that is, of His regard for moral interests, but not dogmatically by way of teaching the necessity for the manifestation or "satisfaction" of Divine justice in connection with human salvation, but rather apologetically by way of pointing out that the actual method of salvation is such that God cannot rightfully be charged with moral indifference; the death of Christ showing that, whatever facts in the world's history might seem to point in a contrary direction, sin is not really a trivial matter in God's sight.

By finding in the word ἱλαστήριον a real though tacit reference to the wrath of God, we bring this Pauline text into line with the two referred to on a previous page, and also with the *logion* in *Galatians* iv. 4. In these three passages one principle is involved, viz., that in His earthly experience Christ was subjected to all that is unblessed in man's unredeemed state, with the result of man being delivered from it. This is the principle of redemption. Christ's whole state of humiliation was the λύτρον, the resulting benefit for us is ἀπολύτρωσις. He was made under

[1] *Rom.* v. 8.

the law, by circumcision and otherwise, and we are redeemed from subjection to law into sonship. He was made a curse, and we are redeemed from the law's curse. He was made sin, and we are made sinless. Adding to these three instances the fourth suggested in *Romans* iii. 25, Christ became in lot an object of Divine wrath, with the effect that men guilty of sins provocative of God's indignation are shielded and saved from wrath. This principle, or law, well established by these examples, may be used as a clue to the meaning of a text which has given much trouble to commentators—*Romans* viii. 3. It has commonly been assumed that the condemnation of sin in the flesh referred to in the last clause took place in Christ's *death*, περὶ ἁμαρτίας being taken in the sense of a sin offering. God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, in His sacrificial death condemned sin in the flesh—such is the traditional interpretation. Is it quite certain that this is the true meaning? Let us see. It may be assumed that St. Paul here points to an experience of Christ that meets a need of man which has been the subject of remark in the preceding context. But of what need has the apostle been speaking? Our need of help to resist and overcome the law of sin in the members, the preponderant and domineering influence of the flesh. But what is there in Christ's earthly experience that can give us help here? One would say not His death, but rather His holy life in the flesh, demonstrating that bondage to the σὰρξ is not inevitable, embodying in a successful experiment of resistance God's condemnation of sin in the flesh, as a thing that ought not to be and that need not be, Christ's life in the spirit being not less than His death a Divine appointment for man's good. The application of the principle exemplified in the other four texts to this fifth one would lead to the same conclusion. That principle requires that the experience of Christ which is to benefit us in any

given way must correspond to the nature of the benefit. The benefit in the present instance being emancipation from hopelessness as to the possibility of walking in the spirit in spite of the flesh, the redemptive experience of Christ ought to be the proof supplied in His life that to walk in the spirit is not impossible. It may indeed be asked, Where is the element of humiliation in that experience of Christ? The reply must be, In the fact that He was sent in the *likeness of sinful flesh.* In other words, that His life on earth was enacted, like ours, under conditions involving temptation to sin. God's whole aim in sending His Son into the world was with reference to sin (περὶ ἁμαρτίας), that by every part of His earthly experience He might work in one way or another towards the destruction of sin. Christ's personal struggle with temptation arising out of the flesh was designed to make its contribution to this end; and it does so not merely by way of example, but by way of a Divine proclamation that the malign dominion of the flesh is at an end, and that henceforth men shall be enabled to walk in the spirit, even while living in the flesh. As the reign of law was doomed by the mere fact that Christ was made under the law, so the reign of the flesh is doomed by the mere fact that Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh.[1]

It is important to note that in all these instances of the principle or law of redemption the apostle gives us what he conceives to be the religious significance of the *obvious* facts of Christ's experience. When he says, *e.g.*, that Christ was made under law, he has in view mainly the fact that He was circumcised. In like manner he conceives of Christ as made sin by enduring physical death, the appointed and historic penalty of sin; as made a curse by enduring death in the form of crucifixion; as made under God's wrath by

[1] This is in substance the view of this text taken by Godet and Weiss. *Vide* Godet's *Commentary*, and Weiss's *Lehrbuch der Bibl. Theologie des N.T.*, p. 308.

