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# THE RESTORED RELATIONSHIP

*A Study in Justification  
and Reconciliation*

W. T. Whitley Lectures for 1961

by

ARTHUR B. CRABTREE

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## Preface

THE following chapters represent the Whitley Lectures for 1961, which were given at the Baptist College, Manchester, England, and, in abbreviated form, at Regent's Park College, Oxford, England. The final chapter was added after the lectures had been delivered.

For the benefit of American readers, I should explain that the Whitley Lectures are an annual series of lectures sponsored by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, and given normally in two Baptist Colleges, or, as they would be called in the United States, Baptist Theological Seminaries.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. L. G. Champion and the Whitley Lectureship Committee for honouring me with an invitation to the Whitley Lectureship, and to Principal and Mrs. Dykes and Professor and Mrs. Farr for their kindness during my stay in Manchester, and Principal Henton Davies and Mrs. Davies for their kindness during my stay in Oxford.

In Manchester the lectures were given to a mixed audience of theological professors, students, and laymen, and in Oxford to a gathering of Baptist theological instructors from Great Britain and Continental Europe. They are thus directed in the first place to theologians and students, but I hope that pastors and laymen will also find them helpful.

The choice of Manchester and Oxford seemed singularly appropriate. For it was in Manchester, as a fellow student of Principal Dykes and Professor Farr, that I received my earliest theological training. And the Oxford conference of Baptist theologians from all parts of western Europe provided a welcome opportunity to renew friendships begun in the days of my work at the Baptist Church House in London and at the international Baptist Theological Seminary in Rüslikon-Zürich, Switzerland.

For this renewed fellowship I am profoundly thankful.

Finally, to one reared among British Baptists and now serving American Baptists, it is a source of gratification that these lectures

are published jointly by the Carey Kingsgate Press of London and the Judson Press of Valley Forge. To the editors of both presses I am deeply indebted.

*Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary*  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.*

July, 1962

ARTHUR B. CRABTREE

### *Abbreviations*

- ATD = *Das Alte Testament Deutsch.*
- EGT = *Expositor's Greek Testament.*
- HNT = *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament.*
- ICC = *International Critical Commentary.*
- KEK = *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament.*
- MNTC = *Moffatt New Testament Commentary.*
- NTD = *Das Neue Testament Deutsch.*
- RGG = *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 3.Aufl., Tübingen, 1957.*
- Th.W.B. = *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, ed. Kittel-Friedrich, Stuttgart, 1933.*

## *Introduction*

THESE lectures were originally intended to deal solely with the Christian doctrine of justification. But in the light of the New Testament it soon became evident that it is difficult, perhaps dangerous, to isolate justification from reconciliation, adoption, redemption, sanctification, the new covenant, the righteousness of God, the kingdom of God, etc., for in the New Testament these are but various ways of describing the same thing—the restoration of a right relationship between God and man.

The scope has accordingly been broadened to include the general question of the transformation of the relationship of God and man. How can the relationship between God and man which has been vitiated by sin be rectified? How can the sinner be put right with God? That is our question. It is the cardinal question of soteriology.

We shall first survey the answers given in the Hebrew-Christian tradition: in the Old and New Testaments, in the Church Fathers and Scholastics, and in the Protestant and Catholic traditions. In the first chapter, dealing with the Old Testament, we shall consider both the vitiation and the rectification of the relationship. In succeeding chapters we shall be concerned only with the rectification of the relationship. In the final chapter we shall attempt to reach some conclusions and to sketch the outlines of a doctrine consonant with the New Testament.

Needless to say, such a theme can be treated only selectively, not exhaustively. In the Old Testament section, for instance, we shall concentrate attention on the idea of the covenant, which is the principal but not the sole concept which expresses the changed relationship of God and man. In the New Testament section we shall consider many terms which denote the new relationship of man to God in Christ, but even here we shall not attempt to be exhaustive. And in the chapters dealing with the history of

Christian thought, we can select only those writers and movements most important for our theme. Such selection will, I hope, not involve distortion.

One of the salutary developments of recent years has been the revival of biblical philology and theology. This has affected both Protestant and Catholic theology. Works like Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* and many excellent studies of biblical words and biblical theology have helped us to understand the meaning of New Testament words with unprecedented precision. In the light of this new knowledge, we have been obliged to recognize that many important theological words have a more comprehensive meaning in Scripture than in traditional Protestant and Catholic theology.

The word 'justify' is an example. For centuries Protestants have understood it as an essentially forensic word meaning 'to declare righteous.' Catholics have understood it as an essentially dynamic word meaning 'to make righteous.' In the Bible, when used theologically, it means to rectify the relationship between man and God, and this God does both by declaring the sinner righteous and by making him righteous. The word is essentially a relational concept (*Verhältnisbegriff*, as Hermann Cremer called it), which has both a forensic and a dynamic aspect. It thus in its biblical usage embraces both the Protestant and Catholic ideas in a broader synthesis.

This is gradually being perceived by both Catholics and Protestants. It was seen by John Henry Newman, a Protestant who became Catholic, in his *Lectures on Justification*, published in 1838. And in the present 'Newman Renaissance' in Catholicism, of which the most brilliant exponent is Hans Küng, it is being widely acknowledged. Similarly, among Protestants it is being recognized by scholars like Schrenk, Hofer, Brunner, Barth and Richardson.

Thus as Catholics and Protestants draw nearer to the Bible they draw nearer to one another. It is a growing understanding which rests not on disregard for truth but on devotion to truth. May the present book assist the process.

*DEDICATION*

*to my beloved and honoured teacher*

**EMIL BRUNNER**

*in gratitude*

## Chapter I

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF GOD AND MAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### A. GOD AND MAN

THE God of the Old Testament is 'the living God' (Deut. 5. 26; Ps. 42. 2), the active, personal God who creates the world, who gives life to man, who stands ever in personal relationship with man, blessing, commanding, judging, redeeming him. He is the God of creation and history, of providence and redemption, of individuals and of nations. In the words of Pascal, he is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, not the God of the philosophers and savants.

That means that he is neither the transcendent God of the deists nor the purely immanent God of the pantheists. He is no mere 'first cause' who once made the world and wound it up like a clockwork top, and then left it spinning without further concern or action regarding its future. Nor is he identical with a world which is but the effusion and emanation of himself. He is rather the Creator God, ever distinct from the world he has made, yet ever active within it. He is, in the words of Augustine, 'most mighty, most omnipotent, most merciful and most just; most secret and most present; most beautiful and most strong; constant and incomprehensible; immutable, yet changing all things; never new and never old; renewing all things, and bringing proud men into decay; ever active and ever quiet ... upholding, filling, and protecting, creating, nourishing, and perfecting all things.'<sup>1</sup> He is the God of power and of pity, of majesty and mercy, of righteousness and holiness, of grace and wrath, of judgment and redemption.

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions*, I, iv.

Finally, he is the God who created man in his own image and likeness (Gen. 1. 27).<sup>1</sup> What does this mean? It means, firstly, that there is a *distinction* between man and God, just as there is a distinction between an image and that of which it is the image. It means, secondly, that there is a *resemblance* between man and God, just as there is a resemblance between an image and that which it portrays. What is the nature of this resemblance? It seems to consist in sovereignty and personality. As God rules all his creatures with absolute authority, so man is to rule the rest of creation with delegated authority.<sup>2</sup> And as God is a personal being capable of personal relationships, so man is a personal being capable of personal relationships.<sup>3</sup>

Now since God is a personal being and man is a personal being, there exists between them a personal relationship. It is characteristic of the Old Testament to see man always in relation to God. 'Adam (which is simply the generic Hebrew term for 'man')<sup>4</sup> is seen in the opening chapters of Genesis as a personal being who is created by God, who is dependent on God, obligated to God, responding to God, and responsible to God. He is placed by God in the garden, and commanded to keep and till it (Gen. 2. 15). He is given the fruit of all the trees of the garden for food, save the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. He is left free to obey or disobey the Lord. But he is not free to escape from the Lord or evade responsibility. After he has eaten the forbidden fruit, he meets the Lord 'walking in the garden in the cool of the day'. He seeks to hide behind the bushes, but finds this impossible. The

<sup>1</sup> That there is no *essential* difference between the 'image' and the 'likeness' seems to be well established. See W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II, 2. Aufl. 1948, pp. 60ff.; P. van Imschoot, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament*, II, 1956, pp. 7f.

<sup>2</sup> L. Köhler, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 1936, pp. 133f.; G. von Rad, *Th. W. B.*, II, pp. 387ff.

<sup>3</sup> Th. C. Vriegen, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 1956, pp. 49f.; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., II, pp. 9f.; H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, 1953, pp. 76, 79; H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel*, 1956, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> See Köhler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, p. 12; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., II, p. 1.

Lord finds him. He seeks to hide behind his wife, casting the blame on her (Gen. 3. 12). But this is equally impossible. The Lord condemns both him and his wife and drives them from the garden. For he is made in the image of God. He is responsive to God and responsible to God. He can never evade either his responsiveness to God or his responsibility to God or his relationship to God. The relationship may be good or bad, blessed or baneful, but it is inescapable.

This thought is nowhere more beautifully expressed than in Ps. 139:

O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me! Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up; thou discernest my thoughts from afar. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways ... Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. (Ps. 139. 1-10.)

We have spoken thus far as if man were a single individual standing alone in relation to God. This is of course not the case. Man is also a multiplicity of individuals standing in relation to one another and having responsibilities towards one another—God-ordained responsibilities. The Old Testament knows neither the rugged individualism of the nineteenth century nor the rugged collectivism of the twentieth. It is true that the collectivistic aspect sometimes stands in the foreground, as when the sins of the fathers are said to be visited on the children (Ex. 20. 5). And it is true that the individualistic aspect sometimes stands in the foreground, as when Ezekiel insists that it is the one who sins who shall die (Ez. 18. 20). But it is not true, as used to be thought, that Hebrew thought moved from a completely collectivistic phase to a completely individualistic one with the advent of

Jeremiah and Ezekiel. What is true is that, with varying emphases, the Old Testament is ever aware both of the individualistic and the collectivistic aspects of human life.<sup>1</sup> It sees the individual always in the setting of the community—of the family, the tribe, the neighbours, the nation. Or, to use better terminology, for the words 'individual' and 'collective' are inadequate to biblical thought,<sup>2</sup> it sees man as persons in community, and the community as persons in relationship.

This is illustrated by the way in which the Old Testament uses the words 'Adam' (man) and 'Israel'.

To any one accustomed to distinguish sharply between singular and plural, individual and collective, it seems strange, almost disconcerting, to find the author of Gen. 1. 26f apparently confusing them hopelessly:

Then God said, 'Let us make 'Adam' ("man", sing.) in our own image, after our likeness; and let *them* have dominion ...'  
So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created *him*; male and female created he *them*. And God blessed *them* ...

Yet there is no confusion whatever to the Hebrew way of thinking. For, as Boman reminds us, 'Adam' is both man and mankind,<sup>3</sup> both the individual and the whole species to which he belongs. That is what makes the story of Adam and Eve and the lost paradise so relevant to our present—and every—predicament. What is here related is not *merely* a story of long ago, although it is the story of every age in the history of man; it is the story of our age; it is the story of you and me.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Hempel, *Das Ethos des Alten Testaments*, 1938, pp. 32-67; W. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 1-18; H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel*, 1956, pp. 99ff.; Th. C. Vriezen, *op. cit.*, pp. 181ff.

<sup>2</sup> T. Boman, *Das Hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem Griechischen*, 3. Aufl. 1959, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> T. Boman, *op. cit.*, p. 57. It is astonishing to see how completely modern Old Testament scholarship has verified Kierkegaard's genial intuition that Adam 'is at once himself and the race.' (*The Concept of Dread*, E. Tr., p. 26.)

At present, however, we are concerned not with the existential implications of the paradise story, but simply with the ease with which Hebrew thought can move from the singular to the plural, since it sees the individual ever as a person in community, and the community as individuals in relationship.

What is true of the word 'Adam' is true of the words 'Jacob' and 'Israel'. Jacob is both the patriarch Jacob whose exploits are recorded in Gen. 27-35 and the people Jacob who are chosen for the service of the Lord (Is. 41. 8, etc.). Similarly Israel (which is the surname of Jacob) is both the patriarch and the people descended from him (Is. 41. 8, etc.).

Thus there is in the Old Testament neither pure individualism nor pure collectivism, but man seen as persons in community, and the community as persons in relationship.

Now these human relationships of person to person, person to community, and community to community, can be right or wrong, good or bad. And the criterion of right or wrong, good or bad, is not some human ideal, as in Greek ethics,<sup>1</sup> but the will of God. A wrong attitude to my neighbour, a wrong action against him, is therefore not merely a social crime but a sin against God. Consequently, a wrong relationship to my neighbour puts me in a wrong relationship to God.

This is aptly illustrated by the story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4). Cain is frustrated and jealous when his sacrifice is rejected while Abel's is accepted. In anger he kills his brother Abel. This is a sin against God, for God had ordained him to be not his brother's murderer but his brother's helper. Not only is his relationship to Abel ended, but his relationship to God is impaired. He is condemned by God (Gen. 4. 10ff) and made a fugitive in the earth.

Similarly, the sins castigated by Amos are what we would call today crimes against society: ruthlessness in warfare, callousness toward the poor, sexual promiscuity, perversion of justice. *These*

<sup>1</sup> W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, I, 53. Cf. Martin P. Nilsson, 'Die Griechengötter und die Gerechtigkeit', in *The Harvard Theological Review*, July 1957, p. 196.

are the sins which turn God against his people and induce him to bring punishment instead of blessing upon them.

Man's relationship to God, and God's relationship to man, depend not only on the attitude of man in regard to God but also on his attitude towards his neighbour. Of the Ten Commandments, four regulate man's relationship to God and six his relationship to his fellow man. And to break *any* of the commandments is to vitiate one's relationship with God.

#### B. THE ORDAINED RELATIONSHIP

What is the right relationship between God and man and between man and man, the relationship ordained of God? It is the natural consequence of the nature of God as the sovereign and beneficent Creator and the nature of man as his frail yet marvellous creature who is made by God and for God.

This ordained relationship, this 'original righteousness', has been vitiated by sin. It can be seen however in the relationship of Adam to God before the advent of sin, and in the provisions of the covenant with Israel which is designed to bring man back into this perfect relationship with God.

What was the original relationship of God and man according to the opening chapters of Genesis? As is well known, Genesis contains two accounts of creation, forming two variations on the same theme. The first, found in Gen. 1.1-2.4a, belongs to the later P tradition. The second, found in Gen. 2.4b-2.24, belongs to the earlier J tradition.

The P narrative sets before us the majestic panorama of the work of creation—the creation of light, of the firmament of heaven, of the gathering together of land and water, of the creation of the sun, moon and stars, the creation of plant and animal life, and lastly, as the crown of all, the creation of man in the image of God, living by the bounty of God and permitted to use any form of vegetable life for food.

The J narrative is concerned primarily with the creation of

man. It tells us that 'in the day when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth ... the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed', commanding him to till the garden and to keep it and forbidding him to eat of the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'

To get the complete picture of what Genesis is telling us we must take account of both narratives.

Man is made of the dust of the ground. He is, that is, a mere creature, partaking of the frailty of the creature, and dependent like all the creatures on the creating and sustaining power of God. The statement that God 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being' (Gen. 2. 7) does not mean that some part of man (the 'mind' or 'soul' or 'spirit') consists of the divine breath, i.e. of the divine being, but rather, as Zimmerli shows,<sup>1</sup> that man owes his life to the creative power of God. Similarly, he owes the blessings of life—the garden and its fruits—to God. The relationship between God and man is accordingly that between an omnipotent and beneficent Creator and a frail and dependent creature.

Yet with all his frailty, man has an eminence among the creatures. He is made in the image and likeness of God. This means, as we have seen, that he is made for dominion and communion: dominion over the rest of creation and communion with God. His dominion is not an absolute dominion like God's but a dominion within subjection: dominion over the creatures exercised in subjection to God. And his communion is not absorption into the very being of God, but the free unfettered fellowship of love between a gracious Creator and a grateful creature. He is made for fellowship with God when the Lord walks in the garden in the cool of the day.

<sup>1</sup> I. Mose 1-11, *Die Urgeschichte*, Zürich, 1943, pp. 137-139.

This fellowship with God involves the service of God, for it is the fellowship between the sovereign Lord and his subservient child. God not only bestows his blessings, but issues his edicts. He places man in the garden with a purpose—to till it and to keep it. He commands man to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. He forbids him to eat of the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’

What is meant by the ‘knowledge of good and evil’? Not, as we frequently assume, the ability to distinguish the morally good from the morally bad, but, as Imschoot<sup>1</sup> and von Rad<sup>2</sup> have shown, the desire to know everything in order to control everything, the urge to usurp the throne of God as the omniscient and omnipotent Lord. This is clearly implied in the words of the serpent that when Adam and Eve eat of it they will ‘be like God, knowing good and evil.’ What is forbidden, as Augustine rightly saw, is that *superbia* (rebellious arrogant pride) which revolts against God’s lordship and seeks to establish one’s own, that emancipation from God and autonomy of man so extolled by modern humanism. Man, according to Genesis, is made not for *autonomy*, emancipation from the will of God, but for *theonomy*, subjection to the will of God. And in this subjection alone lies his health and peace. His rejection of subjection means his rejection by his Lord (Gen. 3. 14-19).

In short, the relationship ordained between God and man according to the creation stories of Genesis is that between a gracious and sovereign Creator and a grateful and subservient creature. It means donation and dominion on the part of God and thankful service on the part of man.

We reach the same conclusion if we consider the provisions of the covenant which seeks to re-establish this relationship. For the covenant, as we shall see more fully later, is a covenant of donation and dominion (blessing and behest) on the part of God and of thankfulness and service on the part of Israel.

<sup>1</sup> *Théologie de l’Ancien Testament*, II, pp. 1ff., 289.

<sup>2</sup> *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I, p. 159.

C. THE VITIATED RELATIONSHIP

This relationship ordained of God was summarily vitiated by man. Led by the serpent to doubt God's veracity and to aspire to his throne, Adam and Eve eat of the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil', i.e. they clutch at the omniscience and omnipotence reserved for God himself. They revolt both against his donation and his dominion. They aspire to become independent of his gifts and of his lordship and become self-sufficient and autonomous. This is *hubris*, *superbia*, the effort to raise oneself above God. This is intolerable to the Lord and giver of all. As they turn against God, he turns against them. He seeks them in the cool of the day not to welcome and bless them, but to condemn and curse them. Of this they are aware. His presence no longer fills them with joy and gladness but with fear and trembling. They hide behind the trees of the garden. Vain endeavour! They hide behind each other and seek to evade responsibility by casting the blame on one another. Vain endeavour! All have sinned, and each must answer for his own sin. Each must be condemned and cursed for his sin.

The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle ...

To the woman he said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing ...

And to Adam he said 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life ... in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.' (Gen. 3. 14-19).

By this sin of insurrection, the whole relationship of God and man is inverted. Instead of a relationship of lordship and blessing

on God's side and of service and gratitude on man's we have a relationship in which God's lordship is violated and his blessing turned to curse, and in which man's obedience has become disobedience and his gratitude thanklessness. The estrangement is not merely on man's side, but also on God's. Man has turned against God, and in consequence God has turned against man. The alienation is mutual.

This is not the end of the story. Man not only turns against God. He also turns against man. The story of Adam and Eve is followed by that of Cain and Abel. Both bring an offering to the Lord. Abel's is accepted but Cain's rejected. And now, instead of submitting to the Lord's judgment and bringing a new offering more acceptable, Cain gives way to resentment, jealousy and anger, and in his rage slays his brother Abel. This crime against his brother is a sin against God, for God had ordained him to be his brother's helper, not his murderer. The curse which fell on Adam now falls on Cain. But it is intensified. Not only will the ground which he tills be unproductive, but he himself will become a fugitive and a wanderer on the face of the earth, the prototype of all the uprooted restless souls of earth.

Murder now stalks the earth. Cain was ashamed of it. Lamech exults in it (Gen. 4. 23f). And after murder all manner of wickedness became rampant.

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground' ... But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6. 5-8).

And now the wrath of God erupts upon mankind, engulfing all save Noah and his family in the flood.

But not even the flood could quell the pride of man. Next the Babylonians 'eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'

Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves ...'

Once more the *superbia* of man! And once more the response of God!

'Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city (Gen. 11. 7-9).

So ends the *Urgeschichte*. It is the story of God and man in their relation to each other within the cosmos of God and outside the covenant with Israel. Man has revolted against the blessing and behest of God and brought upon himself the wrath and curse of God. Now he stands in need of forgiveness, of reconciliation, of justification, of sanctification, if he is to enter once more into the right relationship with God. Adam is more than the first man. He is mankind, the first man and the last man and every man. And the *Urgeschichte* is more than the history of a remote past. It is the story of man, of mankind and every man, of his creation, of your creation and my creation, at the hand of God; of his revolt, your revolt and my revolt, against the will of God; of his vitiation, your vitiation and my vitiation, of the perfect relationship with God. Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel and Lamech and the generation of the flood and the builders of the tower of Babel are concrete examples typifying man in general (this man and that man and every man) in his relation to God outside of the old covenant in Abraham and the new covenant in Christ.<sup>1</sup> They are typical of man in his revolt against God, man in perverted relationship to God, man under the wrath and curse of God. Yet

<sup>1</sup> T. Boman, op. cit., pp. 56f., points out that the Hebrew thinks in terms of universals (*Allgemeinbegriffe*), of which the individual or particular is merely a type or manifestation. Thus the Moabite is 'a revelation or manifestation of "Moabiteness"', just as a particular cow is a true manifestation of 'cowness'. And Adam is 'both man and mankind simultaneously'.

in this *Urgeschichte* though man stands under the curse he is not shut out from the grace of God. Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden, but still allowed to live. Cain is made a fugitive, but protected from the violence of men. And even on the storm clouds of the flood appears the rainbow of mercy. The light of God's grace shines in the darkness of sin and sorrow—and the darkness does not overcome it. Where sin abounds grace much more abounds. But it is sustaining grace, not yet redeeming grace.

#### D. THE RESTORED RELATIONSHIP—THE COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

With the calling of Abraham (Gen. 12) the *Urgeschichte* ends and the *Heilsgeschichte* begins; God manifests not merely sustaining but redeeming grace. He chooses Abraham and his descendants to be his own and makes a covenant with them (Gen. 15. 17ff; 17. 1-21).

