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many opportunities in history of showing what it could do for the peace of the world when the authority of the Church was unchallenged. 'But it needs little knowledge of history to realize that the suffering of the poor, the cruelty of the oppressor, the violence of faction, the horrors of war were not abolished when the Roman Church was the sole and undisputed representative of religion in the Christian world.' There are countries where Romanism has been supreme, Spain for example. Has Romanism freed them from the troubles that afflict the world? The verdict of history is against the idea that a merely unified Church would bring salvation to the world.

The Message of the Epistles.

Romans.

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The Preface to the second edition of Karl Barth's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans contains the following ingenuous admission—'I know that I have laid myself open to the charge of imposing a meaning upon the text rather than extracting its meaning from it.' Barth's doctrine of the Word of God, of a transcendental, objectively proclaimed Divine message lying behind, rather than in, the sacred text—a message of which the human author of the text may not have been fully conscious, or indeed conscious at all—has obvious affinities with the allegorism of the Alexandrine Fathers, and, like it, may easily be used as the instrument of a purely arbitrary exegesis which takes no account at all of what the human author really meant to say. Yet those of us who in the study of Holy Scripture are guided by the canons of Antioch rather than of Alexandria—that is, who regard the determination of the meaning which was consciously present to the author's mind as the primary task of the exegete, and as alone containing the clue to the further significance, if any there be, which, though not realized by the human author, was nevertheless intended by the overruling Divine Mind to be conveyed through the sacred text—find ourselves almost inevitably liable to the same reproach. For it is now generally admitted that the undisputed Pauline Epistles were real and personal letters, dictated to meet some pressing emergency, and to encourage, instruct, warn, or admonish given individuals, known personally or at any rate by trustworthy report to the Apostle; with the partial exception of the Epistle with which we shall be concerned, they were not written as deliberately planned dogmatic treatises. The exegetical canon which results from the recognition of this fact has been expressed by Professor Kirsopp Lake in the following well-known words: 'Treat the Epistles as letters; recognize that in letters the subjects discussed are not those on which all parties are agreed, but those on which there is difference of opinion, so that the really central points are not those which are supported by argument, but those which are assumed as generally believed.'[1] The real message, accordingly, of such Epistles as those to the Galatians, Thessalonians, and Corinthians lies not so much in their explicit *dicta* as in their tacit assumptions, which have to be reconstructed by a process of induction, hypothesis, and verification such as must always be open to the charge of arbitrary speculativeness. The Epistle to the Romans, indeed, partakes much more than those which we have just mentioned, of the nature of a piece of conscious doctrinal exposition; for it was written to provide a Church to which its author was personally unknown, but which he designed to use as a base of operations for his missionary campaign in the West, with an authoritative summary of his whole characteristic presentation of Christianity as a new and unprecedented scheme of salvation centring in union with Christ and indwelling by the Spirit. Yet, even here, the impatience, vehemence, and polemical keenness of the Apostle's temperament are such that thoughts crowd quick and fast upon one another's heels;

[1] *Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* (1911), p. 424.

he has hardly announced a thesis before he finds himself fiercely rebutting objections to it, and sometimes, as in the passages of compressed *stichomythia* in which the 'Jewish Objector' is the other character, the zest of controversial rapier-play becomes so breathless that he has only time to set down his replies, the objections to which they *are* replies never finding expression on paper at all, and being left to be inferred from the replies, by the intelligent reader. In regard to this Epistle, therefore, the apparent paradox still holds good, that its fundamental significance consists in what it does *not* say, but takes for granted, rather than in what it does; and if the following attempt to summarize its teaching seem characterized by undue subjectivism and dogmatism, the writer's excuse must be that any other attempt would probably wear the same appearance, and that, although space forbids him to give a fully documented proof of his conclusions, he is not conscious of having affirmed anything for which he could not, if challenged, produce a case.