enduring death in a manner which involved blood-shedding, as in the case of sacrificial victims; and as made in the likeness of sinful flesh, because subject to temptation arising out of the affections of the flesh, as in the case of the first temptation in the wilderness. To a dogmatically trained intellect the fact-basis for the corresponding theological categories may appear slight, and the temptation is strong to supply for the doctrinal superstructure either from the evangelic history, or from imagination, a broader, more adequate foundation. The procedure may be very natural, but it is not exegesis. We must remember that St. Paul's problem was not the same as that of the scholastic theologian. When he became a believer the imperative task for him was to read in a new light the plain surface facts of Christ's earthly history. The question he had to ask and answer as best he could was: What meaning am I to put upon the facts that One whom I now believe to be the Messiah and the Holy One of God was circumcised and endured death, by crucifixion, and by blood-shedding! On the other hand, the problem of the systematic theologian is to verify and justify the theological categories supplied to him in the apostle's answer to that question by an exhaustive statement of the relative facts. In doing this he is in danger of stepping out of the region of history into the realm of imagination, a danger which has been proved to be very real in connection with Christ's endurance of the wrath of God, and of death as the penalty of sin, representatives of Protestant scholastic orthodoxy not hesitating to say that Christ endured the essence of eternal death, and was the object of God's extreme hatred.[1] In so doing they might be very consistent and thoroughgoing as theorists, but the doctrine they thus taught is at once unscriptural and incredible. Let not St. Paul be made responsible for such extravagances.

[1] For examples *vide* my *Humiliation of Christ*, Lecture vii., note B.

Under the Pauline law of redemption the benefit resulting to men from Christ's mediation is in the first place to be conceived objectively. Thus, Christ having been made under law, redemption from legalism *forthwith* ensues as the objective privilege of humanity. That, in the view of God and in the religious history of the world, is the significance of Christ's subjection to legal ordinances. The era of legalism therewith ended, and the era of liberty began. Very different was the construction the Judaist would be inclined to put on the fact. Christ was circumcised, therefore the law must be perpetual, for has not the Lord of the Church given it the sanction of His example? so he would reason. On the contrary, replied St. Paul, the circumcision of Jesus was the death-knell of the law; He underwent the humiliation of subjection to law for the very purpose of putting an end to legal bondage; His experience in that respect was the ransom He paid for our emancipation. Similarly with all the other applications of the principle. Thus because Christ was made sin for us by subjection to death, therefore, *ipso facto*, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses. So again, because Christ was made subject to temptation arising from the flesh, God condemned sin in the flesh, declared that the dominion of the flesh, as of the law, must take end, and be replaced by the benign dispensation of the Spirit. In a word, at whatever point in our low estate Christ comes in contact with us, in life or in death, His touch exercises a magical emancipating influence, beneficently altering in relation to God the situation of the world.

But this is not the whole truth. The objective change takes place with a view to a corresponding subjective one, without which the former would remain an abstract ideal and a barren benefit. The objective privilege must be subjectively realised. The position of sonship must be accom-

panied with the spirit of sonship, otherwise I shall be a slave of legalism, though living in the era of grace. The general amnesty which ensued from Christ having been made sin must be realised individually as a Divine forgiveness of personal sin. So the apostle views the matter, hence the stress which he everywhere lays on faith. For it is faith's function to transmute the objective state of privilege into a subjective experience; to turn an ideal redemption into an actual one all along the line. Thus it is to be noted that the apostle is careful to represent Christ's sacrificial death as propitiatory *through faith.* Codex A omits the words, but there can be no reasonable doubt as to their genuineness. The idea they express is so essential to the Pauline system of thought that even if they were not in the text they would have to be understood. It is through faith, and only for the believer, that Christ's death becomes effectively propitiatory, a real shield against the Divine wrath. And so throughout the whole range of benefit. There must be appropriating faith if God's goodwill to men for Christ's sake is not to remain comparatively barren and inoperative.