##### 1. *The Purpose of the Covenant*

What is the purpose of this covenant? It is nothing less than the restoration of the lost relationship between God and man, the relationship of sovereignty and blessing on the part of God and of service and thankfulness on the part of man.

For this is precisely the relationship established between God and Abraham. God is the sovereign Lord who commands Abraham to leave his own country and kindred and go to a country which God will show him, and Abraham is the servant of the Lord who unquestioningly obeys. God, moreover, is the gracious Lord who promises a blessing, the blessing of a great posterity dwelling in their own land, and Abraham gratefully believes the Lord. The true relationship between God and man has been restored.

This is a relationship intended not only for Abraham but also for his posterity:

I will establish my covenant between me and you *and your descendants after you* throughout their generations for an ever-

lasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Gen. 17. 7f).

And not only are his descendants to be blessed along with faithful Abraham, but through him and his descendants the whole of mankind:

I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12. 3).<sup>1</sup>

The same thought is repeated in Second Isaiah, e.g. Is. 49. 6:

It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

The true relationship of sovereignty and service, blessing and thankfulness, is established with Israel not that it might be restricted to Israel but that it might be extended to all mankind.

The election of Israel and the covenant with Israel are intended *pars pro toto*, the part in the interest of the whole.

## 2. *The History of the Covenant*

We have been assuming, as used to be customary, that the covenant with Israel began with Abraham. This assumption has been questioned by several recent scholars<sup>2</sup> who see it as beginning with Moses.

<sup>1</sup> The last clause may be correctly translated either, as in RSV 'and by you all the families of the earth will bless themselves' or, as in RSV margin 'in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.' The latter seems more appropriate in the light of the context, where the blessing always goes forth from God, not from man.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. M. Noth, *Geschichte Israels*, 1950; B. W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 1957.

Now the assumption that it began with Moses rests on the silence of the prophets before Jeremiah concerning the covenant with Abraham. This led Galling<sup>1</sup> to posit the existence in Israel of two traditions concerning the commencement of the covenant, one attributing it to the time of Abraham and the other to that of Moses. Of these two traditions, according to Galling, the one which assigns it to the time of Moses is the more ancient and reliable. The other, dating it from the time of Abraham, is the creation of the Jahwist narrator, and was inserted with the political purpose of promoting the unity of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Now the argument from silence is always precarious. Moreover, the silence of the prophets is easily understood if we remember that they had no particular need to mention the covenant with Abraham. For the prophetic movement was essentially a recall to the service of Yahweh, and the law of the covenant.<sup>2</sup> And since this was more explicit in the Mosaic than in the Abrahamic covenant, it is not surprising that they appeal to Moses rather than to Abraham. This appeal to Moses is simply in line with their purpose and in no way implies that they thought the covenant *began* with Moses, or that there were two divergent traditions in Israel regarding the beginning of the covenant.

Even if, with Gerhard von Rad,<sup>3</sup> we assume that originally there were two great *clusters* of tradition, one concerned with the patriarchs and the other with Moses, there is no reason to doubt the reliability of the patriarchal narratives. For, as J. N. Schofield remarks, the stories of the patriarchs fit perfectly into the historical background of the time.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, as Weiser<sup>5</sup> and von Rad<sup>6</sup> himself have shown, the J-E strata of the Old Testament which contain the patriarchal narratives rest on ancient and reliable

<sup>1</sup> *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels*, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> E. König, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 1922, pp. 107f.

<sup>3</sup> *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> *The Historical Background of the Bible*, pp. 44ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1949, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> *Das erste Buch Mose (ATD)*, 2. Aufl. 1950, pp. 14f.

tradition. 'Neither the Yahwist nor the Elohist,' says P. van Imschoot, 'has created either the substance or the persons in his narrative; they have taken them from tradition.'<sup>1</sup>

There is therefore no reason to doubt the authenticity of the narratives which attribute the beginning of the covenant with Israel to the age of Abraham.<sup>2</sup>

This covenant with Abraham is, as we have seen, a covenant of command and promise on the part of God and of obedience and trust on the part of Abraham. God commands Abraham to go forth from his country and kindred and promises to make him and his posterity a great nation in a new land, and Abraham obeys with complete confidence in the promise. This is the true relationship between man and God, and this faith of Abraham, this faith which trusts the promise of God and obeys the command of God, is his righteousness in the sight of God.

And Abraham had confidence (*'mn*) in the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness (Gen. 15. 6).

This is, as Paul rightly saw, justification by faith, but this faith, both Paul and James were abundantly aware, was no mere intellectual assent to propositions. It was rather that complete confidence in God which trusts him implicitly and obeys him unquestioningly. Paul calls it the *obedience of faith* (Rom. 1. 5; 16. 26).

This faith, this joyous, obedient confidence, was put to a grievous test. 'Time passed,' says Kierkegaard, 'the possibility was there, Abraham believed; time passed, it became unreasonable, Abraham believed!'<sup>3</sup> And when at length, against all human probability, the son was given, the Lord called Abraham to sacrifice him on Mount Moriah!

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., I, p. 261. Cf. R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1952, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> The P tradition speaks also of an earlier covenant with Noah, but since this is a covenant of sustaining grace with all mankind rather than a covenant of redeeming grace with Israel, it falls outside our present purview.

<sup>3</sup> Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, E. Tr., p. 32.

After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here, am I.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you' (Gen. 22. 1f).

The absurdity! The futility! The mockery! God promises a great posterity and now asks Abraham to eliminate the very possibility of posterity! The absurdity of the situation and the glory of Abraham's faith have perhaps nowhere been so marvelously described as by Kierkegaard in his *Fear and Trembling*:

So all was lost—more dreadfully than if it had never come to pass! So the Lord was only making sport of Abraham! ... All would now be lost ... the promise of Abraham's seed—this was only a whim, a fleeting thought which the Lord had, which Abraham should now obliterate ... Yet Abraham believed and did not doubt, he believed the preposterous ... joyfully, buoyantly, confidently, with a loud voice, he answered 'Here am I.' We read further: 'And Abraham rose early in the morning'—as though it were a festival, so he hastened, and early in the morning he had come to the place spoken of, to Mount Moriah ... He cleft the wood, he bound Isaac, he lit the pyre, he drew the knife ... And there he stood, the old man, with his only hope! But he did not doubt, he did not look anxiously to the right or to the left, he did not challenge heaven with his prayers. He knew that it was God Almighty who was trying him, he knew that it was the hardest sacrifice that could be required of him; but he knew also that no sacrifice was too hard when God required it—and he drew the knife ... Venerable Father Abraham!<sup>1</sup>

Such was Abraham's faith, a trembling, trusting, joyful, hopeful, obedient, childlike faith in the God who promises and commands and is able to do more than we can ask or think.

<sup>1</sup> *Fear and Trembling*, E. Tr., pp. 33-35.

Such was justifying faith under the old covenant. And such is justifying faith under the new.

If Abraham's faith was tested, so was that of his descendants. The promise of a large posterity had been realized. But what of the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of their own? They were captives in Egypt, serving with hardship and rigour.

But the promise of God was not vain. Like Rome, God always has time: time to wait and time to act.

And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help, and their cry came up to God. And God heard their groaning, *and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.* (Ex. 2. 23f).

Under Moses' leadership God triumphantly brings his people out of Egypt, miraculously delivers them at the Red Sea, graciously protects them in the wilderness, and leads them on to Sinai.

There he makes a covenant with them, reminding them of their deliverance from Egypt, demanding their obedience to his law, and promising that they shall be his people.

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex. 19. 4-6).

The law was made explicit in the Decalogue, but the Decalogue begins not with law but with gospel:

And God spoke all these words, saying, *'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* You shall have no other gods besides me. You shall

After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here, am I.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you' (Gen. 22. 1f).

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The law was made explicit in the Decalogue, but the Decalogue begins not with law but with gospel:

And God spoke all these words, saying, *'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods besides me. You shall*

not make yourself a graven image ... You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain ... Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy ... Honor your father and your mother ... You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house ... (Ex. 20. ff).

And it is interspersed with a reminder that the Lord is a zealous and jealous God who keeps his steadfast love (*chesed*) towards those who keep his law and chastises those who break it:

I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments (Ex. 20. 5f).

Finally, the covenant is sealed.

Then he (Moses) took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.' And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.' (Ex. 24. 7f).

What kind of a covenant is this which is made at Sinai? Like the one made with Abraham, of which it represents the continuation or renewal, it is a covenant of suzerainty, a covenant of blessing and sovereignty on the part of God and of trust and obedience on the part of Israel. Now, however, the blessing which was present to Abraham only as promise, is present in reality—though still as promise. For Israel has already become a great nation and experienced the joy of salvation, yet still awaits possession of the promised land. And the content of obedience is now made explicit, as is appropriate to a people, in the injunctions of the law.

The Mosaic covenant is thus a relationship of blessing and behest, donation and dominion, grace and lordship on the part of God; and of trust and obedience, receptivity and activity, faith and works on the part of man. It embraces both gospel and law, *Gabe und Aufgabe*, the gift of God and the demand of God.

These two elements, as Luther was never tired of insisting, must be distinguished. But they dare never be separated. Maybe Tertullian sometimes confused them, and thought, like many after him, that he was preaching the gospel when he was merely preaching the law. Nevertheless, his rejection of Marcion on the ground that Marcion had *separated* the law and the gospel, was perfectly justified. Neither the Old Testament nor the New ever separates them. The Old says: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall ...' And the New says: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go, and sin no more.'

The gospel of the covenant and the law of the covenant are in indissoluble unity. They may be distinguished but not divided. The basic question is how they are related.

The relationship is most clearly portrayed in Deut. 7-11, where three things are made plain. Firstly, that the blessing of the covenant flows from the free grace of God, not from the merit of good works. Secondly, that unless Israel does the works of the law, the blessing will be removed and replaced by the curse. Thirdly, that the link between gospel and law is love; the love of God for Israel in bestowing the blessing, and the love of Israel for God in fulfilling the law.

That the blessing flows from God's grace rather than Israel's merit appears in passages like the following:

It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty

hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage (Deut. 7. 7f).

Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land' ... Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land; but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out before you (Deut. 9. 4f).

That the *continuance* of the blessing does however depend on the doing of the law is equally clear:

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you will obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God (Deut. 11. 26-28).

And that love is the bond between the blessing of the covenant and the law of the covenant is manifest from the whole tenor of these chapters. They begin with the love of God, that is with God's love for Israel. In his free, unfettered, boundless, unmerited love, God has chosen Israel and made her his people and delivered her from Egypt (Deut. 7. 6-8). What does he desire but her love in return—that love which means obedience to his will?

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good? (Deut. 10. 12f).

Not only the blessing but also the law is given in love, for it is for Israel's good. Thus both blessing and law are the gift of grace. Grace is primary. This is perhaps in part what Karl Barth means

when he says that 'the law lies in the gospel like the tables of Sinai in the ark of the covenant.'<sup>1</sup>

The integrity of the covenant thus depends on God's love expressed in blessing and law, and on Israel's love expressed in thankfulness and obedience. God's love cannot fail. But Israel's can, with disastrous consequences.

That is why Joshua is impelled to renew the covenant at Shechem (Jos. 24), lest Israel forget.

That is why Deuteronomy so earnestly exhorts Israel to love the Lord and obey his will.

That is why the prophets repeatedly denounce Israel's defection from the law and beg Israel to return to the Lord and his service. And that is why they threaten doom if Israel fails to return.

That is moreover the reason why Josiah renewed the covenant after the law had been so shamefully lost and ignored.

And the king stood by the pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, *and to keep his testimonies and his statutes* with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant (2 Kg. 23. 3).

And that is why Ezra, returning from Babylon to Jerusalem after he had heard that the law had again been flagrantly transgressed, renews the covenant (Neh. 8-10).

For Israel, the chosen of the Lord, is a wilful, wayward people, ever and again unfaithful and disobedient to her Lord, ever standing in need of recall. And the miracle of grace in the Old Testament is that when she returns, the Lord receives her. That is the glory of his *chesed*, which is the theme of the book of Hosea. It is equally the theme of Psalm 89, where the Lord says:

My steadfast love (*chesed*) I will keep for him for ever, and my covenant will stand firm for him ... If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my ordinances, if they

<sup>1</sup> *Evangelium und Gesetz*, 1956, p. 13.

violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgressions with the rod and their iniquity with scourges; but I will not remove from him my steadfast love, or be false to my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips (Ps. 89. 28-34).

There is the history of the covenant in a nutshell. On the one side, the frailty of Israel's *chesed*, her repeated defections from the Lord of the covenant and the law of the covenant, the chastisement of the Lord upon her culminating in the Assyrian and Babylonian exile. And on the other side, the fidelity of God's *chesed*, which chastises in order to bring Israel back to himself, and when she returns receives her with joy and forgiveness and blessing, saying anew, 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people.'

### 3. *The Nature of the Covenant*

A covenant in the biblical sense of the term is an agreement between two partners regulating their relationship to each other.<sup>1</sup>

Covenants in the ancient world, as Mendenhall<sup>2</sup> and Anderson<sup>3</sup> point out, seem to have been principally of two kinds: covenants of parity and covenants of suzerainty. A covenant of parity was made between equals, and was bilateral and reciprocal. A covenant of suzerainty was made between a superior and an inferior. Its terms were prescribed by the superior and offered to the inferior. It expressed therefore the relationship between a king and his vassal, a lord and his servant. It was however no mere expression of power politics whereby the stronger sought to oppress the weaker. On the contrary, its purpose was to protect him from harm. It offered him defence and aid in return for service. It established a relationship of blessing and service—blessing on the part of the stronger and service on the part of the weaker.

<sup>1</sup> G. Quell, *Th. W. B.*, II, pp. 109ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, published by the Biblical Colloquium, Pittsburgh, Pa.

<sup>3</sup> *Understanding the Old Testament*, 1957, p. 56.

This is the kind of covenant established by God with Israel.<sup>1</sup> For he is the gracious Lord who confers blessings on Israel and the sovereign Lord who demands service of Israel.

And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: *You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel*' (Ex. 19. 3-6).

The making of the covenant is an act of sovereign grace on the part of God—which means that it is both an act of sovereignty and an act of grace.

It is an act of sovereignty in two senses. Firstly, in the sense that it is God alone who takes the initiative in making the covenant. Secondly, in the sense that the covenant establishes God's sovereignty over Israel:

Then he (Moses) took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient' (Ex. 24. 7).

And it is an act of grace in two senses. Firstly, in the sense that the *making* of the covenant is an act of pure grace. Secondly, in the sense that the *blessings* of the covenant are a gift of pure grace:

It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord

<sup>1</sup> Cf. B. W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 1957, p. 57; G. Quell, *Th. W. B.*, II, pp. 120ff.; G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I, pp. 135f.; P. van Imschoot, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament*, I, pp. 244f.

loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deut. 7. 7f).

The making of the covenant and the deliverance from Egypt are thus acts of pure grace, not the reward of merit. Similarly, the possession of the promised land is an act of grace, not the reward of merit:

Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, "It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land"; whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land; but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob (Deut. 9. 4f).

Indeed, as Gaugler observes,<sup>1</sup> the idea of merit has no place whatever in the covenant relationship. It was the tragic error of post-exilic Judaism to suppose that blessing is the reward of virtue—an error against which the Book of Job and the whole of the New Testament resolutely protest. In the Old Testament, as in the New, blessing is ever the fruit of grace.

But that does not mean, as Israel sometimes presumed to think, that the blessing of the covenant was assured whether Israel kept the law of the covenant or not. For the covenant was a covenant of law as well as a covenant of grace. It involved both grace *and* sovereignty on the part of God; both faith *and* obedience on the part of Israel. The blessing could not be earned by obedience—but it could be lost by disobedience.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Heiligung im Zeugnis der Schrift*, 1948, pp. 16-22.

If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase ... And I will make my abode among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people ... But if you will not hearken to me, and will not do all these commandments ... I will do this to you: I will appoint over you sudden terror, consumption, and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it ... And if by this discipline you are not turned to me, but walk contrary to me, then I will walk contrary to you, and I myself will smite you sevenfold for your sins (Lev. 26. 3-23).

The paradox of the blessing is this, that it is a gift of grace, and yet it is conditional on Israel's obedience to the law. That is why the Old Testament speaks not only of the blessing but also of the curse within the covenant relationship.

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God (Deut. 11. 26-28; cf. Deut. 28. 1ff).

Yet the withdrawal of the blessing does not mean the end of the covenant. God may chastize Israel, but he does not disown her. He maintains his covenant love (*chesed*) to her even when she offers none to him. As Hosea is faithful to his unfaithful wife, so the Lord is faithful to his unfaithful Israel. He has pity on the one who deserves no pity; he still calls 'My People' those who no longer deserve to be his people (Hos. 1. 6-2. 1). In faithfulness he renews his covenant with faithless Israel who has broken it:

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her ... and I will make for you a covenant on that day ... and I will betroth you to me

for ever: I will betroth you in righteousness and in justice and in steadfast love (*chesed*), and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord (Hos. 2. 14-20).

Where sin abounds, there does grace much more abound. Israel's *chesed* falters, but the Lord's abides. That means that where the covenant is violated it can also be restored.

#### 4. *The Violation and Restoration of the Covenant*

The requirement of the covenant is devotion to Yahweh and obedience to his law.

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord? (Deut. 10. 12f).

Both the historical books of the Old Testament and the writings of the prophets tell the story of the violation of this covenant requirement. Israel forsakes Yahweh for other gods and disobeys his law. For this she is taken to task and punished.

Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel; for the Lord has a controversy (*rib*, law-suit, accusation) with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds and murder follows murder. Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish (Hos. 4. 1-3).

Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. Why will you be smitten, that you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness

in it, but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds ... Your country lies desolate, your cities are burned with fire ... (Is. 1. 4ff).

But where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. Sinful, suffering Israel can be restored to the grace and blessing of the covenant relationship.

Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up (Hos. 6. 1).

I will make for you a covenant on that day ... and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord (Hos. 2. 18-20).

There is a balm in Gilead, a way of healing, a way of restoration. What is this way?

The Old Testament answers that it is the way of intercession and repentance (*shub, tshuba*).

There are three forms of intercession, which we may call sacrificial intercession, prayerful intercession, and ministerial intercession.<sup>1</sup>

By sacrificial intercession we mean the offering of cultic sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins and the reconciliation of God and man.<sup>2</sup>

Here two questions present themselves. First, *which* sins do cultic sacrifices cover? Second, *how* do they cover them?

According to Leviticus, the only sins forgiven by sacrifice are those committed unintentionally, inadvertently, unwittingly (*bishgagah*, Lev. 4. 2, 13, 22, 27; 5. 14).<sup>3</sup> For sins committed

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Th. C. Vriezen, op. cit., pp. 25ff.

<sup>2</sup> Sacrifice may have had other purposes, e.g. thanksgiving, but we are concerned here only with atonement, which, as Procksch says, is the principal purpose of sacrifice (*Theologie des Alten Testaments*, p. 552).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Herrmann, *Th. W. B.*, III, p. 310.

deliberately ('with a high hand') sacrifice is of no avail. That is the reason the prophets so often inveigh against sacrifice. They are not, as has sometimes been supposed, opposing sacrifice *per se*, but only the *misuse* of sacrifice prevalent in their day when those who had sinned deliberately offered sacrifice unrepentantly and went on sinning merrily.<sup>1</sup>

How does sacrifice atone for inadvertent sin? By expiating the sin and reconciling the sinner with God.

To expiate (*Kipper*) means to wipe out or cover over<sup>2</sup> the sin by offering compensation to the one who has been wronged.<sup>3</sup> To reconcile means to restore the relationship of mutual love and trust and fellowship which has been disturbed by sin.<sup>4</sup> In the Old Testament the two are intertwined. Reconciliation is effected through expiation. In other words, God's wrath is allayed and the sinner reconciled to God through the covering over of sin by the blood of the sacrificial victim.<sup>5</sup>

The second form of intercession is that of prayerful mediation. Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah; Moses, Samuel, Amos, Jeremiah and Hezekiah for Israel. Sometimes this prayerful mediation brings reconciliation and restoration. Sometimes it does not. Everything depends on the grace of God, the gravity of the sin, and the sincerity of repentance. Jeremiah is even ordered to stop praying for Israel because she is impenitent (Jer. 14. 11ff).

The third form of intercession is that which we have termed 'ministerial'. This word is used to denote the minister or servant of the Lord who is so prominent in Second Isaiah.

Who is the servant? In many passages, e.g. Is. 41. 8; 43. 1; 44. 2,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, 1953, pp. 42f.; P. van Imschoot, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament*, II, 1956, pp. 149f.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Herrmann, *Th. W. B.*, III, p. 302; W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I, p. 73; O. Procksch, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 1950, p. 558.

<sup>3</sup> J. Herrmann, *Th. W. B.*, III, p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> Th. C. Vriezen, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 1956, pp. 245f.; L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 1955, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. König, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 1922, pp. 305f.; J. Herrmann, *Th. W. B.*, III, pp. 302ff.; O. Procksch, *op. cit.*, pp. 551ff.; W. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp. 118ff.; L. Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 125ff.

he is the chosen people, Israel. In others, e.g. Is. 49. 5f; 53. 3ff, he is not so much Israel as a representative of Israel who is to bring Israel back to the Lord. There is nothing mysterious about this dual signification if we remember that names in Hebrew have a great fluidity and can easily oscillate between a communal and individual connotation. This is true, as we have seen, of names like Adam, Jacob, Israel. It is equally true of the servant.<sup>1</sup> The servant is both Israel who is to lead the nations to the Lord (Is. 49. 6b) and the one within Israel who is to 'raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel' (Is. 49. 6a).

It seems to be this one within Israel who is the despised and rejected and afflicted servant of Is. 53.

What is the work of this suffering servant? It is to make intercession for the transgressors (Is. 53. 12) by suffering vicariously for their sins (Is. 53. 4f)<sup>2</sup> and by this suffering intercession to bring them healing and peace (Is. 53. 5) and justification (Is. 53. 11).

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed ... by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities ... (Is. 53. 4ff).

He dies, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring sinners to God.

Thus one way of restoring the covenant is the way of intercession. The other, which is not a substitute for the first but the supplement of it, is the way of *tshuba*.

This is a word difficult to render into English. It means turning around, returning, retracing one's steps (*Umkehr*). It means forsaking the wrong way and getting back into the right way. On

<sup>1</sup> See H. H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays*, 1952, pp. 3ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II, p. 418.

the lips of the prophets it means forsaking allegiance to false gods, renewing allegiance to Yahweh, returning to him in contrition, submitting to him in obedience, doing justly and loving mercy and walking humbly with God. And when the prodigal thus returns in contrition and submission, the Father has compassion and runs to meet him and embrace him.

Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him (Hos. 6. 1f).

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool (Is. 1. 18).

Return, faithless Israel, says the Lord. I will now look on you in anger, for I am merciful, says the Lord; I will not be angry for ever. Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the Lord your God ... Return, O faithless children, says the Lord, for I am your master (Jer. 3. 12-14).

Sometimes, as in the days of Joshua, Josiah, and Ezra, this return in confession, contrition, and submission, takes place on a wide-spread scale and leads to a solemn renewal of the covenant.

### 5. *The Misunderstanding of the Covenant*

The covenant, as we have seen, is a covenant of grace embracing the law, whose ultimate purpose is to restore the true relationship between God and all mankind.

The history of Israel reveals three misunderstandings of this covenant.

The first is the antinomian, which exalts the grace and forgets the law. The second is the legalistic, which exalts the law and forgets the grace. The third is the particularistic, which exalts Israel's election and forgets her mission.

Antinomianism presumes upon the grace of God. It assumes that since God is gracious and has chosen Israel to be his own, he is

bound to bless her however she lives. It forgets that while the blessing cannot be merited by obedience to the law, it can be lost by disobedience to the law.

This kind of misunderstanding was prevalent in the days of the prophets. Israel forsook the Lord and did as she pleased, and still expected his blessing.

In the time of Amos, men were looking forward to what they called 'the day of the Lord,' a day of light and gladness. But since they had forsaken the Lord and his law, Amos warns:

Woe unto you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness and not light (Amos 5. 18).

And from the time of Amos onward prophet after prophet admonishes Israel that infringement of the law will bring a harvest of wrath and grief and death.

And since the prophetic warnings went largely unheeded, the harvest came: defeat and captivity and affliction.

This was a lesson Israel did not easily forget. After the exile, particularly from the time of Ezra, the law was magnified. Israel became the people of the *torah*. And now she was menaced by contrary error—legalism. When law is exalted, it becomes fatally easy to assume that since the blessing could be lost by disobedience to the law it could be earned by obedience. This is the assumption which was increasingly made in the post-exilic period. Grace became obscured. God was no longer the saviour redeeming in his grace, but merely the judge rewarding in his justice. As the post-exilic community passed into Judaism and Phariseeism, the idea became prevalent that God judges every man according to the measure of his fulfilment of the law, i.e. in accordance with the merit of his good works.<sup>1</sup> If the good

<sup>1</sup> G. Schrenk, *Th. W. B.*, II, p. 216; W. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 130f.; G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, 1927-30, p. 90; E. Tobac, *Le Problème de la Justification dans Saint Paul*, 1908, p. 15.

works preponderate over bad works, a man is justified. If bad works preponderate over good works, he is condemned. Only if the two are equal, does God give him the benefit of the doubt and act in mercy.<sup>1</sup> The protest against this kind of legalism begins with the book of Job and is completed in the New Testament.

The third misunderstanding of the covenant was particularism, which, like legalism, became prevalent after the exile. Particularism wanted to restrict the blessing of the covenant forever to Israel. It was so obsessed with the *election* of Israel that it forgot the *mission* of Israel. It ignored the fact that election was for service as well as blessing. It forgot the word of the Lord to Abraham, that in him *all the families of the earth were to be blessed*, and Second Isaiah's concept of Israel as a light to the Gentiles. Israel now wishes freely to receive, but not freely to give. Here again, the protest against this misunderstanding begins in the Old Testament, in the book of Jonah, and is completed in the New.

### 6. Failure and Hope

These tragic misunderstandings and the defections resulting from them meant the failure of the covenant to achieve the glory of its purpose. Antinomianism obscured the law of the covenant and brought bane instead of blessing. Legalism obscured the grace of the covenant and produced the self-righteous Pharisee rather than the humble, thankful saint. And particularism impeded the great universal purpose of redemption for which the covenant was made.

No one in the Old Testament sees these failures so plainly as Jeremiah. The time is coming, he says, when the old covenant will pass away and be superseded by the new:

<sup>1</sup> See E. Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, 4. Aufl. 1907, II, pp. 644; G. F. Moore, op. cit., I, p. 495; H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie*, 1911, I, p. 76; J. Bonsirven, *Le Judaïsme Palestinien*, ed. ab., p. 211; H. Braun, 'Vom Erbarmen Gottes über den Gerechten', in *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Bd. 43, Heft 1-2 (1950-51), p. 5.

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, *not like the covenant which I made with their fathers* when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But *this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days*, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer. 31. 31-34).

In this new covenant antinomianism is excluded, for the law is no longer external but internal, upon the heart. And legalism is excluded, for salvation is not by merit but by forgiveness. And particularism is overcome, for 'they shall *all* know me, from the least of them to the greatest.'

The old covenant, as the writer to the Hebrews later saw, was 'becoming obsolete and growing old and ready to vanish away' (Heb. 8. 13)—but only to make way for that new covenant in Christ in which the purpose of the old would be gloriously fulfilled.

## Chapter II

### THE RESTORED RELATIONSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE New Testament proclaims that the new covenant foreseen by Jeremiah has now arrived in Jesus.

The first to affirm this was Jesus himself. In his words at the Last Supper he clearly associated his death with the covenant. Whether he used the words 'new covenant', as Paul and Luke and certain texts of Mark and Matthew indicate, or simply said 'covenant' as other texts of Mark and Matthew suggest, remains uncertain. But whatever his *ipsissima verba* may have been, there is no doubt that he conceived himself to be inaugurating a new era and a new relationship between God and man.

This is how the early church understood him. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for instance, calls Jesus the mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 9. 15) and sees in him the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant (Jer. 31. 31ff; Heb. 8. 8ff.). And a covenant is, as we have seen in the Old Testament, essentially an agreement regulating a relationship.

#### A. THE NATURE OF THE NEW RELATIONSHIP

This new relationship between man and God established by Christ is referred to in the New Testament by a variety of terms. It is called not only 'the new covenant' but also 'the kingdom of God', 'the righteousness of God', 'justification', 'reconciliation', 'adoption', 'sonship', 'liberty', 'sanctification'.

These terms, as biblical scholarship has recognized,<sup>1</sup> represent

<sup>1</sup> See J. Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, pp. 496ff.; A. Deissmann, *Paul*, pp. 166ff., H. Cremer, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre*, 2. Aufl., 1900, p. 377; P. Feine, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 4. Aufl., 1922, pp. 234ff.; R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1948, pp. 281ff.; M. Meinertz, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, II, p. 100.

not successive experiences in some 'order of salvation' but word pictures drawn from various spheres of life to describe one and the same event—the transformation in the relationship of God and man effected by the advent and work of Jesus Christ. To appreciate this transformed relationship in all its fullness we need to look at all the pictures.

### 1. *The New Covenant*

Jesus (Mk. 14. 24), Paul (Gal. 3. 15-18), and the author of Hebrews (Heb. 9. 15ff) all term this new relationship a new covenant (*diatheke*). The word *diatheke* was used in the Septuagint to translate *b'rith*, covenant. In koine Greek it retained this meaning, but its more usual connotation was a last will and testament.<sup>1</sup> These two usages are combined in the New Testament, where *diatheke* means the new relationship between God and man bequeathed to men through the testament (i.e. the death) of Christ as a sacrifice for sin.<sup>2</sup>

This is my blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many (Mk. 14. 24).

Therefore he (Christ) is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established ... and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9. 15-22).

Thus through the sacrificial death of Jesus, in which he as High Priest offers himself as sacrificial victim (Heb. 9.1-10.25), we enter into a new relationship with God, a relationship of sins forgiven and peace with God.

<sup>1</sup> *Th. W. B.*, II, pp. 106ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Behm, in *Th. W. B.*, II, pp. 132ff.

## 2. The Kingdom of God

Jesus began his preaching ministry, according to Mark, with the message: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel' (Mk. 1. 14).

What did he mean by 'the kingdom of God'? He meant the gracious and kingly rule of God in the hearts and lives of men; the victory of God over Satan and sin; the forgiveness of sins and the conquest of sin;<sup>1</sup> the re-establishment of that relationship of sovereignty and grace on the part of God and of obedience and joy on the part of man which was ordained of God and vitiated by sin. This kingdom is both a gift to be received (Mk. 10. 15) and a requirement to be fulfilled (Mt. 7. 21).<sup>2</sup> Like the covenant, it involves donation and dominion on the part of God, acceptance and service on the part of man.

It was therefore natural for Jesus to speak of it in terms both of proclamation and of invitation. He proclaims its imminent advent: 'The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God has drawn near'; and invites all to 'repent, and believe the good news.'<sup>3</sup> By 'repent' (*metanoieite*) he means not only 'be contrite for your sins' but also, and primarily, 'turn to God.'<sup>4</sup> Turn to God in confidence and believe the good news that the day of the kingdom is dawning! It dawns in Jesus as he does his gracious work.

If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Lk. 11. 20).

The kingdom is already realized (Dodd). And yet it still awaits its culmination when the Son of Man shall come in power and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, 1931, pp. 116ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie*, I, pp. 252-265.

<sup>3</sup> For this translation cf. V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St Mark*, 1955, pp. 166f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. V. Taylor, *ibid.*, pp. 154f.

glory to gather his elect from the four winds (Mk. 13. 26f). The kingdom is thus both realized and future; realized in its inauguration, future in its consummation.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. *The Righteousness of God*

Closely associated with the kingdom of God is the righteousness of God.

In Mt. 6. 33 Jesus uses them as parallel terms:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.

Similarly, in Rom. 14. 17 Paul uses them synonymously:

For the *kingdom of God* does not mean food and drink, but *righteousness* and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

This association of kingdom and righteousness is not surprising when we remember that both the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God signify a right relation between God and man. For righteousness in the biblical sense, as Hermann Cremer long ago demonstrated, is a 'relational concept (*Verhältnisbegriff*), referring to an actual relationship ... between a subject who makes certain claims and an object who fulfils them.'<sup>2</sup> And the righteousness of God is that right relationship established by God between himself and sinful man.

This right relationship, this restoration of fellowship, this restoration of the covenant, is nothing less than salvation. Accordingly in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms and Second Isaiah, righteousness becomes synonymous with salvation.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. G. Kümmel, *Verheissung und Erfüllung*, 2. Aufl., 1953, who speaks both of the 'presence of the kingdom of God' and of the 'eschatological promise' of the kingdom. Cf. further O. Cullmann, *Jesus und die Zeit*, 1946, pp. 122ff.; J. Bonsirven, *Le Règne de Dieu*, 1957, pp. 43ff.

<sup>2</sup> H. Cremer, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre im Zusammenhange ihrer Geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen*, 2. Aufl. 1900, p. 34. Cf. G. Schrenk, *Th. W. B.*, II, p. 197.

In thee O Lord, do I take refuge;  
 Let me never be put to shame!  
 In thy righteousness deliver me and rescue me;  
 Incline thine ear to me, and save me ...  
 My mouth shall tell of thy righteous acts,  
 Of thy deeds of salvation all the day.

(Ps. 71. 1-15).

My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation has gone forth, and my arms will rule the peoples ... my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be ended ... and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing to Zion; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Is. 51. 5-11).

It is this Old Testament concept of God's redeeming righteousness which lies behind the Pauline usage of the phrase 'the righteousness of God'.<sup>1</sup>

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the *power of God for salvation* to every one who has faith ... For in it *the righteousness of God* is revealed. (Rom. 1. 16f).

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not counting their trespasses against them ... We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him *we might become the righteousness of God*. (2 Cor. 5. 19-21).

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, *not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*. (Phil. 3. 8f).

When such passages are considered together it becomes evident that 'righteousness of God' is a rich, flexible, capacious phrase

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Walz and Schrey, *Gerechtigkeit in biblischer Sicht*, 1955, pp. 59ff.

which signifies the righteousness which God possesses, the righteousness in which he acts, the righteousness he demands, the righteousness he confers, and the righteousness which is acceptable in his sight.<sup>1</sup> In a word, it denotes God's righteous action in restoring a right relationship between himself and sinful man.<sup>2</sup> This action is sometimes called justification, sometimes reconciliation, sometimes peace-making, sometimes adoption, sometimes redemption, sometimes sanctification, and sometimes liberation.

#### 4. *Justification*

In Rom. 3. 21ff this righteousness of God is called justification.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested ... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ ... since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace ...

It is easy to understand how Paul could identify the righteousness of God with justification. For the righteousness of God is God's right action in getting men right with himself, and the word 'justify' both in Greek (*dikaioun*)<sup>3</sup> and Hebrew (*hizdiq*)<sup>4</sup> means 'to set right', 'to make *dikaios*, *zaddiq*.'

Justification is thus essentially *rectification*, the making right

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. Schrenk, *Th. W. B.*, II, p. 197; J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, pp. 495f.; H. J. Holtzmann, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 137ff.; G. A. Fricke, *Der Paulinische Grundbegriff der dikaiosune theou*, 1888, pp. 65ff.; A. Sabatier, *The Apostle Paul*, E. Tr., 1906, p. 298; E. Tobac, *Le Problème de la Justification dans St. Paul*, 1908, p. 117; Sanday and Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC 1896, pp. 24f.; J. Denney, *St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, EGT II, pp. 590, 612; H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer*, HNT, 4. Aufl. 1933, pp. 30, 50; M. Meinertz, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 118f.; F. Prat, *The Theology of St Paul*, II, p. 246; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1957, pp. 29f.; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, MNTC 1932, pp. 9ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. Brunner, *Der Römerbrief*, 1948, p. 117; Dodd, *op. cit.*, pp. 9f.

<sup>3</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, New Edition, 1953, p. 429. Cf. G. Schrenk, *Th. W. B.*, II, p. 215.

<sup>4</sup> K. H. Fahlgren, *Sedaka, nahestehende und entgegengesetzte Begriffe im Alten Testament*, Uppsala, 1932, esp. pp. 113-119.

(*rectus, dikaios, zaddiq*) of that which was wrong. It is, in particular, the rectification of personal relationships.

Now in the ancient world, both among the Hebrews and in Hellenistic-Roman society, this rectification took place pre-eminently, though not exclusively, through the law court. Consequently, the word 'justify' came to be used predominantly in a 'forensic' or juridical sense.

In this forensic sense, the word denotes the action of the judge in pronouncing his verdict on the prisoner. This verdict may be one of 'guilty' or of 'not guilty'. Accordingly, in *general* Greek usage the word may signify either condemnation or acquittal.<sup>1</sup> In the Septuagint, however, where *dikaioun* is used as the equivalent of *hizdiq*, the connotation 'to condemn' is absent, and the word means simply 'to pronounce not guilty', 'to declare righteous', 'to acquit.'<sup>2</sup>

This forensic connotation of 'acquittal' is manifestly present in the Pauline usage. For in Rom. 4. 1ff the Apostle equates being justified with being accounted (*logizomai*) righteous, and in Rom. 5. 16 he speaks of justification as the opposite of condemnation (*katakrima*).

'To justify' for Paul means 'to deem right', 'to declare right', 'to pronounce not guilty', 'to acquit.' This forensic sense of the term is, as Schrenk says 'crystal clear and indisputable.'<sup>3</sup>

Does this mean that the justification of the ungodly (Rom. 4. 5) is *merely* a forensic act on the part of God? Certainly not. For the justification of the ungodly is essentially the *rectification* of the ungodly, i.e. the rectification of his relationship with God. And

<sup>1</sup> G. Schrenk, *Th. W. B.*, II, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 219. This is the almost unanimous opinion of Protestant scholars. To mention but a few of the more eminent: F. C. Baur, C. Hodge, C. von Weizsacker, H. Cremer, H. J. Holtzmann, F. B. Westcott, P. Feine, A. Schlatter, J. Weiss, P. Althaus, R. Bultmann, A. Deissmann, E. Stauffer, Sanday and Headlam, C. H. Dodd, A. Richardson, A. Nygren, F. Büchsel, W. Joest. And many leading Catholic scholars concur, e.g. E. Tobac, F. Prat, M. Meinertz, I. Knabenbauer, F. Zorell, H. Kling.

this rectification is accomplished by a whole series of events which involve both forensic and dynamic acts on the part of God. It is effected by the grace of God (Rom. 3. 24) operative in the work of Christ (Rom. 4. 25) and the Spirit (Rom. 8. 1ff), by faith (Rom. 3. 21ff) and baptism (Rom. 6. 1ff) which unite us with Christ (Gal. 3. 26f), by the moral transformation which results from our union with Christ in the Spirit (2 Cor. 3. 18; Gal. 5. 22ff), by works of love (Rom. 3. ff; 13. 8ff), by perseverance (Rom. 11. 17-22; Eph. 6. 18) in this faith that works through love (Gal. 5. 6), and by the verdict of God which pronounces us right with God.

God's justification of the ungodly is thus neither a purely forensic act, as Protestants tend to assume, nor a purely dynamic act, as Catholics tend to think, but a *forensic-dynamic act* by which the relationship of God and man is rectified. Or rather, it is a whole series of forensic and dynamic acts involving the manifestation of grace in the whole redeeming work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the mediation of grace through the proclamation of the word and the administration of the sacraments, the kindling and re-kindling of a living faith that works through love, the forgiveness of sins and the transformation of the sinner through that faith that works through love, along with God's initial acceptance of the sinner as his child and final acquittal in the last judgment. It is, in a word, *the whole process of the rectification of the relationship between man and God, commencing with the earliest operation of redeeming grace and concluding with the final judgment and the life everlasting.*

### 5. Reconciliation

The ease with which Paul's thought moves from the concept of justification to that of reconciliation is illustrated by Rom. 3. 21-5, 21. The theme of this part of the Epistle is the righteousness of God by which we are justified. At Rom. 5. 8-16 however the Apostle's thought glides from the idea of justification to that of reconciliation and back to justification:

But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now *justified* by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were *reconciled* to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life ... But the free gift is not like the trespass ... Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to *justification* and life for all men.

This oscillation of thought between justification and reconciliation is perfectly natural, since both are relational concepts. Both describe, that is, the personal relationship between God and man, justification in the imagery of the law court, and reconciliation in the imagery of the home and society in general.

Justification sees God as the Judge, and tells us that his verdict upon us is one of 'not guilty', acquittal, release.

Reconciliation sees God as the Father and Husband, and tells us that all estrangement between him and his rebellious family is at an end.

Reconciliation thus signifies a change of relationship from alienation to conciliation, from conflict to concord, from enmity to amity.

Now a changed relationship can result only from a changed attitude. But the question is, Who changes his attitude, God or man? Or perhaps both God and man?

This question has been much discussed in Protestant theology ever since the appearance in 1870 of Albrecht Ritschl's epochal work on justification and reconciliation.<sup>1</sup> In the second volume of this work, dealing with the biblical doctrine, Ritschl propounds the following thesis: God is love;<sup>2</sup> love and wrath are incompatible;<sup>3</sup> the wrath of God is therefore excluded; reconciliation in

<sup>1</sup> *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*.

<sup>2</sup> *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, 3. Aufl., Bonn, 1889, II, pp. 96ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 211.

consequence cannot involve the placation of the wrath of God; it signifies therefore not a change of attitude (*Umstimmung*) on the part of God, but only on the part of man.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis proved very influential, leaving its mark on the work of scholars like J. B. Lightfoot,<sup>2</sup> B. F. Westcott,<sup>3</sup> C. A. A. Scott,<sup>4</sup> J. Stewart,<sup>5</sup> and V. Taylor.<sup>6</sup> It has however been rejected by scholars like O. Pfeiderer,<sup>7</sup> H. J. Holtzmann,<sup>8</sup> Cremer-Kögel,<sup>9</sup> G. Stählin,<sup>10</sup> J. Denney,<sup>11</sup> F. Büchsel,<sup>12</sup> E. Stauffer,<sup>13</sup> R. Bultmann,<sup>14</sup> R. H. Strachen,<sup>15</sup> A. Schlatter,<sup>16</sup> O. Moe,<sup>17</sup> L. Morris,<sup>18</sup> and F. Prat,<sup>19</sup> who have insisted that reconciliation involves a change of attitude on the part of both God and man.

That reconciliation in the New Testament is a mutual event involving a change of attitude on the part of God as well as on the part of man seems evident from the following considerations:

Firstly, the alienation is mutual. This is indicated both by the use of the word 'enemies' in Rom. 5. 10 and Col. 1. 21, and the doctrine of the wrath of God in Rom. 1. 18ff. For *echthros* means,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, II, pp. 231ff.

<sup>2</sup> *St Paul's Epistle to the Colossians*, on Col. 1, 21.

<sup>3</sup> *The Epistles of St John*, 1883, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> *Christianity according to St Paul*, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> *A Man in Christ*, p. 213.

<sup>6</sup> *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, 1948, pp. 70ff.

<sup>7</sup> *Paulinism*, E. Tr. 1877, p. 99.

<sup>8</sup> *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie*, II, pp. 107ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Wörterbuch der Neutestamentlichen Gräcität*, p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> *Th. W. B.*, V, pp. 424ff.

<sup>11</sup> *The Epistle to the Romans*, EGT II, pp. 625f.; *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, EB, pp. 211ff.

<sup>12</sup> *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1937, p. 103; *Th. W. B.*, I, pp. 255f.

<sup>13</sup> *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 4. Aufl. 1948, p. 124.

<sup>14</sup> *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1948, p. 281.

<sup>15</sup> *Second Corinthians*, MNTC, p. 118.

<sup>16</sup> *Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament*, IV, p. 240.

<sup>17</sup> *The Apostle Paul, His Message and Doctrine*, E. Tr. 1954, pp. 249f.

<sup>18</sup> *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, pp. 186ff.

<sup>19</sup> *The Theology of Saint Paul*, II, pp. 216f.

as Foerster<sup>1</sup> and Bultmann<sup>2</sup> have shown, not merely, as Ritschl supposed, that man is hostile to God, but also that God is hostile to men. And the doctrine of the wrath of God in Rom. 1. 18ff leaves no doubt that sin has not only alienated man from God but also God from man:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and wickedness of men ... By your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed ... There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil. (Rom. 1. 18-25).

The grace of God does not, as Ritschl imagined, *exclude* the wrath of God. It *saves us from the wrath*:

God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be *saved by him from the wrath of God*. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Now if the alienation is mutual, the reconciliation to be effective must also be mutual. (Rom. 5. 8-10).