The main doctrinal part of the Epistle consists of its first eleven chapters; and although the last five contain incidentally much that is of dogmatic interest, they must be for our present purposes neglected. The subject of the main portion may be briefly described as 'Salvation.' Now sin, from which man is to be saved, may be viewed either as (*a*) a voluntary *offence* against a law, or against the Divine law-giver, or as (*b*) the symptom of a *disease*, an inbred moral distemper, for which, at any rate in its fully developed form, man is not responsible—for no one deliberately chooses to contract a disease. If sin be viewed as a legal offence, Redemption will naturally be conceived on *forensic* lines, and its culminating point will be a judicial verdict of acquittal, pronounced by God, the Supreme Judge—an absolving act which, in the terminology borrowed by St. Paul from the Septuagint, is known as δικαίωσις, 'Justification'; if as a disease, the dominant soteriological category will naturally be *therapeutic* or *medicinal*, and the idea of 'Sanctification,' or interior moral transformation, working out the poison of inbred sinfulness and setting the soul far beyond the reach of temptation, will occupy the centre of attention. For a 'twice-born' genius, however, like St. Paul, who has known the torment of unsuccessful struggle with sin and the sudden peace and joy which supervene upon an instantaneous conversion, Redemption, whether viewed forensically or medically, always appears as a pure act of God, performed in virtue of His sovereign unmerited favour, not earned by the redeemed man's own efforts or deservings. Hence the problem necessarily arises, Why is this supreme boon of Redemption bestowed on some, and not on others? For such minds, the solution seems to lie in the hypothesis of God's absolute, uncontrolled sovereignty, inspired, it may be, by an 'occult justice' which far transcends man's feeble powers of comprehension, but disposing of the destinies of His creatures with imperial, irresponsible omnipotence. We are thus led, from 'Justification' and 'Sanctification,' to the profound idea of 'Predestination,' which lies behind them both. The legal, the medicinal, and the transcendently imperial conceptions of Redemption—these are the three cardinal ideas which together form the subject-matter of the letter to the Romans.

Though the capitulation of the Epistle, as of the rest of the New Testament, is much later than St. Paul's time, it corresponds in this letter with tolerable exactness to the divisions of the sense, and offers a ready means of grasping the logical lay-out of the document. Broadly speaking, it is true to say that chs. 1–4 are devoted, or were meant to be devoted, to the subject of 'Justification,' chs. 5–8 to 'Sanctification,' and chs. 9–11 to 'Predestination'—but only 'broadly speaking,' for the Apostle's tendency to digress (natural enough, in view of the fact that the Epistle would probably have to be dictated by fits and starts, in the few spare moments of a crowded and dangerous life) involves him in many premature anticipations in earlier chapters of problems which seem more properly to belong to the later, and many reversions in later chapters to questions which might have been deemed to have been disposed of in the earlier. Any attempt, accordingly, to summarize St. Paul's teaching with regard to any one of the three cardinal ideas must be based upon a combination of (*a*) what is said in the section appropriated, or meant to be appropriated, to it, with (*b*) incidental allusions to or developments of it in the other sections.

The thesis of the opening section is that of 'Justification by Faith alone.' No definition is given either of Justification or of Faith, it being, apparently, assumed that both of these terms are familiar to the readers. We must take for granted what is agreed by most modern scholars, at any rate outside the Roman Communion, namely, that 'Justification' means judicial acquittal—a sentence or verdict pronounced by God which enables the man who is its subject to leave the (metaphorical) dock without a stain on his character: and that 'Righteousness' (δικαιοσύνη—it is unfortunate

