

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

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

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

STUDIES IN THE PAULINE THEOLOGY.

VI. THE SANCTIFICATION OF MAN.

(1) THE Christian salvation is from the *guilt* and the *power* of sin. The guilt is removed, as was shown in the previous Study, by the righteousness of God. How the power of *sin* is broken in the sanctification of man we have now to consider. Although we may for convenience distinguish these two aspects of the deliverance in Christ, they are not to be separated. As has been already shown, the righteousness of God is so revealed in the Cross of Christ that the means of forgiveness is also the motive of holiness. The cancelling of the guilt of sin is the first step towards the breaking of its power. A burdened conscience goes with a baffled will. Until the burden of distrust of, and estrangement from, God in the expectation of His judgment is lifted off, the bondage of evil habit cannot be broken. The sense of guilt paralyzes moral effort. The pardon of sin conveys the assurance, inspires the anticipation of the conquest of sin. The man who knows himself forgiven can say, If God is for me, sin cannot at last overcome me. The forgiveness of sin brings peace with God (Luke vii. 47, 50); and this reconciliation with God is promise and pledge of complete emancipation. Paul has clearly stated the soul's assurance, "If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10). Without at this point considering the new power that enters into the life in fellowship with God through Christ, we may here note that the removal of the sense of helplessness, and consequent hopelessness, is already the beginning of deliverance from the oppression of sin. There is moral reinforcement in the spirit of adoption. "Ye are all sons of God,

through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). Although the phrase "the righteousness of God" may suggest the law-court, the reality that it expresses is the restoration by the forgiveness of sin of the fellowship of God as Father with man as son. This sonship as it gains certainly gives courage and confidence in the moral struggle. The despairing cry, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24) has already found its answer in the man, who, as justified by faith, is gaining peace with God (v. 1). As fear weakens and hope strengthens, pardon is the beginning of power.

(2) But the worth of this gift of forgiveness, and even more the cost to God of its bestowal in the Cross of Christ, brings a new motive into the life, and a motive which in its persistence and efficiency excels any other motive. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14-15). The love, and especially the sacrifice endured, gives Christ an absolute claim. "Ye are not your own; for ye were brought with a price" (1 Cor. vi. 20). Compare 1 Peter i. 18; "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." If we compare one passage with another, it will become evident that it is no legal right that the apostle thinks of, but the constraint of love, a claim more absolute than any legal right could be, the generosity of Christ's love, or of God's love in Christ, calls forth the love of gratitude in man. It is not necessary to give proofs of Paul's dominant mood of thankfulness to God. It runs like a golden thread through all the varied pattern of his writings. He answers his own despair-

ing cry with his triumphant thanksgiving, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 25). He faces sin, law, and death with the song on his lips, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 57). Such gratitude has a moral potency. Appetites, ambitions, tastes, interests, pursuits which would enter into rivalry or conflict with such a motive are consumed in its glowing fervour: "Far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). To this motive Paul appeals in exhorting the Corinthian believers to generosity: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). Gratitude for grace, that is the new motive of the Christian life. Can we doubt its efficiency? Although it was not the new motive alone which made Paul a new creature in Christ Jesus, yet it was a potent factor in his moral transformation. There are not a few to-day who find it difficult to understand what are often called his more *mystical* doctrines, the fellowship of the living Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; but surely all Christians can understand this gratitude for grace as the dominating motive for the new life. It is true that a popular revivalism has often been accompanied by moral superficiality if not laxity; but that is surely due to the fact that the grace of God in Christ has not been adequately presented in its essentially moral character. A plan of salvation for man's safety and happiness here and hereafter may be so presented as, even when accepted, to prove morally impotent; but the historical reality of Christ on His Cross in its moral significance and value as the revelation of the righteousness of God, when apprehended and appreciated, cannot but evoke a love which, as its object is holy, will inspire the desire for,

and sustain the effort after holiness in the subject. Even in the Epistle to the Romans the danger of an abstract statement of the way of salvation is illustrated. The question with which Paul passes from his treatment of the doctrine of justification to that of sanctification, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" shows the danger of any theory of atonement that is not charged with moral content. That in the Cross sin is judged as well as forgiven by holy love is the presentation of the grace of God necessary if the response of gratitude in man is to prove a potent moral motive.