Secondly, reconciliation and justification take place by the propitiation of the wrath of God as well as by the expiation of sin. This is indicated by the use of the words *hilaskomai* (Heb. 2. 17), *hilasterion* (Rom. 3. 25) and *hilasmos* (1 Jn. 2. 2; 4. 10).

These words signify not merely expiation, as B. F. Westcott<sup>3</sup> and C. H. Dodd<sup>4</sup> supposed, but *an expiation which propitiates the*

<sup>1</sup> *Th. W. B.*, II, pp. 813ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> *The Epistle of St John*, 1883, pp. 83ff.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bible and the Greeks*, pp. 82ff.; *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, pp. 54ff.

wrath of God, as J. Denney,<sup>1</sup> C. Spicq,<sup>2</sup> C. K. Barrett,<sup>3</sup> and L. Morris<sup>4</sup> have shown.<sup>5</sup>

'Forgiveness, or justification,' says James Denney—and we might equally say reconciliation—

has come to men in Christ, whom God set forth in His blood as a propitiation; it has come in One who has realized to the uttermost in His own person what sin meant, One who has drunk the cup our sins had mingled, One who has felt all the waves and billows break over Him in which God's reaction against sin comes home to us sinners. This is the very essence of the *hilasterion* as Paul understands it. It bears witness, of course, to the goodness of God, for it is God who provides it, out of pure love, and it is the way of salvation; but it bears witness also to His severity, to his inexorable repulsion of evil, to a righteousness on which no shadow of moral unreality must ever fall.<sup>6</sup>

The expiation made by Christ is a *propitiatory* expiation, one which by covering our sins allays the wrath of God.

Thirdly, the mutual nature of reconciliation is indicated by the way Paul speaks of *receiving* (not achieving!) reconciliation:

We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation (Rom. 5. 11).

If reconciliation involved merely a change on our part, it would be more natural to say that God receives it from us than to say that we receive it from him. If, on the other hand, it involves

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pp. 152ff.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 1952, I, p. 304.

<sup>3</sup> *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1957, pp. 77f.

<sup>4</sup> *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 1955, pp. 138ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the *New Testament Lexicons* of Abbott Smith and W. Bauer.

<sup>6</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 159.

also a change on God's part, it becomes perfectly natural to say that we receive it from him.

For these reasons Ritschl's thesis that reconciliation consists only of a change of attitude on the part of man is unacceptable. Reconciliation consists equally, and indeed primarily, in a change of attitude on the part of God, a change from wrath to kindness, from condemnation to pardon, from rejection to acceptance. God turns to man in grace and man turns to God in faith. That is reconciliation as the New Testament understands it.

### 6. *Adoption and Sonship*

Through reconciliation with God, we become children of God.

Paul expresses this new relationship by the term 'adoption', John by the phrase 'becoming children of God'.

The practice of adoption was widespread in the Gentile world of the Apostle's day. It meant that an orphan without any claims or rights to sonship was received in sheer grace and kindness into the love and shelter and nurture of a family. Paul applies this image to our changed relationship with God, indicating that we who through sin have lost all claim to be God's children, we who have made ourselves orphans and outcasts, are now received by God in sheer unfathomable grace as God's children:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world ... *He destined us in love to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ*, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious *grace* which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (Eph. 1. 5f).

By this gracious adoption we become once more heirs of the inheritance we had lost (Rom. 8. 17); we call God 'Abba! Father!' and enjoy the glory of the liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8. 15, 21).

John expresses the same thought when he speaks of our becoming children of God. In the prologue of his gospel he tells us that when Christ, the Word of God and the Light of God came into the world,

He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become *children of God* (Jn. 1. 11f).

The word *eksousia*, though it can mean 'power' would in this context be better rendered 'right' or 'authority'<sup>1</sup> for what is conferred is the right or privilege of belonging to God's family, rather than the power to achieve this.

This divine sonship becomes ours through God's grace in Christ and through our faith in Christ (Jn. 1. 1-18).

### 7. Liberty

To sonship Paul joins liberty when he jubilantly writes about 'the glory of the liberty of the children of God' (Rom. 8. 21).

What is this liberty of the children of God? It has both a negative and a positive aspect. It is both freedom *from* and it is freedom *for*. Freedom from what and freedom for what?

Firstly, it is freedom from the curse of the law and freedom for the blessing of God.

The old covenant, we remember, was a covenant of blessing and law, but where the law was not kept the blessing turned to curse. Now Paul's contention is that no one perfectly keeps the law (Rom. 2. 1-3, 20; Gal. 3. 10f). Hence even the Israelites—all of them, not merely one here or there—are under the curse. But now, under the covenant, this curse is removed by Christ:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree'—that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Temple, *Readings in St John's Gospel*, p. 12; R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel*, p. 83; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, p. 136.

might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3. 13f).

As the curse is removed by Christ we receive the blessing by faith.

Secondly, this freedom of the children of God is freedom from guilt and freedom for acquittal.

In his long description of man without Christ, Paul says that because of our sins we are all guilty in the sight of God and fall under his condemnation, concluding with the words:

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world be held accountable to God (Rom. 3. 19f).

The word *hupodikos* which is translated in RSV 'accountable to God' would be better rendered in this context 'guilty before God' as in the AV. The word itself can have either meaning, but in this context it seems to mean 'be guilty', for in the same verse Paul tells us that 'every mouth will be stopped', i.e. unable to offer a defence, and therefore guilty.<sup>1</sup>

And now through the gospel this guilt is removed, the sinner forgiven, acquitted, set free.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law ... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe ... since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3. 21-24).

There is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8. 1f).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Schlatter, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 1935, p. 128; E. Gaugler, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 1945, p. 77; E. Brunner, *Der Römerbrief*, 1948, p. 19; O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, KEK 1955, p. 86; P. Althaus, *Der Brief an die Römer*, NTD 7. Aufl. 1953, pp. 28f.

Thirdly, this freedom is freedom from the wrath of God and freedom for the peace of God.

As Paul sees all men, apart from the redeeming grace of God in Christ, under the divine condemnation, so he sees them equally under the divine wrath (Rom. 1. 18-3.20). So does John (Jn. 3.36)

This wrath is not an eternal attribute of God, like his holiness and love and righteousness, but is rather the *reaction* of his holiness and love and righteousness to sin. It is evoked only where there is sin (Rom. 1. 18).<sup>1</sup>

This wrath rests like a cloud on all mankind. But in Christ this cloud is lifted, and the sunlight of God's grace and peace breaks through.

But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God (Rom. 5. 8f).

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God (Rom. 5. 1f).

Fourthly, we are freed from the power of sin for the service of God. This is the import of Rom. 6. After establishing in Rom. 3. 21-5. 21 that we are freed from guilt and condemnation and wrath, Paul asks whether we should in consequence continue in sin that grace may abound (Rom. 6. 1). He answers with a resounding *me genoito!* Let no such thing happen! For we have been baptized into Christ, both into his death and into his resurrection, by which we have not only the forgiveness of sins but also the power to 'walk in newness of life'. (Rom. 6. 3-11): Before baptism we were servants of sin, but through union with Christ in baptism we have been freed from sin that we might become servants of righteousness (Rom. 6. 18) and servants of God (Rom. 6. 22).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fichtner, *Th. W. B.*, V; pp. 403f.

This liberation from the power of sin and freedom for the service of God is something already accomplished. Hence the indicatives in this passage. But it is not something accomplished once for all, as though there were no possibility of backsliding. Hence the imperatives.

Fifthly, we are freed from death for life.

Law came in to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5. 20f).

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6. 23).

Death is the fruit of sin; life the fruit of Christ. What does Paul mean by 'death' and 'life'? By 'death' he means more than the cessation of biological life, although this is included. He means, as Cremer rightly observes, 'all the punitive consequences of sin.'<sup>1</sup>

These include the wrath and curse and condemnation of God, all the misery and anxiety of this present life, the fear of death and of what lies beyond—the final judgment with its irrevocable 'punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might' (2 Thess. 1. 9).<sup>2</sup> All this *misère de l'homme* (Pascal), all this *uneigentliche Existenz* (Heidegger), all this *délaissement* (Sartre) is what Paul means by death.

But now, says Paul, in Christ this annihilating power of death is itself annihilated:<sup>3</sup>

Our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1. 10).

<sup>1</sup> H. Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, E. Tr. 4.ed. 1895, p. 284. Cf. Grimm-Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2 ed. 1892, p. 283; R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1948, pp. 242f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Cremer, *Lexicon*; Grimm-Thayer, *Lexicon*; R. Bultmann, *Th. W. B.*, III, pp. 13ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann, *Th. W. B.*, III, p. 18.

The end of death means the beginning of life. And 'life' is precisely the opposite of death. It means that the wrath of God is past and the grace of God is ours, that the curse of God is past and the blessing of God is ours, that the condemnation of God is past and the justification of God is ours, that the fear of death is past and the hope of life is ours, that the power of sin is past and the power of God is ours. This is the glorious liberty of the children of God.

### 8. Sanctification

It may appear strange to consider sanctification as a parallel to justification, for Protestant theology has long been accustomed to distinguish sharply between the two. We customarily think of justification as a relational concept signifying a forensic judgment of acquittal, and of sanctification as an ethical concept signifying a moral change. This rigid distinction is however not wholly consonant with biblical usage.<sup>1</sup> For in the New Testament both are relational concepts, though it is true that the ethical overtones are stronger in sanctification than in justification.<sup>2</sup> 'Sanctification,' says W. Joest,

'is essentially a concept of relation and "belongingness" (*Verhältnis- und Zugehörigkeitsbegriff*) which indicates not a quality inhering in man but rather his status of belonging to God. A man becomes sanctified when God unites him with himself and brings him into fellowship with himself. And since the presence of God is *effective* in repulsing sin and creating goodness, sanctification signifies also the coming into being of a way of life appropriate to one who belongs to God. In its New Testament usage, therefore, the concept has manifestly both a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Asmussen, *Warum noch lutherische Kirche*, 1949, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> See Procksch in *Th. W. B.*, I, pp. 87ff.; E. Gaugler, *Die Heiligung im Zeugnis der Schrift*, 1948; A. de Quervain, *Die Heiligung* (Ethik I), 2. Aufl. 1946, pp. 9ff.; W. Dantine, *Die Gerechtmachung des Gottlosen*, 1959, p. 57; and the excellent articles by Th. C. Vriezen, G. Stählin, and W. Joest under *Heiligung* in *R.G.G.*, 3. Aufl. 1959, III, pp. 178ff.

forensic and an ethical pole: it is a calling into the status of fellowship with God, and thereby at the same time an orientation to a new way of life.<sup>1</sup>

Joest concludes that in the light of the biblical texts we can no longer make a rigid distinction between justification and sanctification.<sup>2</sup>

This conclusion is correct. For in the Bible, to be sanctified means to be holy,<sup>3</sup> and to be holy means to belong to God, to be chosen by God for the fellowship of God and service of God. It is identical with election.

For you are a people holy (=sanctified) to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth (Deut. 7. 6).

Israel is a holy nation not in the first place because she is morally a better nation than others, but because the Lord has chosen her to be his own people, because he has set his love upon her, because he has called her to his service.<sup>4</sup> But because she is called to service, she is called to obedience.

Now therefore, *if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a nation of priests and a holy nation* (Ex. 19. 5f).

Sanctification thus involves election and calling on the part of God and faith and obedience on the part of man. This is true of

<sup>1</sup> RGG, III, 179.

<sup>2</sup> RGG, III, 180.

<sup>3</sup> It is unfortunate that English has the adjective 'holy' and the verb 'sanctify', holy being derived from Anglo-Saxon and sanctify from Latin-French. Many languages, including Hebrew, Greek, German, French, have only one root, e.g. *heilig, heiligen*, and the connection is immediately apparent.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. E. Gaugler, *Die Heiligung*, p. 16.

the New Testament no less than of the Old, as is apparent from the beginning of the Epistle to the Ephesians:

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, *to the saints who believe in Christ Jesus*: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, *even as he chose us in him* before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy and blameless before him*. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ ... In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. In him ... we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory (Eph. 1. 1-12).

We become saints, or in other words we are sanctified, as God chooses us in Christ to be his own, as he forgives our sins, as he calls us to his service, and as we respond in the obedience of faith and live to the praise of his glory.

This is essentially the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews. God brings us into a new relationship with himself, into the new covenant, through the sacrificial suffering of Christ for our sins (Heb. 9. 1-10, 39) and through our steadfast faith in him (Heb. 10. 38f), and this is our sanctification (Heb. 10. 10).

So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood (Heb. 13. 12).

Sanctification is thus the establishment of a new relationship between God and man, a relationship in which he accepts us and makes us his own through the redeeming work of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Far from distinguishing sanctification from justification, Paul uses it as a parallel term:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. O. Procksch in *Th. W. B.*, I, pp. 113f.

But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God (I Cor. 6. 11).

The terms 'new covenant', 'kingdom of God', 'righteousness of God', 'justification', 'reconciliation', 'adoption', 'sonship', 'liberty', 'sanctification' are thus in the New Testament synonymous expressions. They are alternative ways of describing the same event—the transformation of the relationship of God and man wrought by God through Christ and the Spirit—and one term frequently merges into another.

## B. THE WAY OF RESTORATION

Thus far we have been thinking of the nature of the restored fellowship and some of the terms used by the New Testament to describe it. We now approach the question: *How* is the relationship restored?

It is restored, according to the New Testament through the initiative of God and the response of man: by the initiative of God manifested in the grace of God, and in the response of man manifested in the faith that works through love.

### 1. *The Initiative of God*

The initiative in salvation rests with God, not with man. This is evident from the opening sentences of at least three New Testament writings: the Gospel of John, Ephesians, and First Peter.

John begins his gospel with the affirmation that the Word of God, who in the beginning was with God and was God, has now become flesh and dwelt among us in order that we through faith might become children of God (Jn. 1. 1-14).

Ephesians opens with a hymn of praise to the God who has chosen us in Christ and destined us in love to be his sons (Eph. 1. 3-5).

And First Peter begins with the thanksgiving:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet. 1. 3-5).

Moreover, when Paul writes of justification and reconciliation in Rom. 3. 21-5. 21, he begins not with the righteousness of man but with the righteousness of God, i.e. with God righteously going forth to establish a right relationship between himself and man. And when he writes of justification in his letter to Titus, he begins with the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior who

saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life (Tit. 3. 5-7).

The initiative of God expresses itself as the grace of God in the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, we must consider the nature of grace, and the work of Christ and the Spirit.

#### *a. The Grace of God*

What is the grace of God? It is the kindness of his love; the spontaneous, undeserved manifestation of his mercy; the steadfast patience of his saving purpose in the face of all man's infidelity and sin.<sup>1</sup> In the New Testament, grace is prevenient, gratuitous, pardoning, and transforming.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, 1932; C. R. Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Grace*, 1956, pp. 56ff.; W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 4. Aufl. 1952, pp. 1592ff.; G. Stählin, RGG II, 1634ff.; N. H. Snaith in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, pp. 108ff.

It is prevenient in the sense that it comes forth to meet us before we turn to meet it. It is the grace of the Son of man who comes to seek and to save the lost (Lk. 19. 10), the grace of the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep (Jn. 10. 11), the grace of the Christ who while we were yet sinners died for us (Rom. 5. 8).

It is gratuitous in the sense that it is given freely, as a free gift, unearned, unmerited, undeserved, without money and without price. It is, in Augustine's marvellous phrase, *gratia gratis data*, grace freely given. This is clear from passages like Rom. 3. 24: 'justified by his grace as a gift (*dórean*)', Tit. 3. 5: 'he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy', and from the way Paul speaks of justification and reconciliation as the free gift of God in Rom. 5. 15-17.

It is pardoning grace in that it brings us the forgiveness of sins and restores us to the favour of God (Rom. 3. 21ff; 5. 1ff; Eph. 1. 3-8).

And it is transforming in that it confers on us the *charismata*, the gifts of grace (Rom. 12. 6) which enable us to do the will of God (Rom. 8. 4).<sup>1</sup>

Grace in the New Testament is both the kindness of God and the gift of God.<sup>2</sup> It is his unfathomable, overflowing, overwhelming, unutterable kindness which gives good gifts to those who in no way deserve them—the gifts of pardon and power.<sup>3</sup>

### *b. The Work of Christ*

This kindness is shown and these gifts bestowed through Christ and the Spirit. Here we are concerned with the work of Christ, and in particular with his work in transforming our relationship with God.

This transformation is wrought by the *whole* work of Christ, not merely by a part of it.

Through his incarnation he came to us in visible, audible,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 1592f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, p. 227.

tangible form, so that all who receive him may become children of God (Jn. 1. 1-14).

In his baptism he consecrated himself to his redemptive mission as the Messianic Servant of the Lord<sup>1</sup> and all that it involved in the way of suffering, death, and resurrection. This is indicated by the fact that he sought baptism at the hands of John the Baptist, by the voice from heaven, by the words of the Baptist, 'Behold, the Lamb of God,' and by the association of baptism with suffering in the teaching of Jesus.

That he who was without sin should insist on being baptized by John in a 'baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins' (Mk. 1. 4) remains wholly inexplicable unless we assume with Denney,<sup>2</sup> Cullmann,<sup>3</sup> Hunter,<sup>4</sup> and Richardson,<sup>5</sup> that in his baptism Jesus identified himself with the sinners for whom he came to suffer as the Servant of the Lord.

That this assumption is correct is confirmed both by the voice from heaven at the time of the baptism (Mk. 1. 11) and by John the Baptist's description of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1. 29).

The voice from heaven is a conflation of part of a royal psalm (Ps. 2. 7) with part of a Servant Song (Is. 42. 1), signifying that Jesus is both the Messianic King and the Suffering Servant.

The phrase 'Lamb of God' is both a messianic<sup>6</sup> and a sacrificial title.<sup>7</sup> It signifies the Messianic King who saves his people by suffering for their sins. That Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, 1958, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Tauflehre des Neuen Testaments*, pp. 13f.; *Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> *The Work and Words of Jesus*, 1950, pp. 36f.

<sup>5</sup> *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 179f.

<sup>6</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 1955, pp. 230ff.

<sup>7</sup> J. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, p. 255; W. Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*, pp. 35f.; R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, pp. 66f.; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, pp. 146f.; E. Stauffer, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, pp. 112f.

away the sin of the world thus means in the words of Edwyn Hoskyns that 'Jesus bears the consequences of human sin in order that its guilt may be removed'.<sup>1</sup> His baptism is his anointing to his priestly-sacrificial mission of suffering vicariously for the sins of the world.<sup>2</sup>

This interpretation of the baptism of Jesus finds additional confirmation in the manner in which Jesus associates baptism with suffering. In Mark 10. 38-45 he asks James and John whether they are able to drink the cup that he drinks or be baptized with the baptism that he has received. And to 'drink the cup' means, as A. M. Hunter has shown,<sup>3</sup> to drink the cup of suffering, 'the cup our sins had mingled' in Denney's memorable phrase.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in Luke 12. 50 he associates baptism with suffering:

I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I seized with agony until it is accomplished.<sup>5</sup>

The baptism in the Jordan is but the beginning of this path of redemptive suffering. Its culmination is Calvary.

But between the Jordan and Calvary lie the temptation and ministry of Jesus.

The temptation, as A. M. Hunter suggests, can be rightly understood only in the light of the baptism.<sup>6</sup> For the temptations recorded by Matthew and Luke are but three forms of the one basic temptation to seek the kingdom without the agony of suffering, i.e. to seek it by some other way than that accepted at the baptism. The temptation is thus, as Irenaeus clearly saw, a

<sup>1</sup> *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. M. Albertz, *Die Botschaft des Neuen Testaments*, II, 2, p. 231. It is surprising that R. E. O. White (*The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation*, pp. 90 ff) and G. R. Beasley-Murray (*Baptism in the New Testament*, pp. 45 ff.) fail to see this.

<sup>3</sup> *The Work and Words of Jesus*, p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> *Studies in Theology*, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> For this translation compare J. M. Creed, *The Gospel according to St Luke*, pp. 178f.; W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 1434f.

<sup>6</sup> *The Work and Words of Jesus*, p. 38.

crucial point in the work of Jesus, and Jesus' victory there determined the manner of his ministry.

That ministry was a redemptive service of healing, preaching, and teaching which evoked the hostility of the Scribes and Pharisees and involved him in suffering:

You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; for whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk. 10. 42-45).

In these words about service and ransom, Jesus 'compresses into a single phrase the whole idea of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah'.<sup>1</sup> Jesus is the suffering Servant of the Lord who gives his life a redemption price for the sins of others,<sup>2</sup> a redemption price paid not only on their behalf but in their stead.<sup>3</sup> For, as Vincent Taylor correctly affirms, 'in *anti pollon* the preposition is used with the meaning "for" in the sense of "instead of" or "in place of".'<sup>4</sup>

The price he paid was the hostility of the Jewish leaders, the betrayal at the Supper, the agony in the Garden, and the suffering of the Cross.

The hostility of the Jewish leaders was evoked by his friendship with publicans and sinners, his disregard for the letter of the law in the interest of the spirit of the law, his claim to be the Son of

<sup>1</sup> E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, 1911, p. 232. Cf. W. Manson, *Jesus the Messiah*, 1943, p. 131; T. W. Manson, *The Servant-Messiah*, 1953, p. 80; V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, 1955, pp. 445f.; P. Feine, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 1927, p. 238; Th. Preiss, *Le Fils de l'Homme*, 1951, p. 52; J. Jeremias, *Th. W. B.*, V, p. 707; F. Flückiger, *Der Ursprung des christlichen Dogmas*, pp. 32, 82,

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 444; F. Büchsel, *Th. W. B.*, I, p. 373; W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch*, 135f.

<sup>4</sup> *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 444.

God, and his claim to forgive sins. This hostility accompanied all his ministry, so that all his action became passion, all his service suffering, a passion and suffering culminating in the betrayal at the Supper, the agony in the Garden, and the suffering of the Cross.

At the Supper Jesus performs the office of a slave in washing the feet of the disciples, and distributes bread and wine as tokens of his body which is to be broken and his blood which is to be shed in establishing a new covenant through the forgiveness of sins.<sup>1</sup> This is nothing less than a foreshadowing of his death as the Lamb of God and the Servant of the Lord.<sup>2</sup>

In the garden he is assailed afresh by the temptation which had confronted him in the wilderness—the temptation to evade the sufferings of the Servant:

My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me (Mt. 26. 39).

Yet once more, and finally, he overcomes it:

Not as I will, but as thou wilt (Mt. 26. 39).