that the conventional usage of English theology renders it impossible to render δικαιοῦν and δικαιοσύνη by a similar pair of cognates, like *rechtfertigen* and *Gerechtigkeit*) means the 'status of acquittal,' of 'being right with God,' so bestowed. It is to be noted that, in the actual practice of earthly courts, from which the whole forensic metaphor is taken—and consequently in the scheme of ideas which forms the framework of this section of the Pauline soteriology—the 'status of *de facto* acquittal' is not strictly identical with 'a past record' or 'a state of settled virtue' *deserving* of acquittal. It is *possible* (though, naturally, it is to be hoped that it does not often happen) for a man to be triumphantly acquitted, owing to the venality of the judge or the incompetence of the prosecution, though in fact he has done all that he is charged with having done, and though his character is such that he will undoubtedly do it again at the next opportunity. No doubt St. Paul never contemplated the possibility of a 'justification' which was not invariably followed by 'sanctification'; justification and sanctification are for him inseparably connected in fact; but none the less they are absolutely distinct in thought, and the confusion between them (due ultimately to the rendering in the Old Latin versions of δικαιοῦν by *iustificare*, the factitive form of which fatally misled St. Augustine and his successors) has involved Christian thought in centuries of quite unnecessary controversy. If sanctification is the path which leads the Christian to the heavenly Jerusalem, justification, or preliminary absolution, is the wicket-gate which admits him to the path; and 'righteousness,' or the 'justified' state, is *qua talis*, a strictly forensic concept, which has, in itself, no ethical connotation. Still, considered merely in itself, it simply means the formal and technical status of being 'right with God,' of having no unsettled moral accounts with Him. It may seem a paradox that the verdict of 'innocent' should precede the actual acquisition of innocence, that a declaration of acceptability with God should be prior to the achievement of that 'holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord'; but, however difficult of logical defence, it is a paradox fully in accord with the Divine mercy which treats a man as what he is becoming rather than as what he is, and with the laws of psychology, which assure us that the best way of making a man trustworthy is to trust him.

The meaning of 'Faith,' in consideration of which God pronounces a man to be (technically) righteous, is more elusive. It is, however, clear that Pauline usage assigns a much richer content to the terms 'Faith' and 'to believe' (as in the case of δικαιοῦν and δικαιοσύνη, it is unfortunate that English theological terminology does not provide us with a pair of cognates corresponding to πίστις and πιστεύειν) than the Jacobine. 'Faith' is always faith in Christ, including not merely the intellectual recognition of His Divine Sonship and Lordship, but also utter, self-surrendering trust and confidence in Him; and ch. 4, which rebuts Jewish theories of 'justification' as obtainable through circumcision or the observance of the Mosaic Law, indicates that Christian faith in Christ is faith in Him specifically as Risen. But Faith is an act, as well as a mental and emotional state; for reference to a concordance will show that the verb πιστεύειν, 'to believe,' is sometimes used in the aorist tense, which, though not in itself of temporal significance, at any rate is devoid of the implication of continuance in time, and consequently suggests the idea of momentary or instantaneous action. Familiar instances are St. Paul's question to the 'Johannites' at Ephesus—'Did ye receive Holy Spirit when ye believed (or, made the Act of Faith) (πιστεύσαντες)?' and Ro 13^{11}, 'Now is our salvation nearer than when we made the Act of Faith' (ἐγγύτερον . . . ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν). A consideration of the passages in which the word occurs will, I venture to maintain, make it clear that, besides its rich and wonderful connotation of interior trust and worshipping self-surrender, the word also has what may be called an external denotation, signifying the whole act of being converted to Christ; the infant Church already possesses a kind of *argot* of its own, in which πίστις means the total fact of being a Christian, πιστῆναι to *become* a Christian, πιστένειν to *be* a Christian, οἱ πιστένοντες are Christians, and οἱ πεπιστευκότες are Christians of long standing. 'Justification by Faith,' therefore, translated into terms of ordinary speech, means simply Divine absolution from the guilt of past sins—or, more simply, God's forgiveness—imparted to the sincere and humble convert to Christianity solely in virtue of his conversion. That is all that there is in it—though this 'all' is more than enough to redeem the whole human race. When the Apostle vehemently affirms 'Justification by Faith only' as opposed to fancied theories of justification by legal works, what he means to assert is the centrality and uniqueness of Christ, as the only revealed Way, Truth, and Life, as against the Judaizing Christians who still regarded the observance of the Mosaic Law as the heart of true religion, and allegiance to Christ as an appendage to religion, desirable, indeed, but not strictly of the first importance.