(3) It has seemed desirable to place in the forefront in regard to the Christian salvation to prove its moral efficacy, these two considerations, which make the widest appeal; but it is scarcely necessary to say that here we do not get the characteristically Pauline doctrine. The gratitude for grace is not for Paul the most potent factor of the new creation he experienced. Not an event of the past, however pregnant with promise for man's deliverance, was the source of the new life in him. It was in a constant and intimate personal communion with Christ that he experienced the sufficiency of the grace of God, the perfecting of God's strength in his weakness. If in Galatians ii. 20 he expresses this living union with the living Lord in an individual form as his own personal experience, he does not claim it as a spiritual monopoly, for in Romans vi. 3, 4 he makes a general statement on the assumption that this experience is common to all Christians. "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death? We were buried, therefore, with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." In discussing this passage it is necessary to make a concession and a distinction.

We must admit that this union with Christ is not realized in the common Christian experience in the same degree as in Paul. His moral passion and his spiritual vision combined to make the Christ of faith a reality to him as He is but to a comparatively few souls. But even where there is no such certain and vivid consciousness of Christ's presence there may be such trust in His promise, fulfilled in the experience of such as Paul, as will enable the moral struggle to be waged with courage and confidence due to the assurance that the human strength is not left unaided, but is sustained by the divine power of the Saviour whose working is not limited by the soul's consciousness of His presence. It is indeed a blessing to be greatly desired that now and again, if not always, that presence may be felt ; but what is to be remembered is that the power worketh even where the presence is not recognized. Down in the valley there is help even for those who have not beheld the glory of the mountain-top. Christian experience both in its moral endeavours and its spiritual visions, confirms the truth that the soul's deliverance from the power of sin is not accomplished by the impression made or even the motive awakened in man by Christ and His Cross, as an event of past history, but by a constant and potent living and saving presence. It is a personal influence which is being universally and permanently exercised, and exercised even when its reality is not fully recognized. Nevertheless, as intimate communion increases the efficacy of personal influence, so the practice of the presence of Christ is a condition of moral progress. It is a pity that this phase of Paul's teaching has so often been called *mystical*, as the term seems to warn off those who are most concerned about the moral issues of Christian faith. It is spiritual in character, because independent of sense, but is also moral in content, because man's holiness is its end.

(4) We may make a distinction between the general fact of this personal union with Christ and the particular content which Paul gives to it. It is not the historical Jesus as He is represented for us in the Synoptic Gospels on whom Paul meditates and with whom he communes. His attention is almost exclusively concentrated on the Crucifixion and the Resurrection ; and to enter into personal union with Christ is to be crucified and risen with Him. Although he claims "visions and revelations of the Lord," a rapture into Paradise, a hearing of "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. xii. 1, 4), yet his moral progress did not depend on these ecstatic experiences. It was his meditation on the death and rising again that was the condition of, and gave content to, his personal communion with Christ. The thought of many devout and earnest believers is to-day withdrawn from the Cross and the Grave. It is in the words and works of Jesus in His earthly ministry that they find that "inner life" which is to them the revelation of the grace of God. Jesus' absolute devotion to God on the one hand and His intense compassion for sinners on the other present to them that blending of mercy and judgment, that "righteousness of God" which Paul saw in the Cross of Christ. If the "inner life" of Jesus so conceived does convey to them the condemnation as well as the pardon of sin, and so the salvation from sin, we have no right to forbid them this way of approach to the grace of God. Nevertheless, we may still believe that it is in the sacrifice of Jesus that the moral energy of God in bringing men to repentance as well as assuring them of pardon is most effectively exercised. It is not necessary, however, to consider these as alternative courses. The death and rising again need not be detached from the earthly ministry. As we become familiar with the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels the moral conscience and the religious consciousness of the