Rise, let us be going (Lk. 22. 44).

And with the humility of the Servant and the dignity of the King he goes to meet his betrayer, goes to suffer indignity and shame, goes to be crucified between malefactors.

<sup>1</sup> In this summary of the Supper, I have taken account of the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Paul. These vary slightly, it will be recalled, in two respects: the words uttered by Jesus concerning the bread and wine, and the date of the Supper. The variations in the words of Jesus are insignificant, for, as Jeremias has shown (*Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu*, 2. Aufl., pp. 84, 94), the variously reported words of Jesus all have the same meaning. Furthermore, the dating is insignificant. For if the Synoptic chronology be correct, Jesus celebrated the Supper at the time the passover lamb was sacrificed. And if the Johannine chronology be correct, he was crucified at the time of the passover. In either case, both the supper and the crucifixion are closely associated with the passover sacrifice.

<sup>2</sup> M. D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 1959, pp. 62ff., gives but the flimsiest of arguments for her view that there is only a slender connection between the Synoptic passion narratives and the Servant Songs of Second Isaiah.

What is the meaning of this unutterable suffering?

In the Ransom Saying (Mk. 10. 45) Jesus had interpreted it, as we have already seen, as the redemptive vicarious suffering of the Servant of the Lord for the many who are sinners.

The apostolic church accepted this interpretation. This is evident from the Book of Acts,<sup>1</sup> where in his address after the healing of the lame man Peter twice refers to Jesus as the Servant of God (Ac. 3. 13, 26), and the assembled Christians in their prayer twice mention 'thy holy servant Jesus' (Ac. 4. 27, 30).

Not only in his speeches in Acts but also in his First Epistle, Peter speaks of the suffering of Jesus in terms strongly reminiscent of Isaiah 53.<sup>2</sup>

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed (1 Pet. 2. 24).

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. (1 Pet. 3. 18).

Peter thus interprets the death of Jesus as the vicarious suffering of the Servant of God who bore our sins, i.e. in the words of E. G. Selwyn, 'bore their penal consequences'.<sup>3</sup>

It seems probable that the title 'Servant of God' gradually fell into disuse as Christianity moved into the Gentile world, though a trace of it is still found in the 'form of a servant' of Phil. 2. 7.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, although the name 'Servant of God' tended to disappear, the idea that Christ suffered vicariously for our sins persisted, as is evinced by the Epistles of Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Johannine writings.

In 1 Cor. 15. 3 Paul tells us that he handed on to the Corinthians the tradition he himself had received, to the effect that 'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.' This

<sup>1</sup> Cf. O. Cullmann, *Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. M. D. Hooker, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 113; O. Cullmann, *Christologie des Neuen Testaments*, pp. 73f., E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St Peter*, p. 180.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. O. Cullmann, *Christologie*, p. 76.

means that both in the general apostolic tradition and in the preaching of Paul the doctrine that Christ died for our sins occupied a prominent place.

What Paul meant by Christ dying for our sins is made plain in passages like Gal. 3. 13f; Rom. 3. 21ff; 5. 1ff; 2 Cor. 5. 17ff. In Gal. 3. 13f Paul says:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree'—that in Christ the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

This means, when we remember that *hyper hemon* (for us) means 'in our stead' as well as 'on our behalf',<sup>1</sup> that Christ, who deserved the blessing of God, on our behalf and in our stead bore the curse of God, that we might be released from the curse and receive the blessing.

In Rom. 3. 21ff he says that we are justified by the grace of God

through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Rom. 3. 24f).

We are justified, that is, by faith in the blood of Christ, whom God put forward as a *hilasterion*. The word *hilasterion* has been variously interpreted as (1) mercy seat,<sup>2</sup> (2) propitiatory sacrifice,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grimm-Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd edn., pp. 638f.; Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 457; W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, pp. 1522f.

<sup>2</sup> So many of the Church Fathers, Luther, Calvin, Grotius (cited by C. Hodge in *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 92), and recently A. Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 3. Bearb. p. 344; F. Büchsel, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 2. Aufl., p. 101; Herrmann-Büchsel, *Th. W. B.*, III, pp. 301ff.; A. Nygren, *Kommentar zum Römerbrief*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> So Vulgate, Beza, C. Hodge, and F. C. Baur (*Vorlesungen über neutestamentliche Theologie*, p. 157).

(3) means of atonement,<sup>1</sup> (4) Propitiator.<sup>2</sup> Which of these was in the Apostle's mind, can, as Büchsel justly remarks,<sup>3</sup> no longer be accurately ascertained. But two things seem incontrovertible. Firstly, that the phrase 'hilasterion in his blood' has a sacrificial connotation.<sup>4</sup> Secondly that it signifies both the expiation or covering over of sin and the propitiation or placation of God.<sup>5</sup>

Paul's meaning is therefore that we are justified by the shedding of Christ's blood which both expiates our sin and placates the wrath of God.

This is expressed more explicitly in Rom. 5. 1ff, where the Apostle says that since Christ has died for the ungodly (*hyper asebon*, 5. 6), 'we are now justified by his blood', in consequence of which 'we shall be saved by him from the wrath of God' (5. 9).

How this reconciliation is accomplished by the death of Christ is explained in 2 Cor. 5. 17ff:

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them ... For us he made him who knew no sin to be sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Reconciliation is accomplished by Christ becoming sin for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

What is meant by this remarkable expression? To find an

<sup>1</sup> So Beyschlag, *New Testament Theology*, II, p. 149; A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, pp. 124ff.; H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer*, p. 50; V. Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> So Semler, Wahl (cited C. Hodge in *Commentary*) and R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3. Aufl., I, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *Th. W. B.*, III, p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, pp. 55f.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, pp. 167ff. Morris has, I think, successfully demonstrated the weakness of Dodd's objections to the idea of propitiation.

answer we must ask what is meant by the word reconciliation (*katallage*), what is meant by becoming sin for us, and what is meant by our becoming the righteousness of God in him.

*Katallassein* means basically to *change*, and is used to express both that change of relationship which we call *reconciliation* and that change from one coinage to another which we call *exchange*.<sup>1</sup> What Paul is saying is that reconciliation takes place by way of exchange: by that exchange in which Christ becomes sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

But what does he mean when he says that Christ who knew no sin became sin for us?

He means that Christ who *committed* no sin in some way became sin for us. In what way? By taking our sin upon himself and suffering vicariously for it. In the words of James Denney:

The sin is laid by God on the Sinless One; its doom is laid on Him; His death is the execution of the divine sentence upon it. When he dies, He has put away sin; it no longer stands, as it once stood, between God and the world. On the contrary, God has made peace by this great transaction; He has wrought our reconciliation.<sup>2</sup>

And Paul says that this takes place *hyper, hēmōn*, which as we have seen means not only 'for our sake' but also 'in our stead'. Christ stands in our stead, in our place, bearing our sin and its penalty, exposed to the storm of God's wrath and curse and condemnation, (cf. Gal. 3. 13), bearing it for us.

And since he has borne it not only on our behalf but also in our stead, we do not have to bear it ourselves. We are delivered from the condemnation and wrath of God. Deliverance from the condemnation means justification, and deliverance from the wrath,

<sup>1</sup> Abbott-Smith, *Lexicon*, p. 286; Grimm-Thayer, *Lexicon*, p. 333; *Th. W. B.*, I, pp. 252ff.; Cremer-Kögel, *Wörterbuch*, pp. 129f.; J. Weiss, *Urchristentum*, p. 384 footnote; A. Oepke, 'Dikaiosune theou bei Paulus' in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, May 1953, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (EB), 1900, p. 220.

reconciliation. Thus through the vicarious suffering of our Lord our whole relationship to God is changed. We are no longer condemned, but acquitted; no longer under the wrath of God, but in the peace of God. It is this new relationship which Paul here calls 'the righteousness of God'.<sup>1</sup> For, as we saw earlier, the righteousness of God signifies among other things that right relationship to God for which we were made, from which we fell, and to which we are restored in Christ.

Thus by a marvellous exchange, Christ takes our place, and we take his.<sup>2</sup> He takes ours in accepting the penalty of our sin. We take his as we are 'in him'.

What does Paul mean by being 'in him'? He means being united with the crucified and risen Christ through faith and baptism.<sup>3</sup> United with the crucified *and risen* Christ! Hence the resurrection is significant for justification no less than the crucifixion. Christ was

put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Rom. 4. 25).

United with the crucified and risen Lord *through faith and baptism*! Hence baptism is significant for justification along with faith. The two are mentioned in the same breath in relation to justification in Gal. 3. 24-27. As Johannes Schneider,<sup>4</sup> G. R. Beasley-Murray,<sup>5</sup> and R. E. O. White<sup>6</sup> have shown, the New Testament knows no faith without baptism and no baptism without faith. It is not by faith alone and not by baptism alone that we come to be 'in Christ', but by faith expressed in baptism.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Denney, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp. 222f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. D. Wendland, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD), 6. Aufl., p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, pp. 446ff.; A. Deissmann, *Paul*, pp. 135ff.; A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, pp. 101ff., J. Schneider, *Die Gemeinde im Neuen Testament*, pp. 58ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Taufe im Neuen Testament*, 1952.

<sup>5</sup> See his chapter on 'Baptism in the Epistles of Paul' in A. Gilmore, *Christian Baptism*, pp. 128ff. and his *Baptism in the New Testament*, 1962, pp. 266-274.

<sup>6</sup> *The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation*, 1960, pp. 201ff.

What Paul is basically saying in 2 Cor. 5. 21 is thus that Christ in his vicarious suffering took our place under the wrath and condemnation of God in order that we by union with him might take his place under the peace and acquittal of God.

Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, and I am thy sin; thou hast assumed that which is mine and given me that which is thine.<sup>1</sup>

This Petrine and Pauline doctrine of a changed relationship to God through the vicarious suffering of our Lord is reproduced with slightly different terminology in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Hebrews thinks of the new relationship to God primarily in terms of the new covenant and sanctification. Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 9. 15; 12. 24). He is the High Priest who sanctifies us through his own blood (Heb. 13. 2) as he expiates (*hilaskomai*) the sins of the people (Heb. 2. 17).

The meaning of *hilaskomai*, as we have seen, is not restricted to expiation, but includes also propitiation. It signifies that covering over or expiation of sin which allays the wrath of God and renders him propitious to the sinner.

And sanctification in the Bible, as we saw earlier, denotes not merely a moral transformation but primarily the new relationship in which we belong to God.

*Hebrews* thus perpetuates the apostolic tradition that our relationship to God is transformed by the sacrificial suffering and death of our Lord for our sins.

So, finally, does the *First Epistle of John*, which twice refers to Christ as the *hilasmos* for our sins (1 Jn. 2. 2; 4. 10). For *hilasmos* as Leon Morris has shown,<sup>2</sup> like *hilaskomai* from which it is derived, means not only the expiation of our sins but also the propitiation of God. John's teaching, like the rest of the apostolic tradition, is thus that Christ reconciles us to God by his sacrificial suffering on our behalf and in our stead.

<sup>1</sup> Luther, in a letter to Spelenin, 1516.

<sup>2</sup> *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, pp. 177ff.

Charles Wesley correctly summarized New Testament doctrine when he wrote:

His death is my plea;  
My Advocate see,  
And hear the blood speak that hath  
Answered for me:  
He purchased the grace  
Which now I embrace  
O Father, Thou know'st *He hath died*  
*In my place.*

*c. The Work of the Spirit*

In the New Testament the work of Christ is never separated from the work of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Both are essential to salvation. For the work of the Spirit is to bear witness to Christ (Jn. 15. 26; Rom. 8. 16), to glorify Christ and declare him to us (Jn. 16. 14), to bring us to the acknowledgement of his lordship (1 Cor. 12. 3), in a word, to bring Christ to us and to bring us to Christ that we may be united with him and receive his blessings in faith.

When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8. 15f).

Through the work of the Spirit the initiative of God thus leads to the response of man. To this response we now advert.

*2. The Response of Man*

*a. The Indispensability of Faith*

What is the response by which man receives the blessing of God and enters into a new relationship with him? In the Synoptic Gospels it is repentance and faith.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Deissmann, *Paul*, pp. 138f.

According to Mark, the keynote of Jesus' message was: 'the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel' (Mk. 1. 15).

What did Jesus mean by repentance (*metanoia*)? In the Septuagint the word *metanoiein* is used to translate the Hebrew word *nicham*, which means to regret what one has done and to repent of it.<sup>1</sup> In classical and hellenistic Greek *metanoiein* means both to repent and to change one's purpose.<sup>2</sup> In late Jewish and Rabbinic literature it means to turn around, to turn back, to turn to God.<sup>3</sup> It seems highly probable that all these ideas were in the mind of Jesus when he called men to repentance, the dominant one being that of turning from sin and turning to God.<sup>4</sup>

What Jesus is saying is: 'Repent of your sins, turn to God, and believe the good news', i.e. the good news that the kingdom of God is at hand.

Turning to God means turning to him in faith, in trustful confidence that his kingdom is at hand.<sup>5</sup> Where men turn to God in faith, Jesus can bestow the blessings of the kingdom. The stories of the healing of the leper (Mk. 1. 40-42), of the paralytic (Mk. 2. 1-12), and of the woman with a flow of blood (Mk. 5. 25-34) all illustrate this. It is significant that Jesus says to the latter, 'Daughter, *your faith* has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease'. But where faith was lacking, as in the region where he was brought up, he could bestow no blessing: 'And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief' (Mt. 13. 58).

In the Fourth Gospel faith becomes indispensable not only for healing but for salvation.

<sup>1</sup> Köhler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, pp. 608f.

<sup>2</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, New Edition, p. 1115.

<sup>3</sup> *Th. W. B.*, IV., pp. 987ff.

<sup>4</sup> Johannes Behm in *Th. W. B.*, IV, pp. 996ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Johannes Behm in *Th. W. B.*, IV, p. 998: 'Aus der Umkehr erwächst in der Verkündigung Jesus der Glaube (Mk. 1. 15), nicht als ein Zweites, das er verlangt, sondern als Entfaltung der positiven Seite der *metanoia*, der Hinwendung zu Gott. Cf. A. Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 3. Bearb. 1905, p. 155.

To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God (Jn. 1. 12).

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life ... He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God (Jn. 3. 16-18).

Indeed, the whole purpose of the Gospel of John is to awaken faith in Jesus that men might be saved:

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name (Jn. 20. 31).

Paul no less than John insists on the indispensability of faith for salvation, and links it expressly with justification.

In Galatians he says:

We ourselves, who are Jews by birth, and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified (Gal. 2. 15f).

And in Romans, speaking of justification in terms of the righteousness of God, he says:

No human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law ... But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law ... *the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe* ... it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that *he justifies him who has faith in Jesus* (Rom. 3. 21-26).

Romans 4 is wholly occupied with Abraham as an example of justifying faith, and Romans 5 begins with the sentence:

Therefore, since we are *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This emphasis on faith continues in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author warns his readers of the dire results of unfaithfulness (Heb. 3. 12, 14; 4. 6) and exhorts them to draw near to the throne of grace with confidence (*parresia*) that they might receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4. 16). Then, after describing the atoning work of Christ, he bids them to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (*pistis*, Heb. 10. 22). In chapter 11 he demonstrates how under the old covenant the true people of God always lived by faith, and begs the people of the new covenant to look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12. 2).

The First Epistle of Peter explicitly speaks of salvation as the 'outcome of faith' (1 Pet. 1. 9).

And even James, who is often thought to be the apostle of works, rather than faith, speaks of the indispensability of faith both for effective prayer (Ja. 1. 5f) and for justification (Ja. 2. 23).

#### *b. The Origin of Faith*

Whence does faith come? Through the Word and the Spirit. That is, through the preaching of the gospel of God and the operation of the Spirit of God.

In Rom. 10. 1ff, Paul describes faith as man's response to the preaching of the gospel:

For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved ... But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? ... So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ (Rom. 10. 10-17).

And in 1 Cor. 12. 3 he describes faith as the result of the opera-

tion of the Spirit. This is wholly consonant with the Johannine words of Jesus concerning the work of the Spirit who glorifies Christ by declaring him to men (Jn. 16. 14f).

All this means that faith arises in our hearts when we hear the word of the gospel and receive it with joy because we are enabled by the Spirit to do so.

c. *The Nature of Faith*

We now approach a question which is crucial both for New Testament scholarship and for the relation of Protestant to Catholic doctrine. What is the nature of the faith which justifies us in the sight of God, which reconciles us to the Father, which sanctifies us to his service, and entirely transforms the relationship of God and man?

In the New Testament such faith has a threefold character. It is acceptance; it is reliance; and it is obedience.

(1) *Faith as Acceptance* 'The primary sense of *pisteuein* in its specifically Christian usage,' says Bultmann, 'is the acceptance of the kerygma concerning Christ.'<sup>1</sup> This is clearly the meaning of the word in passages such as Jn. 20. 31; Ac. 15. 7; 18. 8; Rom. 10. 13-17, which all refer to the proclamation of the Christian message on the part of the preacher and the acceptance of that message on the part of the hearer. Faith is thus, as Bultmann rightly says, *fides quae creditur* as well as *fides qua creditur*.<sup>2</sup> It means believing *that* something is true.

But these are written that you may believe *that* Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name (Jn. 20. 31).

If you confess with your lips *that* Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart *that* God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Rom. 10. 9).

<sup>1</sup> *Th. W. B.*, VI, p. 209. Cf. F. Prat, *The Theology of Saint Paul*, II, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> *Th. W. B.*, VI, p. 214.

For I delivered to you as of first importance that which I also received, *that* Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (1 Cor. 15. 3f).

But to accept this message of the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord and Saviour is nothing less than to accept Christ himself as the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord and Saviour. Faith therefore means not only the acceptance of the gospel of Christ, but the acceptance of Christ himself. This is illustrated in the Prologue of John's Gospel:

To all who received *him*, who believed on his name, he gave the right to become children of God (Jn. 1. 12).

Now to receive Christ means to receive him as Saviour and Lord (Phil. 3. 20). To receive him as Saviour means to rely on him for salvation. To receive him as Lord means to obey his will. Hence faith is both reliance and obedience.

(2) *Faith as Reliance* Faith is relying on God for salvation, trusting in Christ for salvation, resting on the Holy Spirit for salvation. It means forsaking all efforts to save ourselves, abandoning ourselves to the saving grace and power of God, relying entirely on God to save us.<sup>1</sup>

This aspect of faith rests on the meaning of faith in the Old Testament and in Judaism. For in the Old Testament faith is trusting in the God who is trustworthy, relying on the God who is reliable.

*Fides* is thus *fiducia*, as Luther so clearly saw. To believe in God the Father does not mean merely to believe something about him, but to commit oneself in utter trust to him, knowing that he will save.

Faith thus comes to mean confidence in God, confidence in

<sup>1</sup> R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 311.

Christ, confidence in the Holy Spirit, confidence in the Triune God,<sup>1</sup> a childlike confidence which relies on God for salvation both now and in the future. It therefore merges with hope, as the writer to the Hebrews perceives:

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Heb. 11. 1).

(3) *Faith as Obedience* Since Christ is both Saviour and Lord, to commit ourselves to him as Saviour is to commit ourselves to him as Lord. Hence faith is obedience.<sup>2</sup> It is obedience to the will of the Father (Rom. 8. 4) through the presence of the indwelling Christ (Gal. 2. 20) and the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8 4ff), whereby we become the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6. 18) and the servants of God (Rom. 6. 22).

This is the gist of Paul's argument in Rom. 3. 20-6, 23. After affirming that we are justified not by works of the law (Rom. 3. 20) but by faith in Christ (Rom. 3. 21-26), he asks whether this means that we may continue in sin that grace may abound (Rom. 6. 1). His reply is: 'No such thing!' For faith, together with the baptism in which it is expressed (Gal. 3. 26f), unites us with Christ, with the crucified and risen Christ, in whose power we walk in newness of life.

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism unto death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6. 3f).

Walking in this newness of life, we become servants of God (Rom. 6. 18ff), obedient to his will. Faith is thus inseparable from life, and justification from the service of God.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. Prat, *op. cit.*, II, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F. Prat, *ibid.*, II, p. 242. R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 310; *Th. W. B.*, VI, p. 206; M. Meinertz, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, II, pp. 124f.

*d. Faith and Works*

The recognition that faith means obedience as well as acceptance and reliance, helps us to approach the thorny problem of faith and works in relation to justification.

The seriousness of the problem becomes evident when we realize that the New Testament apparently gives two divergent answers to the question how we are justified. One answer—that of Paul and John—is that we are justified by faith. The other—that of Matthew, James, and the Apocalypse—is that we are justified by works.

Both in Romans and Galatians Paul emphatically affirms that we are justified not by works of the law but by faith in Christ. In Romans he says:

No human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law ... But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law ... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe ... they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith ... it was to prove at the present time that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3. 20-27).

In Galatians he repeats this antithesis of works of the law and faith in Christ even more emphatically:

We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified (Gal. 2. 15f).

And John, while saying less than Paul about works of the law, attributes justification and sonship to faith.

To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (Jn. 1. 12).

God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (Jn. 3. 17f).

When however we turn from Paul and John to Matthew, we find Jesus in the parables of judgment in Matthew 25 attributing justification to works.

In the parable of the virgins (Matt. 25. 1-13) it is those who take the trouble to have oil in their lamps who are admitted to the feast.

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25. 14-30) it is the industrious servants who enter into the joy of their master and the lazy servants who are cast into the outer darkness.

In the parable of the great assize (Matt. 31-46) it is those who have done works of love and compassion who inherit the kingdom and those who have failed to do these works who go into eternal punishment.

In the Apocalypse the dead are judged 'by what was written in the books, by what they had done' (Rev. 20. 11f).

And finally, in the Epistle of James we are told that we are saved by works and not by faith alone:

What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? ... Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? ... You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone (Ja. 2. 14-24).

What are we to do when the Epistles of Paul and the Gospel of John say we are justified by faith, and the Gospel of Matthew together with the Epistle of James and the Apocalypse say we are justified by works?

What are we to do, moreover, when Paul himself sometimes says that we are justified by faith and sometimes that we are justified by works? In the passages we have quoted, he affirms that justification is by faith. In others, however, he says that it is according to works:

By your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will render to every man *according to his works* (Rom. 2. 5f).

Whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, *according to what he has done in the body* (2 Cor. 5. 9f).

Justification by faith! Justification by works! The New Testament manifestly teaches both. What is the meaning of this polarity? Does it indicate a radical contradiction at the heart of the New Testament? Or does it point to a deeper unity beneath the apparent contradiction?