If it be asked why he did not explain this in explicit terms, the answer is that very probably he did in his oral instructions to his converts, and that in any case men of vehement natures, who have little time for literary composition, are prone to rely upon watch-words, assuming that the meaning of these will be as familiar to their readers as it is to themselves.

In order to grasp the full significance of the idea of 'Forgiveness through conversion to Christ (and not through circumcision or conformity to the Jewish Law)' it is important to remember that both St. Paul and his readers were converts; indeed, at this date, when Christianity was not more than a quarter of a century old, practically all the Christians then alive were persons who had been converted in adult life to the gospel. No doubt there were a few youths or children who were the offspring of Christian parents, though uncertainty as to the precise date of the beginnings of pædobaptism forbids us to affirm with confidence that they were full members of the Christian group. But, generally speaking, a Christian was a person who had known what it was to be a non-Christian Jew or a pagan, 'without God in the world.' It is here that, owing to the general diffusion of the custom of infant baptism, our own experience differs so widely from that of the Apostle's readers as to make it difficult to think ourselves back into the state of mind and memory which was the background of their perusal of his letter. Most of us cannot remember a time when we were not at least nominally Christians; and the 'conversion' of which our psychologists write is usually a conversion from nominal to real Christianity, not a conversion from paganism to a Christianity which is both nominal and real. For the first readers of the Roman letter it was otherwise. Conversion to the new religion must have drawn a deep dividing line across the life of the converted man, severing him not merely from gross and obvious sins, but from many social observances, harmless in themselves, but accidentally linked up with the worship of heathen deities; it must have been an event to which the ordinary Christian could look back, with awe and gratitude, as few of us can look back with conscious memory to the beginnings of our membership of the Christian Church. And, human nature being what it is, it seems unlikely that St. Paul could have appealed, as he often implicitly does, to his readers' memories of the day when they made their solemn Act of Faith, with its corollary of absolution, if that act had been merely interior. No doubt there must have been repentance, with its corollary of confession; no doubt the converted man must have consigned his *Lares* and *Penates* to the scrap-heap, and resigned all public office and membership of all associations which might involve him in participation in pagan rites. But the language which implies that justifying Faith is expressed in a single act, which all can remember, demands something more than a series of social re-adjustments as its explanation. The act in question should be a public ceremony, symbolizing in the most vivid manner release from guilt and re-birth into a new life, inspired by the power of the Risen Christ.

The clue is given us by a passage in another letter, in which the crucial terms 'justification' and 'sanctification' occur in significant juxtaposition. Writing to the Corinthians (1 Co 6^{11}) to warn them against backsliding, the Apostle mentions various abominable types of human sin, and adds: 'And such were some of you: but ye were *washed*, but ye were *sanctified*, but ye were *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.' The reference to Baptism in 'washed' is unmistakable. We conclude therefore, that the solemn act which is the external expression of justifying Faith, its obverse or outward sign, is the act of accepting Initiation into the Christian society, the act of which the central moment is Baptism, at that date, doubtless, administered in the Name of Jesus, rather than of the Trinity, as St. Matthew's Gospel and the *Didache* were later to prescribe.

This hypothesis, that for St. Paul, in this letter at least, the great rite of Christian Initiation is the hinge upon which the Christian life turns, explains much that is otherwise obscure. Towards the end of the first section, the Apostle, having demonstrated the universal need for forgiveness, and the impossiblity of obtaining it through Jewish observances, announces once more the thesis of 'Justification by Faith only,' as, apparently, proved by the default of any rival hypothesis; and proceeds to exhibit the Atoning Death of Christ as the ground of justification. This is precisely the point at which we long for enlightenment. Granted that God freely forgives the sinner who turns to him through His Son, where exactly does the *Death* of Christ come in? Could God not have forgiven without it? These are questions which have been asked by many Christian thinkers in all ages; and it is in this passage ($3^{24ff.}$) that we should expect to find them answered. Actually, we find no answer; the Apostle vaguely connects justifying faith with the Blood of Christ (v.^{25}), but