But not even yet have we got to the bottom of St. Paul's mind. I have not hitherto attempted to translate the principle of redemption obtained inductively from Pauline texts into the technical terms of theology. It is not imperative on an interpreter to undertake the task of translation, and he might excusably feel some measure of perplexity in an endeavour to fit in such non-scriptural terms as "substitute" and "representative" into his exegetical results. But perhaps it is not far off the mark to say that while the idea of Christ as a substitute fits into the conception of His death as sacrificial, the idea of representation best accords with the whole group of texts from which I have gathered by induction the Pauline law of redemption. In these texts Christ appears as a central person in whom the human race

is collected into a moral unity, having one responsibility and one interest, all things as far as possible common, even sin and righteousness, which one would think inseparable from personality, being treated as separable entities passing freely from one side to the other, sin to the sinless One, righteousness to the unrighteous. It is a case of *objective identity*. And the point I wish to make now is that this objective identity does not content St. Paul, not to speak of substitution which expresses too external a relation to have any chance of satisfying his mind. He cannot rest content with anything short of *subjective identity* between Redeemer and redeemed, implying that Christ is not only by Divine appointment and in outward lot, but in conscious sympathy, one with men, and on the other hand that they are one with Him in the same manner, making His experience their own. The former aspect of this subjective identity is not at all so prominent in the epistles of Paul as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the sympathy of Christ is one of the great outstanding ideas, the whole earthly career of the Captain of salvation, not excluding His passion, being regarded as a curriculum of trial and suffering designed to develop in Him the spirit of compassion essential to the priestly vocation. But there are significant hints of the truth, as when the apostle adduces as a motive for Christian consideration of others the fact that Christ pleased not Himself,[1] urges the duty of mutual burden bearing as a fulfilment of the law of Christ,[2] and represents the Lord Jesus as becoming poor for our sakes.[3] There can be no doubt that he would include in the self-impoverishment of Jesus the whole state of humiliation as voluntarily endured out of sympathy with men, though in mentioning the details of that state he presents the experi-

[1] *Rom.* xv, 3, which, however, is proved not by facts taken from Christ's history, but by a quotation from a psalm.

[2] *Gal.* vi. 2.

[3] 2 *Cor.* viii. 9.

ence of Christ as something to which He was subjected rather than as something He voluntarily incurred.

The other aspect of the subjective identity, the sympathy of believers with Christ, is made very prominent in St. Paul's teaching. It is all due to the action of faith, which, as he conceives it, cannot be restricted to the act of appropriating a benefit, but, like ivy clinging to a wall, lays hold of everything in the experience of Christ that is capable of being turned into a source of spiritual life. As Christ in love made His own every detail in our unredeemed state, so faith in the exercise of its native clinging power makes its own every critical stage in Christ's redeeming experience, His death, burial, resurrection and ascension, and compels the redeemed man to re-enact these crises in his own spiritual history. "I am crucified with Christ";[1] if One died, then all died."[2] So St. Paul judged; so he viewed the matter; so judge all like-minded. To put it so may appear to be making it a matter of opinion, a mere affair of personal moral idiosyncrasy. And there can be no question that many who pass for believers do not so judge, at least with anything like the earnestness of St. Paul, and the fact gives urgency to the inquiry as to the guarantees for ethical interests in the Pauline system. This will come up for consideration hereafter; meantime our business is to understand the apostle's own way of conceiving the believing man's relation to the Redeemer. And the thing to be noted is that in his view the function of faith is not merely to lay hold of a purchased benefit, but to impose a serious ethical task, that of dying to live. The fact suggests the query whether after all he so entirely overlooked the ethical aspect of Christ's own death as I said, and as on the surface it seems. If for us being crucified with Christ is an ethical process, must not crucifixion for Him also have had an ethical motive and end? So it naturally appears to us,

[1] *Gal.* ii. 20. [2] 2 *Cor.* v. 14.