Luther, as is well known, thought that it indicated a radical contradiction. Paul, it seemed to him, taught that we are justified by faith alone, and James that we are justified by works. If it be by faith alone, argued Luther, it cannot be by works. Hence the two apostles contradict each other, Paul being right and James wrong.<sup>1</sup>

Luther's thesis, though still defended by Paul Althaus,<sup>2</sup> seems no longer tenable.

For in the first place, as Adolf Schlatter has shown,<sup>3</sup> Luther gives a one-sided interpretation of Pauline teaching, overlooking what the apostle says about the place of works in the final judgment. This can be understood historically as a reaction against the

<sup>1</sup> See Max Lackmann, *Reformatorsche Rechtfertigungslehre*, 1953, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Die lutherische Rechtfertigungslehre und ihre heutigen Kritiker*, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 2. Aufl. 1952, pp. 42, 48, 78f., 83f., etc.

undue emphasis on works characteristic of late scholasticism. But it cannot be defended exegetically today.

In the second place, Luther gives an equally one-sided interpretation of the Epistle of James. Whenever Luther hears the phrase 'you see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone' (Ja. 2. 24) he seems to 'see red'. He imagines that James is teaching that we are justified by *works alone*. But this is not so. James, like Paul, takes Abraham as the great prototype of faith, and, like Paul, quotes Gen. 15. 6: 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness' (Ja. 2. 23). Moreover, like Paul (Gal. 5. 6), he links faith with works: 'You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works' (Ja. 2. 22). James is therefore not teaching that we are justified by works alone (i.e. works without faith) any more than Paul is teaching that we are justified by faith alone (i.e. faith without works), but both are teaching that we are justified by the faith that works through love (Gal. 5. 6.; Ja. 2. 8).<sup>1</sup> No such gulf as Luther imagined exists between Paul and James. On the contrary, as Schlatter has shown,<sup>2</sup> both are exponents of the common message of the apostolic church.

What is this common message regarding justification, and what is the connecting link between the message of justification by faith and the message of justification by works?

The common message is that we are justified by the faith that works through love, and the link uniting justification by faith with justification by works is the obedience of faith expressed in works of love.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Adolf Schlatter, *Der Brief des Jakobus*, 2. Aufl. 1956, pp. 43-67; 184-207.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43ff.; cf. J. Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. H. Cremer, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre*, 2. Aufl. 1900, pp. 359, 401; A. Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 3. Bearb. 1905, pp. 341ff.; 372ff.; 381; A. Schlatter, *Der Brief des Jakobus*, pp. 184ff.; F. Büchsel, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 2. Aufl. 1937, pp. 123ff.; M. Albertz, *Die Botschaft des Neuen Testaments*, II, 1, pp. 249ff.; H. J. Schoeps, *Paulus*, 1959, pp. 217ff.; M. Lackmann, *Reformatrische Rechtfertigungslehre*, 1953, pp. 86ff.; Max Meinertz, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1949, I, pp. 240ff.; Wilfried Joest, *Gesetz und Freiheit*, 2. Aufl., 1956, pp. 155ff.

This is indicated by the way in which Peter in his First Epistle can say 'As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls' (1 Pet. 1. 9) and almost immediately without the slightest sense of contradiction, 'And if you invoke as Father *him who judges each one according to his deeds*, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile' (1 Pet. 1. 17).

Similarly John joins faith and deeds:

*He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already ... But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God (Jn. 3. 16-21).*

Paul, as we have seen, denies that we can be justified by *works of the law* (Rom. 3. 20; Gal. 2. 16). By works of the law he means works done in an effort to obey the law apart from the grace of God in Christ and apart from faith in Christ. Such works, done in our own strength with a view to impress God with our righteousness, cannot justify (Rom. 10. 3f; Phil. 3. 3-9). But that does not mean that *works which flow from the grace of God in Christ* as Christ is apprehended by faith and dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3. 17), have no part in justification.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, in the teaching of Paul they have their place along with the grace and faith from which they flow. It is significant that when Paul wishes to illustrate the nature of faith he takes the example of Abraham, whose faith was an obedient faith manifesting itself in deeds (Rom. 4. 1ff). This obedient faith expressed in action is the only justifying faith known to Paul. 'Such faith,' says Hermann Cremer, 'is no mere attitude without action; it is not even an attitude which demands works alongside itself; but such faith is itself action.'<sup>2</sup>

'Such faith is itself action.' If this be so, and it manifestly is, then it is obviously a cardinal error to divorce faith from works, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Cremer, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre*, p. 364.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365.

to claim that we are justified by faith and not by works, as the Reformers sometimes did.<sup>1</sup> This was not the apostolic way of speaking. This is something Paul never did. On the contrary, he joins faith and works in indissoluble unity when he speaks of the 'work of faith' (2 Thess. 1. 11), and the 'work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope' (1 Thess. 1. 3). And that these 'works of faith' as opposed to 'works of the law' have a place in our justification is evident from Paul's discussion of justification in Romans and Galatians if we take into account the *whole* of his argument and not merely part of it.

Let us turn first to Romans. It is, says the Apostle, those who are righteous by faith who will live (Rom. 1.17). But to be righteous in the sight of God and receive eternal life, we must repent and obey the truth and do good, for God shows no partiality (Rom. 2. 1-11). It is the doers of the law who are justified (Rom. 2. 13). But mere knowledge of the law does not enable us to do it (Rom. 7. 7-24; cf. Gal. 3. 21). Hence 'no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law' (Rom. 3. 20). But now, apart from the law and works of the law (Rom. 3. 21, 28), a new way of justification is offered to us. It is the way of justification by the grace of God in Christ and by our faith in Christ (Rom. 3. 21ff). This faith, like Abraham's, is a trusting faith, a hopeful faith, an obedient faith, a faith which justifies us in the sight of God and reconciles us to the heart of God (Rom. 5.). This faith however by which we are justified and reconciled is a faith which through baptism unites us with Christ in his death and resurrection, so that we walk in newness of life as servants of righteousness and servants of God (Rom. 6). It is a faith which gives us that victory over sin which the law could never give (Rom. 7). It is a faith which, uniting us with Christ and the Holy Spirit, enables us to fulfil the just requirement of the law (Rom. 8.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Calvin, *Institutes*, III, xi, 13: 'But since a great part of mankind imagines a righteousness compounded of faith and works, let us here show that there is so wide a difference between justification by faith and by works, that the establishment of the one necessarily overthrows the other.'

1-4). What is the just requirement of the law? It is nothing but to love God and love one's neighbour (cf. Lk. 10. 25-28). 'Love is the fulfilling of the law' (Rom. 13. 10). The Christian therefore fulfils the law not by endeavouring to obey a multitude of requirements in his own strength, but by fulfilling the one requirement of love in reliance on Christ (Rom. 6) and the Spirit (Rom. 8). Thus while the Jews seek to establish their own righteousness by obeying the law in their own strength, the Christian is content to receive the righteousness which comes from God through Christ and the Spirit (Rom. 10. 1ff; cf. Phil. 3. 9). By this righteousness he is transformed by the renewal of his mind, so that he may discern *and do* that which is good and acceptable and perfect in the sight of God (Rom. 12. 2).<sup>1</sup> And in *this* righteousness he stand at length before the divine tribunal to give account of himself to God (Rom. 14. 11f).

In Galatians Paul presents the same teaching in briefer compass. There is, he says, no possibility of justification by works of the law (Gal. 2. 16, 21). There would be, if the law could 'make alive', i.e. confer on us the righteousness which is acceptable to God (Gal. 3. 21). But it is unable to do this. Hence the only possibility of justification is by faith in Christ (Gal. 2. 16), who redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, in order that we might have the blessing of Abraham and receive the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3. 13f). Through Christ therefore, in so far as we are united with him in faith and baptism, we are sons of God (Gal. 3. 26f). This sonship means freedom from the multitudinous regulations of the Jewish law (Gal. 5. 1-4) but not freedom from the spirit of the law, which is love (Gal. 5. 14). We are thus justified in the sight of God and accepted as his children in so far as we have *that faith in Christ which works through*

<sup>1</sup> For this interpretation of Rom. 12. 2 cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 1932, p. 192; E. Brunner, *Der Römerbrief*, 1948, p. 85; O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 2. Teil. 1952, pp. 236ff.; A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*, E. Tr. 1952, pp. 419f.; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1957, p. 233.

love (Gal. 5. 4-6) and brings forth the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness self-control (Gal. 5. 22). Where there is faith with these fruits of the Spirit there is justification. Where these fruits of the Spirit are lacking there is no justification:

Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, that *those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God* (Gal. 5. 19-21).

According to Paul, therefore, our relationship to God is changed; we are justified, reconciled and adopted as his dear children, not by faith alone apart from works, nor by works alone apart from faith, but by faith that brings forth works, or to use Paul's own words by 'faith working through love' (Gal. 5. 6).<sup>1</sup>

Schlatter does not exaggerate when he says, 'It is entirely understandable why the preaching of faith by Paul is based on the sole value of works, and begins with the sentence: 'to every one who does well, glory!' (Rom. 2. 1ff). The sole saving significance of faith is based on this, that there is no other way of doing good than the way of faith, which means that the only way is to renounce oneself and trust the One who has been given by God to be the Head, the one who vivifies and leads us. The statement 'by works alone' with which the Epistle to the Romans begins, and the statement 'by faith alone' with which it continues are correlative.'<sup>2</sup> They are correlative because without faith there are no works which could justify, and without works there is no faith which could justify.

This is manifestly the conviction of James. In the celebrated passage on faith and works, Ja. 2. 14ff, he does not teach, as we have seen, that we are justified by works alone, i.e. by works

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Walz and Schrey, *Gerechtigkeit in biblischer Sicht*, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 3. Bearb. 1905, p. 381.

without faith. But neither will he concede that we are justified by faith alone, i.e. by faith without works. His doctrine rather is that we are justified by the faith that brings forth works, or, what comes to the same thing, by the works that flow from faith:

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works, and the scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness'; and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone (Ja. 2. 21-24).

Like Paul, James teaches that we are justified by faith: 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness.' And like Paul, he teaches that we are justified by works: 'You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.' But in his case as in Paul's, these are not two doctrines but one. For he refuses to divorce faith and works in the question of justification: 'You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith found its completion in works.' We are justified neither by faith without works nor by works without faith, but by the faith which brings forth works, the faith that works through love.

There is thus a consistent apostolic teaching regarding the place of faith and works in justification. It is that in the grace of God bestowed on us through Christ and the Holy Spirit we are justified in the sight of God by the faith which works through love.

Augustine was wholly consonant with the New Testament in his insistence that faith, hope, love and works must ever be united, never divorced.<sup>1</sup> He closes his treatise on *Faith and Works* with the significant words:

I have shown that ... the catechumens who ask for baptism are to be so instructed so that they learn not only what they are

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Enchiridion*, 2. 7-8; 18. 67.

to believe but also how they are to live; that eternal life is promised to believers not, as some imagine, on account of a dead faith which without works is unable to save, but *by that faith of grace which works through love*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Per illam fidem gratiae, quae per dilectionem operatur (*De Fide et Operibus*, XXVII, 49).

## Chapter III

### THE RESTORED RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO PATRISTIC AND SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY

#### A. THE SECOND CENTURY

THE sources of Christian doctrine in the second century are to be sought not only in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and in the apostolic tradition which crystallized as the rule of faith, but also in the Judaism and Hellenism of the day.<sup>1</sup> For in the course of its mission to Jews and Gentiles, the church did not wholly escape the influence of Judaism and Hellenism. We can see this in the New Testament itself, where both John and Paul have to contend with Judaizing and Oriental-Hellenistic (Gnostic) tendencies in the church.

In view of this, it is not surprising to find in the Apostolic Fathers echoes both of the apostolic gospel and also of Judaistic legalism and moralistic Hellenism. By legalism is meant the idea that we shall be saved by keeping the law, and by moralism the idea that we shall be saved by the quality of our moral life.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently we find some passages in the Apostolic Fathers, particularly in *First and Second Clement* and the *Epistle to Diognetus*,<sup>3</sup> which sound like the New Testament and give a thoroughly evangelical account of the restoration of our relationship to God through the grace of God, the work of Christ, and our faith in him.

*Second Clement*, for instance, speaks of the God who 'saved us

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Reinhold Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 4. Aufl., 1953, I, pp. 666f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. von Harnack's definition of moralism as the doctrine 'according to which eternal life is the reward and recompense for a perfect moral life lived in one's own strength.' (*Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 5. Aufl. 1931, I, p. 190.)

<sup>3</sup> This anonymous epistle is sometimes classified with the writings of the Apologists rather than with those of the Apostolic Fathers.

in his mercy'<sup>1</sup> through the work of Christ who came 'to save the perishing.'<sup>2</sup> *The Epistle to Diognetus* extols the 'excellence of the kindness and the love' of God, who 'did not hate us nor reject us nor remember us for evil, but was long-suffering, endured us, himself in pity took our sin, himself gave his own Son as ransom for us, the Holy for the wicked, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal' in order to cover our sins with his righteousness and 'make righteous many wicked.'<sup>3</sup> And *First Clement* teaches that we are justified by faith: 'We are not justified by ourselves, or by our wisdom or understanding or piety or the deeds which we have wrought in holiness of heart, but through faith, by which Almighty God has justified all men from the beginning of the world.'<sup>4</sup>

The influence of Jewish legalism and Hellenistic moralism, on the other hand, is clearly seen in *The Didache*, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, and *The Shepherd of Hermas*. In both *The Didache* and *The Epistle of Barnabas* the document known as *The Two Ways* appears, which, according to Lake<sup>5</sup> and Knopf<sup>6</sup> is a Jewish writing describing the way of righteousness as the way of life and the way of wickedness as the way of death. And in *The Shepherd of Hermas* legalism and moralism receive classical expression. For the basic teaching of *The Shepherd* is that we are saved by repentance and good works.<sup>7</sup> Repentance means confession of sin, contrition of heart, and reformation of life.<sup>8</sup> It brings the forgiveness of sins committed before repentance, but not of those committed after repentance, and can take place but once.<sup>9</sup> After this one and only repentance, eternal life is gained by works.<sup>10</sup> 'Thou shalt have

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Clement*, I. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Epistle to Diognetus*, IX.

<sup>4</sup> 1 *Clement*, XXXII. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *The Apostolic Fathers* (Loeb Library), Vol. I, pp. 306f.

<sup>6</sup> *Die Apostolischen Väter* (H.N.T.), pp. 2-5.

<sup>7</sup> Mand., IV. 2. 2-4; Mand. XII. 6. 1-5. Cf. M. Dibelius, *Die Apostolischen Väter* (H.N.T.), p. 423.

<sup>8</sup> Mand. VI. 2. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Mand. IX. 2f.; Vis. II. 2. 4f.

<sup>10</sup> Vis. III. 9.\*5.

life if thou observest my commandments and walkest in them.<sup>1</sup> After repentance, the Christian must ask not for forgiveness but for 'righteousness,' i.e., a righteous life,<sup>2</sup> for only by keeping the commandments of the Lord will he at length enter the Tower, i.e., the kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup>

Such teaching was of course a legalistic distortion of Christianity. It was recognized as such by Marcion, who sought to overthrow it by the Pauline doctrine of grace. Unfortunately, his Paulinism was tainted with Gnosticism. That was the tragedy of the second century. Its greatest Paulinist was its greatest Gnostic! And whatever the church thought of his Paulinism, she was bound to reject his Gnosticism, which involved a doctrine of two gods. Thus the man who might have restored the gospel of redeeming grace was lost to the church, and in the west legalism often obscured the gospel.

#### B. THE EAST

'The concepts of justification and reconciliation,' says Albrecht Ritschl, 'in whatever sequence and connotation they be understood, are peculiar to the western church. In the eastern or Greek church they are almost unknown.'<sup>4</sup> To say that they are 'almost unknown' (*so gut wie unbekannt*) is perhaps to indulge in hyperbole, but it remains true that they are overshadowed by the idea of deification,<sup>5</sup> understood either as transformation into the likeness of God or into the very essence of God.

Irenaeus,<sup>6</sup> for instance, sums up his view of the work of Christ in the celebrated words: "The Word of God, Jesus Christ our Lord ... became what we are in order that he might make us what he is."<sup>7</sup> What he means by this becomes clear when we read:

<sup>1</sup> Mand. IV. 2. 4. Cf. Sim. VIII. 7. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Vis. III. 1. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Mand. XII. 3. 6; Sim. V. 3. 2.; Sim. IX. 1-10. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, 3. Aufl. 1889, I, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> A. von Harnack, *Lehrbuch*, II, p. 67

<sup>6</sup> Though he laboured long as bishop of Lyons, Irenaeus was eastern both in origin and mentality.

<sup>7</sup> *Contra omnes haereses*, V. Praefatio.

‘The Son of God ... when he became incarnate and was made man, recapitulated in himself the long line of human beings, thus furnishing us in the briefest yet fullest manner with salvation, so that what we lost in Adam—namely, existence according to the image and likeness of God—we might recover in Christ.’<sup>1</sup>

The restoration of the image and likeness of God<sup>2</sup>—that is the centre of Irenaeus’ faith rather than the restoration of the relationship between man and God.

This restoration of our resemblance to God takes place, he says, through Christ, who pours out ‘the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting God to man by the Spirit,’<sup>3</sup> and thus rendering us worthy (*dignus*) of acceptance in the final judgment.

Clement of Alexandria, like Irenaeus, is interested principally in that transformation of human life which leads to the attainment of immortality through moral excellence.<sup>4</sup> He sees in Christ not so much the Mediator between God and man as the Instructor and Lawgiver who exhorts us to that perfection which merits immortality.<sup>5</sup> It is significant that when he speaks of justification he means not a divine verdict of acquittal but a moral transformation. ‘Ye were justified by the name of the Lord, ye were, so to speak, made by him to be just, as he is just.’<sup>6</sup>

Origen and Athanasius, however, are interested not only in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, III.xviii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus distinguishes the image (*imago*) from the likeness (*similitudo*), meaning by the first man’s personal nature, which remains even after the fall, and by the second man’s moral resemblance to God, which is lost through the fall. He himself did not adhere very rigidly to this distinction, but later writers did.

<sup>3</sup> *Contra omnes haereses*, V. i. 1.

<sup>4</sup> R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, I, pp. 489ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Stromateis*, VII. Cf. R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, I, pp. 483ff.; V. E. Hasler, *Gesetz und Evangelium in der alten Kirche bis Origenes*, Zürich, 1953, pp. 58ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Stromateis*, VII. 87.

the moral transformation of man but also in his relation to God.

'Origen,' says Walther Koehler, 'is the first of the orientals who presents a doctrine of reconciliation.'<sup>1</sup> In contrast to Clement, he had a profound sense of the gravity of sin and of man's impotence either to win forgiveness or change himself. Man needs more than an Instructor and Example. He needs a High Priest, one who can offer an adequate sacrifice for sins. This High Priest, who is also Instructor and Lawgiver and Example, is Jesus, who on the cross suffered for our sins and ever liveth to make intercession for us.<sup>2</sup> The benefits of his intercession, the forgiveness of sins and the victory over sin, become ours through faith, repentance, and baptism.<sup>3</sup> Thus through the work of Christ, the word of the gospel, faith (which is never severed from works), repentance and baptism, we enter into a new relationship with God and are transformed into the image of God.

After baptism therefore we ought not to sin. What happens, however, if we do? We can obtain forgiveness through martyrdom, almsgiving, etc., and through penance (*poenitentia*).<sup>4</sup> By penance Origen means the confession of sin and the suffering of those punishments which serve to atone for sin and to purify us from it. If such penitential sufferings are insufficient to atone for *all* our sin and purify us from it, they must be continued in the fire of purgatory after death. In this fire, however, *all* remaining sins will be thoroughly atoned for and purged, and eventually everybody will be saved both by the restoration of a right relationship to God and by the restoration of the image of God.<sup>5</sup>

Athanasius is concerned supremely with the person and work of Christ. He sees both however from the standpoint of soteriology and hence in relation to man and God.

Like Origen, he conceives salvation as both the restoration of a right relation to God and as the transformation of human life

<sup>1</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, 3. Aufl. 1951, I, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> R. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 526ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 529ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 532ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 550ff.

into the image of God. Both are effected by God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Since all of us are sinners, we are condemned by the law and guilty before God.<sup>1</sup> To remove this guilt, Christ in his great love and mercy became incarnate,<sup>2</sup> taking upon himself the form of a servant and suffering for our sake.<sup>3</sup> As the suffering Servant of the Lord he 'bore our sins and underwent the curse which was pronounced against them,'<sup>4</sup> thus satisfying the demands of justice in our stead.<sup>5</sup> 'All mankind had formerly incurred the sentence of the law, and were guilty criminals; but the Word of God took upon himself the punishment to be inflicted, and thus justice was satisfied.'<sup>6</sup> And now, since the penalty of our sin has been borne by Christ, it no longer rests upon us.

'Have no fear, then. Now that the common Saviour of all has died for us (*hyper hēmōn*), we who believe in Christ no longer die, as men died aforetime, in fulfilment of the threat of the law. That condemnation has come to an end; and now that, by the grace of the resurrection, corruption has been banished and done away, we are loosed from our mortal bodies in God's good time for each, so that we may obtain thereby a better resurrection. Like seeds cast into the earth, we do not perish in our dissolution, but like them shall rise again, death having been brought to nought by the grace of the Saviour.'<sup>7</sup>

Thus by the vicarious suffering of our Lord, we are acquitted of sin, restored to God's favour, and released from the curse of death. Athanasius, like Origen, has beautifully recaptured the Pauline doctrine of the marvellous exchange. And he has equally recaptured the Pauline-Johannine doctrine of the transformation of our life by union with God through the work of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> *Oratio*, I. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *De Incarnatione*, viii.

<sup>3</sup> *Oratio*, I. 41.

<sup>4</sup> *Oratio*, II. 55. Cf. *Oratio*, II. 47 and *De Incarnatione* xxv.

<sup>5</sup> *Oratio*, II. 69.

<sup>6</sup> *Oratio*, I. 60.

<sup>7</sup> *De Incarnatione*, xxi.