makes no attempt to explain the 'how' of the connexion. He seems to move with embarrassment amongst these high mysteries, and after a few verses leaves the topic for his favourite theme, that of the equality of Jew and Gentile in the sight of God. But, where his power of intellectual self-expression fails him, his deep, compelling, prophetic experience comes to the rescue. The real explanation of the halting sentences of 3^{24-26} is to be found in ch. 6, with its mystical exposition of Baptism as involving and effecting union with Christ as the redeemer who eternally dies and rises again. Christ died, once and for all, as the Representative Man; He died unto sin as the vicarious sin-bearer; but He belonged in essential nature to the eternal world, and His death and Resurrection are timeless facts, of which Calvary and the Garden Tomb were the temporal manifestation. Through self-surrender to Him, expressed in dramatic death and burial in the baptismal river, man becomes incorporated into Him, and so a participant in the release from guilt won by His perfect act of representative penitence.

But Baptism, though the culminating point of the rite of Christian Initiation, does not exhaust it. According to the ideas of ancient times (which may well have more in them than some modern critics are willing to allow) it is not sufficient for the sinner merely to have the guilt of past sins and evil influences washed out of him; the house which is merely swept and garnished may be re-occupied by seven devils worse than the previous tenant; the neophyte must be re-charged with good influences, with a Spirit potent enough to perfect the work of moral transformation and to keep all evil spirits at bay. It was here that the 'Johannite' baptism of the Ephesian disciples failed; it had produced (at least subjectively) the negative effect of release from guilt, or from the consciousness of guilt; but it had not bestowed the Spirit. It was replaced, or supplemented, by 'baptism into the Name of the Lord Jesus'; and 'when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them' (Ac 19^{6}). It is this final moment of Christian Initiation, the laying on of hands, imparting the new life of the Spirit, which lies behind the discussion of Sanctification in chs. 5–8, as Baptism lies behind the exposition of Justification in chs. 1–4. So mighty is the power of the Spirit of adoption, that those whom He indwells become exempt from all fleshly temptations, their 'old man' or former vicious self is, metaphorically, put to death, and the Law, *qua* Law, ceases to exist for them, inasmuch as they no longer have any impulses which might lead to the actions which it forbids.

We thus hold that the thought of the great composite rite or act of Christian Initiation, involving, on the inner side, Repentance and self-surrender to Christ, and on the outer, the acceptance of Baptism and the laying-on of hands, and conveying both preliminary absolution and subsequent sanctification through the Spirit, is the dominating background of the first eight chapters of the letter. At first sight, it might seem as though this background were entirely absent from the Theodicy of chs. 9–11, which moves so largely on predestinarian lines; for an absolutely rigid predestinarianism makes sacraments otiose, a fifth wheel to the coach of God's selective purpose. Yet this is not so, for Initiation is initiation into the Church, the new Israel, the People of God; and it is precisely the conception of the Church which is the presupposition of the problem to which the Pauline Theodicy endeavours to give an answer. That problem is, Why are the Jews (in the ethnological sense) who for so long were the only members of the Church of God, now excluded from it? The Apostle's answers —that God is the master of all men, and can do what He likes with His own (ch. 9)—that it is the Jews' own fault (ch. 10)—that in any case the Jews are sure to be restored before the Second Coming (ch. 11)—may not appear in detail to be altogether consistent with one another. But all alike presuppose the idea of the Christian society, to which Initiation admits, as that *extra quam est nulla salus*, and the first of these, at least, like the writings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, illustrates the fact that it is psychologically (whether or no it be logically) possible for sacramentalism and predestinarianism to be held together, by a mind of transcendent genius and power.