but it does not follow that that view of the matter was much or at all present to the apostle's mind. We must take his ideas as they stand, and the fact is that he does not present the death of Christ and the co-dying of Christians under the same categories of thought. Death in Christ's case is physical, in the case of the believer mystical. The reason for dying in the one case is a transcendent theological one, in the other it is moral. On this account the dying-to-live to which the Christian is summoned loses the impetus arising from its being presented as the ideal and universal law of all true life, and is based on the weaker though not lower ground of a believer's sense of congruity and honour.[1]

In St. Paul's own case the new life lost nothing on that account, partly because the moral ideal was operative in his reason and conscience under disguise, but chiefly because the religious fervour and energy of his faith and the grateful devotion of his love were of themselves all-powerful motives to Christ-like living. The love of Christ who died for him "constrained" him to die with Him and to live unto Him. Then his faith, with its power of vivid imaginative apprehension, laid Christ under contribution as a source of inspiration in every conceivable way. For it Christ was at once Vicar, Representative, and Brother blended together in indissoluble unity. There was therefore no risk in his case of justification taking place without sanctification, through faith laying hold of a certain benefit, objective righteousness, procured by Christ's death, and looking to nothing but its own private interest. His faith so contemplated Christ that He became at once and with equal certainty unto him believing, the ground of pardon and the source of a new life, Christ for him and Christ in him. And it was such faith as his own he had in view in

[1] *Vide* Green's *Witness of God*, Works, vol. iii., p. 230, where a purely ethical view of Christ's death is presented.

all his discussions on justification. It was a yielding of the heart to the love of God and of Christ, and as such not merely the reception of the gift of salvation, but the entering into a mystic unity of life and of love with the source of salvation.

It will be well for the interests both of theology and of religion that we earnestly endeavour to make this Pauline conception of faith our own. The consequence of losing sight of it in theology is that the living organism of Paulinism becomes resolved into a dead collection of scholastic dogmas standing side by side in a system, but having no vital affinities; and in religion that the unseemly spectacle is presented, in the case of many professed believers, of men looking to Christ for deliverance from guilt and wrath without devotion to Him as the Lord, or any trace of that all-pervading moral sensitiveness one expects to see in a Christian.

These dangers are by no means imaginary. They beset us both as Protestants and as Evangelic Christians. As Protestants, because our bias in that capacity is to empty faith of all moral contents on which a doctrine of merit might be based; and, as controversy with Romanist theology leads the Protestant dogmatist to give a very exceptional prominence to justification, it may readily come to pass that he shall hardly find leisure or opportunity, to say nothing of inclination, to regard faith under any other aspect. As Evangelic Christians, because in that character we naturally interest ourselves much in those whom Jesus pitied, the lost, and having them in view speak often and with emphasis of Christ as the sin-bearer, inviting them to lay their sins on Him by faith that they may have peace with God, and probably endeavouring to make the act of faith as easy as possible by use of such phrases as "only believe that Jesus died on the cross in your stead and you are saved." A natural and yet a serious mistake. For it

is a short-sighted evangelism which looks only to the beginning of Christian life and makes no provision for its continuance and progress; which thinks of justification and forgets sanctification; which cares not about the quality of faith provided only faith of some kind of which Christ is the object be awakened, with as little delay as possible; which deems it the one thing needful to bring every sinner into a state of conscious peace, instead of aiming at rousing the conscience of the sinful into energetic activity and leaving them, as we so safely may, in God's hands. The true, healthy evangelism is that which offers Christ to men's faith as He is offered in the New Testament, in Christ's own teaching and life, and in the apostolic epistles, in all the aspects of His character and work. That cannot be done in a day or in a single address, still less in a single sentence. But it can be done by giving prominence now to this side of truth, now to that, always aiming at exhibiting the manysided wisdom of God in the Gospel. The result will be a faith to which Christ is wisdom by being at once righteousness, sanctification and redemption; a Prophet, a Priest, and a King; a Christ for us and a Christ in us; a Christ who died in our stead, and a Christ with whom we die daily; a faith which will work through fellowship with Christ in His sufferings to the effect of making us Christlike as surely as it will rest upon Christ as the Saviour from sin.

A. B. BRUCE.