'For this was the very end and purpose of His Incarnation, that our human nature might in His Person obtain and receive whatever it could not otherwise have obtained, and that we might be partakers both of the same nature and of the same blessings with Him ... It was necessary therefore that God and man should be personally united, in order that human nature might be invested with power and exalted to glory.'<sup>1</sup>

Athanasius sometimes calls this transformation 'deification',<sup>2</sup> but it is clear that he uses this word not in the Neoplatonic sense of 'becoming God' but in the Christian sense of 'becoming like God'. 'God the Father and his Word are identically one in nature, but we can only be one with them as regards our imitation of that nature.'<sup>3</sup>

In the mystical-sacramental theology of Dionysius the Areopagite, deification is conceived neoplatonically. It becomes, that is, absorption in God rather than resemblance to God. This is accomplished by three steps, purification, illumination, perfection, which are effected by the sacraments or mysteries of the church.<sup>4</sup>

Eastern theology culminates in John of Damascus' *Fount of Knowledge*. John's controlling interest, as A. C. McGiffert remarks,<sup>5</sup> is Christological rather than soteriological. What he has to say regarding salvation is, however, very close to the theology of Athanasius.

Christ came to free us from the condemnation of sin by offering himself as a sacrifice for our sins and to free us from the power of sin by renewing within us the image of God.<sup>6</sup> All this is clear and admirable. What is less clear—as also in Athanasius—is how we receive these twin benefits of a new relationship with

<sup>1</sup> *Oratio*, IV. 6.

<sup>2</sup> P. T. Camelot, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie*, Paris 1946, pp. 90ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Oratio*, III. 22.

<sup>4</sup> See Loofs, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 252ff.; A. C. McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought*, I, pp. 291ff.; A. von Harnack, *op. cit.*, II, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> *A History of Christian Thought*, I, p. 320.

<sup>6</sup> A. Ritschl, *op. cit.*, I, p. 19.

God and a new life in the image of God. John links them rather vaguely and somewhat incidentally with faith and the mysteries or sacraments.<sup>1</sup>

In general, we may say that in eastern theology the question of the relationship of God and man plays but a subordinate role. Where it attains significance, the restoration of the relationship between God and man is conceived of as the result of the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of the Word of God, whose benefits we receive through faith and the sacraments or mysteries of baptism, eucharist, and penance.

### C. THE WEST

If the tendency in the east was to interpret Christianity largely in terms of Neoplatonic mysticism, the tendency in the west was to interpret it largely in terms of Roman legalism.<sup>2</sup>

This meant that the relationship of man and God was ever in the foreground. But it meant also that this relationship was thought of primarily in legalistic terms. The relationship became that of the Judge and the prisoner rather than that of the Father and his children or the Redeemer and the redeemed. The Bible saw God as Judge *and* Father *and* Redeemer. Tertullian, Lactantius and Pelagius saw him only as Judge. Cyprian saw him as Judge and Redeemer, and Ambrose and Augustine as Judge, Redeemer, and Father.

The spirit of legalism, present already in *The Didache* and *The Shepherd of Hermas*, finds classical expression in the theology of Tertullian (ca. A.D. 200).

Tertullian was a lawyer who even after he became a theologian never abandoned his legalistic outlook. Apparently it was he who introduced legal terms such as *merit* and *satisfaction* into Christian theology. Christianity for him, as for Justin Martyr,<sup>3</sup> is essentially the new law, and Christ the new Lawgiver.<sup>4</sup> 'He

<sup>1</sup> A. C. McGiffert, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 322ff.

<sup>2</sup> K. D. Schmidt, *Kirchengeschichte*, 3. Aufl. 1960, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch*, I, p. 350.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 434ff.

thinks and feels as a Roman,' says Reinhold Seeberg, 'and his peculiar mentality expresses itself in the form of a legalistic relationship between God and man. Tertullian undoubtedly received his basic conception in Rome. Its source was ultimately Jewish, but it had been accepted and worked over by the Roman mind. Tertullian brought this process to completion.'<sup>1</sup>

This legalistic outlook meant that Tertullian always conceived the relationship between God and man as a relationship between the Judge and the prisoner at the bar. God's highest attribute is his justice (*iustitia*). To be sure, at creation his goodness was manifest.<sup>2</sup> But when man fell into sin, 'the divine goodness (*bonitas*), being interrupted in that free course whereby God was spontaneously good, is now dispensed according to the deserts of every man; it is offered to the worthy, denied to the unworthy ... justice (*iustitia*) is the very fullness of the Deity himself.'<sup>3</sup>

In this world the justice of God is sometimes obscured, since God 'bestows his blessings alike on wicked men and on his own elect.'<sup>4</sup> But after death 'he has appointed an eternal judgment, when both thankful and unthankful will have to stand before his bar.'<sup>5</sup> There, in a judgment which is plenary, absolute and irrevocable,<sup>6</sup> he will execute 'retribution according to men's merits,'<sup>7</sup> for he is a God of vengeance and retribution.<sup>8</sup>

Tertullian obviously conceives the office of the judge in Roman rather than in Hebraic fashion. The judge is one who dispenses rewards and punishments according to merit and demerit rather than the one who defends the afflicted and distressed. Similarly, he conceives righteousness (*iustitia*) in the Roman rather than the biblical way. The righteousness of God is no longer the saving

<sup>1</sup> R. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, I, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> *Contra Marcionem*, ii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Scapulam*, ii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, ii.

<sup>6</sup> *De Resurrectione Carnis*, xiv.

<sup>7</sup> *Contra Marcionem*, v. 12.

<sup>8</sup> P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la Littérature Latine Chrétienne*, I, p. 124.

righteousness (*iustitia salutifera*) of the Psalms and Paul, but the strict justice (*iustitia distributiva*) of Aristotle and Ulpian.<sup>1</sup>

Since in the final judgment God deals with us in strict justice, and we are all sinners who deserve hell, God's ultimate relationship to us will be that of the impartial Judge who gives us what we deserve and consigns sinners to hell.<sup>2</sup> Can anything change this relationship and this judgment? Yes, says Tertullian, one thing: repentance. 'Repentance is the price at which the Lord has determined to award pardon.'<sup>3</sup>

A man has two opportunities of repentance—one at his baptism and the other after baptism.

Baptism, according to Tertullian, is not to be rashly undertaken.<sup>4</sup> It is the seal of faith and is best administered when the one to be baptized experiences faith and repentance.<sup>5</sup>

'Let them come then while they are growing up; let them come while they are learning, while they are being taught whither to come; let them become Christians (i.e. by baptism) when they have become able to know Christ.'<sup>6</sup>

For Tertullian, as for the New Testament, faith, repentance and baptism belong together. Of the three, however, repentance is supreme. 'Repentance is the price at which the Lord has determined to award pardon.' What is repentance (*poenitentia*) as Tertullian understands it? It is the confession of sin (*exomologesis*) and satisfaction for sin.<sup>7</sup> Confession alone is not sufficient. It must be accompanied by satisfaction. And satisfaction means a voluntary 'prostration and humiliation' in which we afflict ourselves

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle had defined *dikaïosune* in the narrower sense as distributing awards according to merits (*Ethica Nicomachea*, 1131a), or giving everybody what he deserves (*De Virtutibus et Vitiis*, 1250a). Ulpian, Tertullian's great juristic contemporary, had defined *iustitia* as *constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum cuique tribuendi*—the constant and enduring will to give to each that which is his due.

<sup>2</sup> *De Poenitentia*, xii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

<sup>4</sup> *De Baptismo*, xviii.

<sup>5</sup> *De Baptismo*, xiii.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii.

<sup>7</sup> *De Poenitentia*, v-vi.

with sufferings and mortifications.<sup>1</sup> For the more we afflict ourselves in this life, the less will God afflict us in the life to come.<sup>2</sup> The grace, therefore, which pardons our sins in baptism is not free grace. It has to be earned by the merit of baptismal satisfaction. Here in germ is the idea of meriting grace which later plays so large a part in the theology of Cyprian and the Franciscans.

Once we have merited forgiveness by repentance and received it in baptism, we are to live without sin and be saved by good works. For we are like sailors who through sinning suffered shipwreck before baptism, and now, having been rescued by baptism, must sin no more, for there is no second baptism to save us.<sup>3</sup> If, however, we do sin after baptism, a second repentance is offered us, but only one, this time of course without baptism.<sup>4</sup> By this second repentance we may again merit the grace of forgiveness by the rigour of our mortification. And after that? Tertullian does not say.

Calixtus does. In A.D. 220, as Bishop of Rome, he issued his famous edict permitting *poenitentia* not merely once after baptism but as often as the Christian sinner feels the need of it, thus making penance an indefinitely repeatable act in the life of the Christian.<sup>5</sup>

After Calixtus the importance of post-baptismal repentance steadily increased. For several reasons. In the first place, the growing practice of infant baptism meant that baptismal repentance became impossible, and post-baptismal repentance more important. Secondly, the considerable number of apostates in the Decian persecution intensified the question of post-baptismal repentance and re-admission to the church. Thirdly, there seems to have been a growing sense that the Christian is still a sinner,<sup>6</sup> and since only pre-baptismal sins were conceived to be forgiven in baptism, the question of the forgiveness of post-baptismal sin became acute.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., ix.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ix.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., viii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., vii-xii.

<sup>5</sup> Walther Kochler, *Dogmengeschichte*, 3. Aufl. 1951, I, p. 201.

<sup>6</sup> This is stronger in Cyprian than in Tertullian.

Cyprian, though regarding Tertullian as his theological guide, had a far more evangelical conception of Christianity.

Many and great, beloved brethren, are the divine benefits wherewith the large and abundant mercy of God the Father and Christ both has laboured and is always labouring for our salvation: that the Father sent the Son to preserve us and give us life, in order that he might restore us; and that the Son was willing to be sent and to become the Son of man, that he might make us sons of God; humbled himself, that he might raise up the people who before were prostrate; was wounded that he might heal our wounds; served, that he might draw out to liberty those who were in bondage; underwent death, that he might set forth immortality to mortals.<sup>1</sup>

Christ is our Mediator,<sup>2</sup> and Advocate,<sup>3</sup> and Redeemer<sup>4</sup> who by his death reconciles us to God:

This grace (sc. of pardon) Christ bestows; this gift of his mercy he confers upon us, by overcoming death in the trophy of the cross, by redeeming the believer with the price of his blood, by reconciling man to God the Father, by quickening our mortal nature with a heavenly regeneration ... Made by him the children of God, with him we shall ever live; with him we shall always rejoice, restored by his own blood.<sup>5</sup>

Reconciliation, however, becomes complete only when we receive the gift of God in Christ. How do we receive it? By confession of sin<sup>6</sup> and prayer for the forgiveness of sin<sup>7</sup> by faith in Christ,<sup>8</sup>—and by satisfactions and good works.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De opere et eleemosynis*, i.

<sup>2</sup> *De oratione Dominica*, iii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xxv.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Demetrianum*, xxv.

<sup>5</sup> *De oratione Dominica*, ix; *De mortalitate*, iii.

<sup>6</sup> *De opere et eleemosynis*, xxiii, xxiv.

<sup>7</sup> *De idolorum vanitate*, xi.

<sup>8</sup> *Ad Demetrianum*, xxv.

<sup>9</sup> *De oratione Dominica*, vi.

Cyprian is a practical rather than systematic theologian and nowhere clearly states the *relation* between confession, prayer, faith, satisfaction and good works. It is clear however that he declines to divorce prayer from works or faith from works, for he says that prayer for pardon unaccompanied by good works is futile,<sup>1</sup> and faith devoid of good works unavailing.<sup>2</sup> We are forgiven by God as we forgive one another.<sup>3</sup> And we are justified by that faith alone which brings forth works.<sup>4</sup>

Lactantius takes us back to the theology of the *Shepherd of Hermas* and Tertullian. He occasionally calls God 'Father and Lord,'<sup>5</sup> but thinks of him predominantly as the Lawgiver and Judge who rewards our virtues with eternal joy and our vices with eternal punishment.<sup>6</sup> Consequently:

There are two ways, O Emperor Constantine, by which human life must proceed—the one which leads to heaven, the other which sinks to hell ... We say that the two ways belong to heaven and hell, because immortality is promised to the righteous, and everlasting punishment is threatened to the unrighteous.<sup>7</sup>

But we are all sinners. Hence our relationship to God is one in which we are estranged from him and condemned to death, i.e., eternal punishment.<sup>8</sup> How can this relationship be changed? Only, says Lactantius by the forgiveness of past sins and the avoidance of future ones. But can God the Judge forgive? Yes, says Lactantius, since he is Lord of his own law.<sup>9</sup> How does he

<sup>1</sup> *De oratione Dominica*, xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> *De opere et eleemosynis*, viii.

<sup>3</sup> *De oratione Dominica*, xxii, xxiii.

<sup>4</sup> *De mortalitate*, iii; *De opere et eleemosynis*, viii.

<sup>5</sup> *Divinarum Institutionum*, IV. x.

<sup>6</sup> The very title of his major work, *The Divine Institutions*, is indicative of his legalistic bent, for the word *Institutio*, as P. de Labriolle points out (*Histoire de la Littérature Latine Chrétienne*, I, p. 297) is a legal term.

<sup>7</sup> *Divinarum Institutionum*, VI. iii.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. §xxvi.

<sup>9</sup> *De Ira Dei*. xix.

forgive? By leading us to repentance and good works. Repentance for Lactantius has nothing to do with mortifications as satisfactions for sin, but is simply 'to profess and affirm that one will sin no more'.<sup>1</sup> It is nothing but moral resolution. How is it evoked? By the teaching<sup>2</sup> and example<sup>3</sup> of Christ. As we follow his example and turn from sin we 'earn immortality by works of righteousness.'<sup>4</sup>

Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* is the first *systematic* theology of the Latin church. It is a system however which has no place for the incarnate Son of God who suffered for our sins and was raised for our justification or for the Holy Spirit who transforms our life. Christ has been reduced to a mere preacher of repentance and example of a good life, and Christianity to mere moralism.

This moralistic reduction of Christianity culminates in Pelagius.

There are, it is true, some passages in his commentaries on Paul's epistles which sound remarkably evangelical. He says, for instance, that 'God freely forgives the sins of all the undeserving'<sup>5</sup> and 'justifies the ungodly freely, by faith alone (*gratis per solam fidem*).'<sup>6</sup> This justification through forgiveness however takes place but once in the life of the believer—at his baptism.<sup>7</sup> Thereafter he must win justification by his good works before the Tribunal of the just Judge who 'renders to each that which is his due, without fraud and without grace.'<sup>8</sup> And he is well able to do so, for he possesses freedom of will (*liberum arbitrium*), by which Pelagius meant not only freedom to choose, but also freedom to

<sup>1</sup> *Divinarum Institutionum*, VI. xiii. In another passage (*Div. Inst.*, VI. xxiv) he considers the Greek word *metanoia* and says it means 'a return to a right understanding,' which signifies grief for one's error and confirmation to a better course of life.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. xii, xiii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. xvi.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. xxv.

<sup>5</sup> On Rom. 3. 24. Cited R. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, II, p. 495.

<sup>6</sup> On Rom. 4. 5. Cited R. Seeberg, *ibid.*, II, p. 495.

<sup>7</sup> F. Loofs, *op. cit.*, II, p. 336. Cf. A. C. McGiffert, *op. cit.*, II, p. 128.

<sup>8</sup> Cited A. von Harnack, *op. cit.*, III, p. 190.

choose (and do) that which is good.<sup>1</sup> All that he needs is the grace of God which sent Christ to be our Teacher and Example, and faith in the teaching of Christ. For by the teaching of Christ we are exhorted to virtue and by the exercise of our wills we are able to live that virtuous life which earns the approval of God. Thus by the forgiveness of pre-baptismal sins at baptism and good works after baptism our relationship to God is restored. We are justified in his sight.<sup>2</sup>

Grace is no longer the pardoning mercy of God nor the transforming power of God, but merely the goodness of the human will and the teaching and example of Christ. Christ is no longer the Lamb of God, but merely the Teacher and Exemplar of virtue. And faith is no longer faith in Christ, but merely faith in his teaching. Save for the forgiveness of sins in baptism, Christianity has become indistinguishable from Jewish legalism and Hellenistic moralism.

Alongside these legalistic tendencies there is, however, among the Fathers a more evangelical trend represented by Ambrose and Augustine.

Ambrose is influenced by both eastern and western traditions,<sup>3</sup> and above all by the Bible.<sup>4</sup>

To him God is not merely Lawgiver and Judge. He is also Father and Redeemer, more inclined to mercy than severity.<sup>5</sup> Hence, although our sin evokes his wrath, he reconciles us to himself and forgives our sins through his redeeming work in Christ and the Holy Spirit, as we confess our sin and turn in faith to Christ. It is this forgiveness of sin which Ambrose, like Paul, calls justification.

<sup>1</sup> R. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, II, p. 489.

<sup>2</sup> Pelagius did not reject penance as a means of forgiveness for post-baptismal sin, but he laid no stress on it and merely tolerated it as a concession to human weakness. See A. C. McGiffert, *op. cit.*, II, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> Berthold Altaner calls him '*der beste Zeuge des morgenländischen und abendländischen Kirchenglaubens in seinem Einklang*' (*Patrologie*, 3. Aufl. 1951, p. 337).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. H. v. Campenhausen, art. Ambrosius in *RGG*, 3. Aufl., I, pp. 307f.

<sup>5</sup> *De Poenitentia*, I, iii, 11.

Why do you fear to confess your sins to our good Lord? 'Set them forth,' He says, 'that thou mayest be justified.' ... For he is justified who voluntarily confesses his own sin ... The Lord knows all things, but he waits for your words, not that he may punish, but that he may pardon.<sup>1</sup>

God justifies us by pardoning our sins. He justifies us, that is, not in justice but in mercy,<sup>2</sup> a mercy bestowed upon us through the work of Christ. For Christ, 'being in the form of God, emptied himself, and took upon himself the form of a servant,'<sup>3</sup> became obedient unto death, suffering the curse upon sin for us.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, we are justified not by the works of the law, but by the work of Christ.

We are not justified by works of the law; I have therefore no cause to glory in my own works or any cause to vaunt myself; therefore will I glory in Christ. I will not glory because I am righteous, but because I am redeemed. I will not glory because I am void of sin, but because my sins are forgiven. I will not glory because I am profitable or because any one is profitable to me, but because Christ is my Advocate with the Father, and his blood was shed for me.<sup>5</sup>

'His blood was shed for me.' That is a frequent theme in the message of Ambrose. Christ has suffered that I might be forgiven and justified in God's sight. But though he has died for me, I am not yet justified until I believe. 'To this end He came down, that thou mightest believe; if thou believest not, He has not come down for thee, has not suffered for thee.'<sup>6</sup> Until we believe, the gates of heaven are shut against us.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I. iii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *De Fide*, V. viii. 107.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II. xi. 92.

<sup>5</sup> *De Iacob et vita beata*, I. vi. 21.

<sup>6</sup> *De Fide*, IV. ii. 27.

What shall we do, then? How shall we ascend to heaven? ... The doors are shut; they are not opened to everyone; not everyone who desires shall enter, unless he faithfully believes ... When the Lord of the banquet enters, and sees one who is not clad in the wedding garment of faith, he will cast him into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we are justified by grace, justified by Christ, justified by faith. But what is faith? Faith is receiving the gospel, the gospel that the Father has sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, the gospel that Christ has become man and suffered for our sins and been crucified and buried and is raised and exalted. But for Ambrose it is, as Harnack points out,<sup>2</sup> more than this. It is placing one's trust in Jesus. It is opening one's heart and life to Jesus that he might enter as Saviour and King.

For Christ standeth at the door of thy soul. Hear him speaking. 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man open to me, I will come in to him, and I will sup with him and he with me.' ... Be thy gates lifted up, then, that Christ may come in unto thee ... Christ in the form of God, Christ with the Father; that he may enter such as he is, exalted above the heaven and all things; and that he may send forth upon thee his Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

Thus we are justified by grace. We are justified by Christ. We are justified by faith. And, says Ambrose, we are justified by baptism. For as faith unites us with Christ, so also does baptism, since in baptism we are buried *with Christ* and rise with him to newness of life.<sup>4</sup> Hence baptism, which Ambrose normally associates with faith,<sup>5</sup> mediates forgiveness of sins and regenera-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. ii. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Lehrbuch*, III, pp. 50f.

<sup>3</sup> *De Fide*, IV. ii. 19-24.

<sup>4</sup> *De Poenitentia*, II. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *De Sacramentis*, V. 28. A. W. Argyle points out, however, that Ambrose also advocates infant baptism (*Christian Baptism*, ed. A. Gilmore, p. 214).

tion by the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> So does participation in the eucharist. For 'as often as we receive the Blood of the Lord, we proclaim the death of the Lord. As, then, he was once slain for all, so whenever forgiveness of sins is granted, we receive the Sacrament of His Body, that through his blood there may be remission of sins.'<sup>2</sup>

For sins committed after baptism there is therefore forgiveness through the eucharist. But for grievous sins, such as apostasy, there is forgiveness only through the sacrament of penance (*poenitentia*), which is a public confession of sin, allowed but once,<sup>3</sup> in which we grieve for sin, afflict ourselves, and turn to God.

The world must be renounced; less sleep must be indulged in than nature demands; it must be broken by groans, interrupted by sighs, put aside by prayers; the mode of life must be such that we die to the usual habits of life. Let a man deny himself and be wholly changed.<sup>4</sup>

For lighter sins we must repent daily, but in private rather than in public, and daily receive the forgiveness of sins.<sup>5</sup>

In brief, then, the teaching of Ambrose is that we are reconciled to God and justified in his sight by the grace of God manifest in the vicarious suffering of Christ and received in faith and the sacraments of faith. This is essentially New Testament teaching expressed in the oratory of the fourth century.

Augustine keeps close to the doctrine of his beloved Ambrose. He was, however, more philosophical than the Bishop of Milan, and sometimes allowed Stoic and Neoplatonic ideas to distort his doctrine of the relationship of God and man.

Like Ambrose and the New Testament, he sees man estranged from God by sin, and subject to the wrath and condemnation of God.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> *De Poenitentia*, II. iii. 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II. x. 95.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II. x. 96.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II. x. 95.

Thus the human race was held in righteous condemnation, and they were all children of wrath. Of this wrath it is written: 'For all our days are consumed away, and we pass away in thy wrath ...' It is under this wrath that we all are born. And this is why the Apostle says: 'We also were by nature children of wrath, even as the others.'<sup>1</sup>

Now since we are in bondage to sin,<sup>2</sup> we can do nothing to rectify our relationship to God or allay his wrath. Reconciliation, if it is to take place at all, can come only through the grace of God manifest in the mediatorial work of Christ and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Consequently,

A mediator was necessary, that is, a reconciler, who by the offering of a single sacrifice, of which all the sacrifices of the law and the prophets were but shadows, might placate this wrath.<sup>3</sup>

This single sacrifice was offered by Christ, who in his death for us was both priest and sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> On the cross he was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5. 21), which according to Augustine's interpretation means that he was 'made a sacrifice for our sins, which avails for our reconciliation.'<sup>5</sup>

All this seems eminently clear and biblical until we ask what Augustine means by the wrath of God, reconciliation, and justification.