Christ Crucified and Risen become more intelligible to us. His attitude to God as Son and His attitude to man as Brother are made plain and sure to us in His words and works. We can thus penetrate a little further into His "inner life," and so interpret His experience in the Crucifixion and Resurrection to give to it a fuller spiritual and ethical content. How far Paul did thus give meaning to the death and rising again by such contemplation of the concrete reality of the historical Jesus we cannot now tell ; but there can be no doubt that for us his teaching of personal union with Christ as crucifixion and resurrection with Him gains in significance and value in the measure in which the historical Jesus is concrete reality to us, and not a theological abstraction. We must not, however, ignore what such an experience as Paul's teaches, that it is in the Cross that the moral purpose of Christ has its fulfilment. His revelation both of the compassion and the severity of God, of God's love as holy, is not complete until we see sin judged as well as forgiven in the revelation of the righteousness of God in Christ propitiatory in His blood. Here is focussed the light and the warmth of the grace of God.

(5) The content of the personal union with Christ is for Paul crucifixion and resurrection with Christ. But how shall we understand this experience ? Shall we interpret it in terms of the substitution of Christ for man, or of the identification of man with Christ, or are the two conceptions but complementary ? In the previous Study it was shown that what Christ suffered or did was on behalf of man ; He took man's lot that He might give man His life. Doubtless Paul's thought was this, He was crucified for me, and so I was crucified with Him ; He endured on my behalf what He saves me from enduring, God's judgment on my sin. He rose again for me, and I rose with Him ; what He achieved was for my gain that I might live in fellowship with God

through Him. "One died for all, therefore all died." While we must carefully guard our statement against misconception, it seems to the writer impossible to explain Paul's experience or Christian experience generally without the recognition of such a *substitution*; Christ's suffering on our behalf, to rescue us from the suffering that our sin would have brought upon us. Are not Mrs. Browning's words in her poem "Cowper's Grave" true?—

Yea, once Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken;
It went up single, echoless, "My God, I am forsaken!"
It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,
That, of the lost no son should use those words of desolation.

Hermann regards this truth as the necessary confession of Christian experience. "The believer then says to himself, spontaneously looking back on the work of Christ, what we should have suffered, He suffers" (*Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*, p. 107). That is not all that Paul means. This statement regarding Crucifixion and Resurrection is made by Paul to define clearly the moral attitude of the Christian; and so our crucifixion and resurrection with Christ mean our conscious, voluntary identification of ourselves with Christ in the moral purpose of His work for us. Christ offers Himself to us as our *substitute*, that we may choose Him as our *representative*. He identifies Himself with us that we may identify ourselves with Him. Paul did mean that we made our own Christ's condemnation of sin on the Cross, and His consecration of Himself to God in His Resurrection. "Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin" (Rom. vi. 6-7). There is an absolute separation from sin freely willed by the man who in Christ accepts the pardon of his sin. He condemns and executes it in himself as it was judged in the Cross of Christ. Repentance is not only *change of mind*

in regard to sin, but a new direction of the will, consent becomes antagonism. Although there are difficulties in speaking of Christ's death as the offering of a perfect penitence for humanity to God, yet the penitence of the believer is his crucifixion with Christ, and the more fully he realizes what the death of Christ involved for Him, and lets the mind of Christ concerning sin be reproduced in himself, the more adequate will his repentance become. Thus the faith that accepts the grace of God in the Cross accepts also the judgment of sin the Cross involves, and accordingly it has an essential moral influence in severing men from sin. This crucifixion with Christ is not a single act at the beginning of the Christian life, but needs in face of constant temptations to sin to be continuously maintained. It is the negative phase of moral progress, the reproduction and expulsion of moral evil from the renewed life. The Resurrection of Christ too has a moral meaning which can be reproduced in the believer: "The death that he died, he died unto sin once; but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (vers. 10, 11). Until His death on the Cross Christ Himself, though sinless, stood in relation to sin. He was liable to temptation, subject to the contradiction of sinners, submitted Himself in His vicarious sacrifice to the consequences of sin. By His death He was once for all released from His relation to sin. He, who had found His meat and His drink in doing His Father's will, at His resurrection entered into a life so free of all the conditions that had on earth opposed His sense of God, that He could henceforth live unto God, and God alone. The believer who is united to Christ in Him enters on a life of such complete dedication unto God. Of course Paul knew well that neither he himself, nor any other believer, was so entirely dead to sin and alive to God as cruci-

fixion and resurrection with Christ indicated. It was in this, however, that he saw the aim set before himself and others, and an aim, the attainment of which was not hopeless because of the sufficiency of the grace of Christ which the faith of man could ever claim. Faith was for him the condition of perfectness.

(6) We do not recognize all that Paul means when he so describes the Christian experience unless we lay the emphasis on the divine grace and the human faith. While faith calls into exercise, and free and full exercise, the whole personality of man, it is not understood as Paul understood it, if it is regarded as a task to be done by man's strenuous effort. If faith were this, salvation would be of works, and grace would not be grace. The stress in Paul's doctrine is on the objective facts of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, the subjective states of being crucified and risen with Christ are the necessary effects of these facts, where a man submits himself to Christ. Faith is not a productive, but a receptive energy. It is the greater personality of Christ which inspires and sustains that dependence on, communion with, and submission to Him which results in a man's moral transformation. In these days, when on the one hand the Jesus of history is receding into the distant past, and the Christ of faith is being sublimated into a moral and religious ideal, the identity of both needs to be insisted on to make the one present, and the other real. It is the real presence of the [personal Saviour and Lord which alone explains Paul's own experience, and the experience which he assumed to be common to all believers. The moral passion and power of the apostle can be recovered by the Christian Church to-day only as it recognizes the moral meaning of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, and reproduces that moral content in personal union with Him.

(7) This is not, however, all that Paul has to teach us in

regard to the sanctification of man. We find in his writings what may at first sight appear an alternative explanation of the Christian life, but what may on closer scrutiny prove but a complementary representation. Paul speaks of salvation through sanctification of the Spirit (2 Thess. ii. 13). The work of making holy (*ἁγιασμός*) cannot but belong to the Holy Spirit (*πνεῦμα ἅγιον*). It is not intended in this Study to discuss the doctrine of the Spirit generally, for that subject must be reserved for subsequent discussion; only the function of the Spirit in the deliverance of man from the power of sin. One feature of Paul's teaching must, however, be mentioned. What may be called the popular view of the Spirit's presence and power in the Apostolic Church was closely connected with the Old Testament conception. In the earlier portions of the Book of Acts dealing with the primitive Church the work of the Spirit is generally recognized in the miraculous and the marvellous. The ecstatic *charismata*, such as speaking with tongues and prophesying, are especially regarded as the gift of the Spirit. Paul shared the popular view, for in such a matter he was a man of his own age and surroundings, but only in admitting the supernatural character of these manifestations. In two important particulars he rose above it. In the first place he formed a much more moderate estimate of the value of these exceptional phenomena than was current, and he not only demanded that the exercise of these gifts should be subordinated to the edification of the Christian community, but even gave a higher place to the three graces of faith, hope, love (1 Cor. xii. and xiii.). Secondly, for him the Spirit's work was seen in man's moral purification and elevation. The Spirit was for him the antithesis of the flesh. As the flesh was the seat and vehicle of sin, so in the Spirit was the source of holiness. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest . . . but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-

suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 19-23). The Christian lives, is led, walks by the Spirit (vers. 18, 25) and thus crucifies the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof (ver. 24). The being crucified and risen with Christ is the same as living, being led, walking by the Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and no man is Christ's who has not His Spirit (Rom. viii. 9). Even although Paul speaks of the Lord the Spirit, and expressly says the Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18) we should solve the problem too easily were we simply to identify Christ and the Spirit. The work of Christ and of the Spirit is one; there is no union with Christ that is not possession and habitation by the Spirit; and yet there can be no doubt that Paul distinguishes the Spirit and Christ in the Apostolic benediction 2 Cor. xiii. 14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." (Compare 1 Cor. xii. 4-6, and Ephesians iv. 4-6). The love of God is revealed in the grace of Christ, and this grace is realized in the communion of the Spirit; but while there is one divine work in men the Spirit is no more the same as Christ than Christ is the same as the Father.

(8) How shall we relate the working of the Spirit to the work of Christ? It seems to the writer that in so far as Paul was not conscious of the personal presence of Christ in his experience, and yet had evidence of divine activity in his religious certainty and moral progress, he described that action of God as the indwelling (Rom. viii. 9), working (1 Cor. xii. 11), leading (Rom. viii. 14), bearing witness (v. 16), help (v. 26) and teaching (1 Cor. ii. 13) of the Spirit. The whole of his "inner life" was not covered by his consciousness of personal communion with Christ. These were experiences which he could not assign to the exercise of his own personality alone, but for which he must find a divine

cause. To discuss the question whether Paul conceived the Spirit as a power or a person is quite beside the mark. For him the Spirit did indeed mean power, an enthusiasm and an energy which human personality could not account for ; but as the power of the personal God it was necessarily conceived and described as personal. Yet we seem warranted in affirming that he could not so distinctly distinguish the operations of the Spirit from the exercise of his own personality as he could distinguish himself from Christ even in the most intimate personal communion. The demand sometimes made that the Spirit is to be conceived as a person is self-contradictory, for the Spirit is God in His most intimate working within the soul of man, least distinguishable from human aspiration and effort. This working of the Spirit, while it may be distinguished from the personal communion with Christ, is not to be detached from the revelation of God or the redemption of man in Him. We must avoid, however, representing the working of the Spirit as only the subjective effects of the objective facts of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ as the means of man's salvation. Only where the grace of Christ is received in faith is the fellowship of the Spirit enjoyed, and yet the fellowship of the Spirit is more than the impression and influence of His grace. We do justice to Christian experience only as we recognize that God as Spirit Himself becomes progressively immanent in those to whom He reveals Himself and whom He redeems in His Son. The God who is in all, and through all, and over all does in measure conceal His presence ; but in the spiritual life that presence in the thoughts, feelings, desires, deeds of the spiritual man, is known and felt. The connexion between justification and sanctification is not merely human gratitude for divine grace as the motive of a new life ; it is not only a conscious personal communion with a Divine Saviour and Lord, a communion that must be

potent in conforming man to His moral perfection ; but it is, even when there is no consciousness of the personal presence of Christ, so long as faith claims grace, a habitation and operation in man of God by His Spirit, the very life of God become the life of man.

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

STUDIES IN CONVERSION.

III. ST. AUGUSTINE.

IF the conversion of the Emperor Constantine is an instance of the power of dreams and visions, that of Augustine is a no less striking illustration of how another means of conversion mentioned in the thirty-third chapter of Job—namely, testimony—may take effect.

Augustine's life covers the second half of the fourth century and the first quarter of the fifth, his date being 354 to 430. He was a native of Thagaste, a town of Numidia in North Africa ; and most of his life was spent in that province. Soon after this time Numidia was blotted from the map of civilisation by the incursions of barbarians ; but, in his day, not only did it form part of the Roman Empire, but its capital, Carthage, was one of the leading cities of the world. The town of Hippo, where his mature life was spent, has been restored in recent times by the French, under the name of Bona, and, at the present day, is a busy seaport, containing 25,000 inhabitants.

Augustine was of good family. His father was a government official and, though far from being a wealthy man, made great efforts for the education of his gifted son, who was trained first at home, then in the neighbouring town of Madaura, and finally at the university of Carthage. The profession for which he was intended was that of a rhetorician or, as we should say, a professor of literature,