By the wrath of God he means 'not a perturbation of the emotions such as takes place in an angry man,' but simply the con-

<sup>1</sup> *Enchiridion*, X. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *De Spiritu et Littera*, XXX. 52. When Augustine speaks of the bondage of the will he means not that man has no freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*), but that he has no liberty to do the will of God (*libertas arbitrii, libertas ad bonum*). 'Il y a dans la pensée d'Augustin une distinction parfaitement nette entre le sens de *liberum arbitrium* et celui de *libertas*' (E. Gilson, *Introduction à l'Etude de Saint Augustin*, Paris, 1949, p. 212).

<sup>3</sup> *Enchiridion*, X. 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Sacerdos et sacrificium, Confessions*, X. xliii. Cf. *De Trinitate*, IV. xiv. 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Enchiridion*, XIII. 41.

demnation and punishment of sin.<sup>1</sup> The placation of divine wrath, in other words 'reconciliation', is nothing but the removal of condemnation, i.e., acquittal—which is what the Apostle Paul termed 'justification.'

Augustine, however, wavers on the question whether the wrath of God, even in this sense, really is placated by the suffering of Christ. Sometimes he says it is. But frequently, in accordance with his Neoplatonism,<sup>2</sup> he questions this. Thus in *De Trinitate* he says:

And what is meant by 'being reconciled by the death of his Son?' Was it really so that when God the Father was angry with us, he saw the death of his Son for us, and became reconciled to us and even ready to die for us while the Father was still so angry that unless his Son died for us he would not be reconciled? ... For unless the Father were already reconciled, how could he have delivered up his own Son unsparingly for us?<sup>3</sup>

On this view, reconciliation is a unilateral, not a mutual, affair. God does not change his attitude towards us. It is only we who change our attitude towards him.

When he (God) is said to be angry with the unrighteous and gentle with the good, it is they that are changed, not he; just as light is troublesome to weak eyes and gentle to those that are strong, not because it changes, but because they do.<sup>4</sup>

Augustine thus has two views of reconciliation. According to the first it means that God changes his attitude to us—from condemnation to acquittal. In this sense it is equivalent to what Paul called 'justification'. According to the second it means a change in our attitude to God—from *amor sui* to *amor Dei*. In this second

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, X. 33; cf. XXIX. 112. The influence of Stoicism is manifest.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. Koehler, *op. cit.*, I, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *De Trinitate*, XIII. xi. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, V. xvi. 17.

sense it is equivalent to what Paul called 'transformation' (2 Cor. 3. 18) but which Augustine prefers to call 'justification'.

We must pause for a moment to consider this new meaning which Augustine gave to the word 'justification', since it became standard in all subsequent theology till Luther.

The Apostle Paul, as we have seen, used the word in its normal Hebraic forensic sense of 'to deem righteous,' 'to account righteous,' 'to acquit.' Augustine admits that this is the meaning of the word in Luke 10. 29, where it is used concerning the lawyer who desired 'to justify himself.' But in the Epistle to the Romans, says Augustine, it means 'to make righteous.'

The word 'justified' is equivalent to 'made righteous'—made righteous by him who justifies the ungodly, so that he who was ungodly becomes righteous.<sup>1</sup>

This is, as John Burnaby points out,<sup>2</sup> a grave misunderstanding of the Pauline use of the word, which led Augustine into a grotesque exegesis of Paul's phrase, 'the doers of the law shall be justified' (Rom. 2. 13). The misunderstanding was all the more serious since Augustine understood the word 'righteous' not in the Hebraic-Pauline sense of 'righteous in the sight of God,' but in the Hellenistic-Roman sense of 'possessing a quality (*hexis, habitus*) of righteousness.'

'Justification' thus becomes for Augustine a moral transformation effected by God in man rather than a divine verdict pronounced by God upon man. So, as we have seen, does reconciliation in Augustine's second (Neoplatonic) sense of the word. This represents a serious distortion of New Testament usage and doctrine.

The consequence is that the basic question for Augustine

<sup>1</sup> *De Spiritu et Littera*, XXVI. 45; cf. X. 16.

<sup>2</sup> In a footnote on p. 229 of his translation of the *De Spiritu et Littera* in *Augustine. Later Works* (Library of Christian Classics, Vol. VIII). The misunderstanding was due in part to Augustine's poor command of Greek, a weakness resulting from the harshness of an early teacher.

becomes: how is this 'justification,' i.e., transformation, effected? His answer is that it takes place, not as the Pelagians supposed, solely by the efforts of man, but solely by the grace of God—grace being understood as that power of God which liberates our will from the bondage of sin and frees it for the service of God.<sup>1</sup> His favourite text is Eph. 2. 8-10: 'For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.'

Commenting on this text in his *De gratia et libero arbitrio* he says:

'Not of works' is spoken of the works which you suppose have their origin in yourself alone ... We are fashioned therefore, that is, formed and created, 'in the good works which' we have not ourselves prepared, but 'God has prepared,' in order that we might walk in them. It therefore follows indubitably, dearly beloved, that since our good life is nothing else than God's grace, so also the eternal life which is the recompense of a good life is the grace of God.<sup>2</sup>

This transforming grace is *gratia gratis data*, grace freely given, not in response to any merits of ours, but spontaneously, gratuitously.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore *gratia praeveniens*, prevenient grace, since

<sup>1</sup> The Pelagians also accepted the idea of grace, but restricted it to God's goodness in creating man with freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*) and exhorting him to a good life through the law. Augustine does not deny that all this is grace, but extends the idea of grace to cover that divine power which frees our will from sin so that we might serve the living God. He therefore distinguishes, as Etienne Gilson has shown, between freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*) which all men possess even after the fall, and liberty (*libertas*, i.e. liberty to do the will of God) which becomes ours only through the operation of grace.

<sup>2</sup> *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, VIII. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Gratia, vero, nisi gratis est, gratia non est. Enchiridion*, 107.

it meets us before we turn to receive it. It is *gratia operans*, since it continues to act on the will after we have turned to God, granting us the gift of perseverance without which we cannot be saved.

How does this saving grace reach us? In many ways, says Augustine, but primarily by the infusion of faith as we hear the word of God and receive the sacraments. For when we receive the word of the gospel in faith, our sins are forgiven and we are transformed by redeeming grace.<sup>1</sup> When we receive baptism in faith,<sup>2</sup> our original sin and all pre-baptismal sin is forgiven and we are regenerated to newness of life.<sup>3</sup> When we receive the eucharist in faith, our sins are forgiven and we are transformed more fully into the image of Christ.<sup>4</sup> When we pray, do penance, or give alms (which includes all forms of service to our neighbour) our faith is increased and we receive forgiveness of sins and continued transformation of our life.

What is this saving faith which is received and increased through the hearing of the word and participation in the sacraments, through prayer and penance and works of love? It is, of course, assent to Christian doctrine, but it is more than this. It is that assent to Christian doctrine which, trusting in God and obeying God, brings forth works of love.<sup>5</sup> It is a living faith, not a dead faith. For Augustine, closely following St James, carefully distinguishes between a dead faith which is unredemptive, and a living faith which is redemptive. A dead faith is one which merely assents to Christian doctrine, but knows nothing of that obedient trust which brings forth works of love. A living faith is one which, assenting to Christian doctrine, trusts God in filial obedience and brings forth works of love. It is, in a word, the faith of which St

<sup>1</sup> R. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 452f.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding baptism, there is an inconsistency in Augustine which runs through most subsequent theology. In theory he treats baptism as though it were 'the sacrament of faith' in the sense that the baptized is a believer. In practice, however, he accepts—and defends—infant baptism.

<sup>3</sup> F. Loofs, *op. cit.*, II, p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> R. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 459ff.

<sup>5</sup> A. von Harnack, *op. cit.*, III, p. 205.

Paul speaks in Gal. 5. 6—the faith that works through love (*fides quae per dilectionem operatur*).<sup>1</sup> Augustine therefore does not say, as the Reformers later did, that we are justified by faith *alone*, since this too readily conveys the impression that we are justified by faith irrespective of love and works. He prefers to say—and has excellent New Testament warrant for so doing—that we are saved by that faith alone that works through love.

Eternal life is promised to the faithful, not through a dead faith which without works is unable to save, but solely through that faith which is the gift of grace, the faith that works through love.<sup>2</sup>

It is this concept of a living faith which is itself the gift of grace, that enables Augustine to solve the problem that in the New Testament eternal life is said to be the free gift of God, the fruit of faith, and the reward of good works. For if faith itself is the gift of God, to say that eternal life is the fruit of faith and the gift of God is one and the same thing. And if a living faith is one which brings forth works, to say that eternal life is the fruit of faith and to say that it is the reward of works is one and the same thing.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, Augustine considers the question of grace and merit. His fundamental affirmation is that we are saved by grace alone, and that grace cannot be merited. How then can we say that eternal life is the reward of good works, that is, as Augustine understands it, the outcome of merit? Because, he says, merit results from grace, not grace from merit. It is of sheer grace that we have that faith which brings forth those good works which merit eternal life. 'If, then, your good merits are God's gifts, God does not crown your merits as your merits, but as his own gifts.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Enchiridion*, XXI. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *De fide et operibus*, XXVII. 49. Cf. *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, VII. 18. The same thought frequently occurs in the *Enchiridion*, *De fide et operibus*, and *De Spiritu et Littera*.

<sup>3</sup> See the argument in *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, VII. 18; VIII. 20.

<sup>4</sup> *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, VI. 16.

Such is Augustine's doctrine of the transformation of the relationship between God and man through the *gratia Dei per Christum*. It is a doctrine which to some degree presents biblical truth, but which also to some degree, under the influence of Stoic and Neoplatonic philosophy, distorts that truth, since it weakens the idea of the wrath of God, loses the mutuality of reconciliation, changes the sense of justification, and retains the dubious Tertullianic concept of merit.

It was principally on Augustinian foundations that Gregory the Great erected that massive edifice of doctrine and practice which forms at once the culmination of patristic and the inauguration of medieval theology.<sup>1</sup> But he added much to it, in conformity with the developing popular theology of the age.

Gregory repeats the familiar Augustinian doctrines of the estrangement and reconciliation of God and man through the grace of God manifested in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, the preaching of the Word, and the sacraments of faith. But he goes beyond Augustine in the doctrines of eucharist, penance, and purgatory, and gives to these doctrines that form which they retained with slight modifications throughout the middle ages.<sup>2</sup>

He conceives the eucharist not merely as a memorial of the crucified and a communion with the risen Christ, but as a participation in the atoning sacrifice which Christ continually offers.

Incessantly the Redeemer offers sacrifice for us, he who continually shows to his Father the incarnation he has accepted for us. For his incarnation is the oblation for our cleansing.<sup>3</sup>

We should, therefore, despise this world with all our hearts as though its glory were already spent, and offer our sacrifice of tears to God each day as we immolate his sacred flesh and blood. This sacrifice alone has the power of saving the soul from eternal death, for it presents to us mystically the death of

<sup>1</sup> R. Gillet, *Grégoire le Grand, Morales sur Job*, I, pp. 86ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Walther, art. Gregor I in *Realencyclopädie*, Vol. 7, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Moralia*, I. xxiv. 32.

the only-begotten Son. Though he is now risen from the dead and dies no more, and death has no more power over him, yet, living in himself immortal and incorruptible, he is again immolated for us in the mystery of the holy Sacrifice ... See, then, how august is the sacrifice that is offered for us, ever reproducing in itself the passion of the only-begotten Son for the remission of our sins ... We need to sacrifice ourselves to God in a sincere immolation of the heart whenever we offer Mass, because we who celebrate the mysteries of the Lord's passion ought to imitate what we are enacting. The sacrifice will truly be offered to God when we present ourselves as the victim.<sup>1</sup>

In what spirit should we join in this sacrifice of the Lord for us? In a spirit of forgiveness. For God forgives us as we forgive one another.

Let us also remember that we are justified in asking forgiveness of our sins only if we have previously forgiven those who have wronged us. The offering will not be accepted unless discord is first removed from the heart, as Christ says, 'If thou art bringing thy gift, then, before the altar, and rememberest there that thy brother has some ground of complaint against thee, leave thy gift lying there before the altar, and go home; be reconciled with thy brother first, and then come back and offer thy gift.'<sup>2</sup>

The eucharist has become the Mass, the perpetual sacrifice of our Lord for sins in which we participate as we offer ourselves to the Lord, forgiving others as we hope to be forgiven.

And as the Mass is a means of forgiveness for the living, so it is for the dead, for those poor souls in purgatory, whose sufferings may be curtailed by the saying of Masses for them, says Gregory.

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogus*, IV. 60-61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 62.

Alongside the Mass as a means of forgiveness, Gregory places penance, which has now come to comprise four elements: contrition, confession, absolution, and satisfaction. Contrition means remorse for sin, whether arising from fear of punishment or from love to God. Confession means the outward acknowledgement of sin, which is to be made in all cases to God and in some cases to a priest. Absolution means the word of forgiveness, of release from guilt. And satisfaction means making reparation to God for sin, such reparation as will satisfy his justice, appease his anger, and win absolution from eternal punishment. This satisfaction is made through voluntary mortifications such as fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

It is significant that while Gregory mentions the *vicarious suffering* of Christ, he never speaks of his vicarious *satisfaction*. That was a step reserved for Anselm. No; Gregory speaks only of *our* satisfaction, on the Tertullianic view that only if we submit to voluntary punishments now will God remit eternal punishments later. The God of Gregory, as Harnack justly comments, is still 'the God of retribution (who) leaves no sin unpunished' even though he has provided various means of grace by which we are able 'to elude the punishment of sin and present our merits to the requiting God.'<sup>1</sup>

The doing of penance, or the making of satisfaction, thus becomes a means of converting eternal into temporal punishment. Temporal punishment, however, involves the sufferings of purgatory as well as the sufferings of this life. If we make sufficient satisfaction in this life, we may escape purgatory entirely. If, however, we make insufficient satisfaction, we must endure purgatory. But the greater the satisfaction we make now, the shorter our time in purgatory later.

Thus, by making satisfaction we can curtail our own time in purgatory, and by offering Masses we can curtail both our own time and that of our friends.

Such was Gregory's teaching on the restoration of relationships

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., III, p. 266.

between God and man, and it was on this foundation that the whole edifice of medieval theology was reared. During the five centuries or so between the death of Gregory and the rise of scholasticism, the doctrines of the Mass, penance, purgatory, and indulgences were elaborated and became so generally accepted as to be incorporated into scholasticism without question.

We must therefore briefly survey the development of these doctrines before studying the scholastic systems into which they were integrated.

For Gregory, as we have seen, the eucharist had already become the Mass, both in name and in nature. For it was not only a memorial of our Lord's death and a communion of his body and blood, but also a participation in his atoning sacrifice, which is offered to God as often as Mass is celebrated. During the ninth century Paschasius Radbertus wrote the first Latin monograph on the Mass, *de corpore et sanguine domini*, in which he maintained that the body of our Lord present in the Mass is the same body which was born of Mary and transfigured by the resurrection, and that it is present in the mass by virtue of a transformation in which 'the substance of the bread and wine ... is changed (*commutatur*) into the flesh and blood of Christ.'<sup>1</sup> Bread and wine are received by believers and non-believers alike, but the body and blood of our Lord (the *virtus sacramenti*) by believers only.<sup>2</sup> This is the doctrine which, despite the protests of Ratramnus, Rabanus, and Berengar, prevailed in the middle ages. It was upheld in the eleventh century by Lanfranc, with the modification that along with the bread and wine, the body and blood of our Lord are received by believer and unbeliever alike, by the former to salvation, by the latter to damnation.<sup>3</sup> The doctrine of transubstantiation was dogmatized at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which decreed that 'the body and blood (of Jesus Christ)

<sup>1</sup> Cited by F. Loofs, *op. cit.*, II, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> See the descriptions of Radbertus' teaching in A. Harnack, III, *op. cit.*, pp. 309ff.; F. Loofs, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 380ff.; W. Koehler, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 310ff.

<sup>3</sup> W. Koehler, *op. cit.*, I, p. 314.

are truly present in the sacrifice of the altar under the species of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body and the wine into the blood by divine power<sup>1</sup> at the priestly words of consecration.<sup>2</sup>

Thus through the priestly concept of the Mass and the doctrine of transubstantiation, the eucharist became the continuation of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, a sacrifice offered to God by the church for the forgiveness of sins of both the living and the dead.

As the doctrine of the Mass developed, giving rise to the dogma of transubstantiation, so the doctrine of penance evolved, giving rise to the practice of indulgences.

By the time of Gregory, as we have seen, penance comprised four elements: contrition, confession, satisfaction, absolution. For long there was much uncertainty whether absolution should follow or precede satisfaction. The earlier order seems to have been: first, satisfaction, then absolution, on the theory that absolution can be pronounced only when satisfaction has first been made. Gradually, however, this order was reversed.<sup>3</sup> Absolution was pronounced before satisfaction had been made. This however raised the question of the purpose of satisfactions. If their purpose is not to merit absolution, what is it? The usual answer given to this question was that they serve to curtail the pains of purgatory. Such, for instance, was the answer of Peter Damian (d. 1072), who already spoke of a *sacrament* of confession.<sup>4</sup>

The medieval doctrine of penance found its classical expression in a pseudonymous writing, *de vere et falsa poenitentia*, which in the twelfth century was commonly attributed to Augustine.<sup>5</sup> The author says nothing of baptismal repentance, and deals solely with penance for post-baptismal sins. He claims that penance converts mortal into venial sins, and offers forgiveness for venial sin. Contrition and confession are to be followed by absolution,

<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 430.

<sup>2</sup> W. Koehler, op. cit., I, p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> Some of the reasons are given by Loofs, op. cit., II, pp. 389ff.

<sup>4</sup> F. Loofs, op. cit., II, pp. 395f.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 393.

but in pronouncing absolution the priest is to lay on the penitent appropriate satisfactions. These satisfactions serve to reduce the punishment of purgatory.

The satisfactions imposed often proved exceedingly onerous, and men began to cast around for some means of mitigating their severity. They found it in the doctrine of 'commutations,' according to which a less grievous satisfaction could be substituted for a more grievous one, e.g. one could sing psalms instead of fasting, or one could give money to a good cause.<sup>1</sup>

One form of these substitutionary satisfactions was the indulgence, which, beginning in southern France in the first half of the eleventh century,<sup>2</sup> soon gained widespread popularity. It offered an abridgement of the pains of purgatory in return for the payment of money. Condemned by Abélard, it was condoned by Albert the Great, Bonaventura, and Thomas Aquinas, on the ground that the church possesses a treasury of merits (the merits of Christ and the saints) from which, through the sale of indulgences, she can dispense merits to those who need them.

Thus was completed not only the doctrine of the seven sacraments but also the doctrine of indulgences in conjunction with the sacrament of penance.

All this was incorporated in the scholastic theology to which we now turn.

During the age of Anselm (ca. 1033-1109), Christians seem to have been so preoccupied in winning forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God by all manner of satisfactions that they were in danger of forgetting that God was *in Christ* reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning our trespasses against us (2 Cor. 5. 18). It was to remind them of this basic truth, as well as to demonstrate the two natures of Christ, that Anselm wrote his *Cur Deus homo*.<sup>3</sup>

He begins by defining sin in terms of debt (*debitum*), a debt

<sup>1</sup> F. Loofs, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 396f.

<sup>2</sup> K. G. Steck, in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3. Aufl., I. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. McIntyre, *St Anselm and His Critics*, 1954, pp. 86ff.

which we owe to God, since we have robbed him of his honour in refusing to obey him.<sup>1</sup> Now this debt must be repaid, or God must punish us, and to repay the debt is to make satisfaction.<sup>2</sup> Hence, 'it is necessary that all sin be followed either by satisfaction or by punishment.'<sup>3</sup> But, says Anselm, contrary to the prevailing ideas of his day, we cannot make adequate satisfaction for sin. For all that we can offer to God in the way of 'penitence, a contrite and humbled heart, fastings, and many bodily labours, and mercy in giving and forgiving, and obedience,' we already owe him quite apart from sin, and cannot offer them as *satisfaction* for sin. 'If I owe to him myself and all I am capable of, even if I sin not at all, I have nothing which I can give in amends for sin.'<sup>4</sup> Yet, satisfaction must be made unless punishment is to follow. If I cannot make it, who can? Christ alone, says Anselm, Christ the sinless Son of God, who in his sufferings vicariously makes satisfaction for my sin.

He freely offered to his Father that which he would never have been obliged to lose, and paid for sinners that which he owed not on his own account.<sup>5</sup>

The satisfaction that atones for sin and reconciles us with God is therefore Christ's rather than ours. It does not follow, however, that *we* need make no satisfaction for sin. It only means that ours is subsidiary to Christ's and dependent on his. For let us suppose, says Anselm, that a king has been highly offended by all his subjects save one, and that this one on a certain day performs a unique service whereby all the subjects are pardoned and reconciled to their king. And let us further suppose that not all the subjects can be present to receive the pardon on the day when it is won by the one sinless subject. How do they receive the pardon? By coming on some day when they are able to ask pardon in virtue of the

<sup>1</sup> *Cur Deus homo*, I. xi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I. xi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I. xv.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I. xx.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II. xviii.

reconciling act of the one, and 'should it happen that after this pardon they transgress again, if they will worthily make satisfaction and thenceforth amend, they shall again receive forgiveness through the efficacy of the same covenant.'<sup>1</sup>

Anselm's doctrine therefore is that we receive forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God on the ground of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, but we must come to receive the benefits of this satisfaction in asking for forgiveness, and in making satisfaction for our sin.

Thus the primary satisfaction is Christ's, not ours, and ours is acceptable in virtue only of his.

This doctrine of Christ's vicarious satisfaction is occasionally mentioned by Abélard,<sup>2</sup> but plays no significant part in his theology. He, like Augustine, is concerned rather with that transformation of the sinner into a saint which makes him acceptable in the sight of God.

This transformation, says Abélard, is the work of grace, of that transforming grace of God which creates in the sinner a *habitus* of love to God and man.<sup>3</sup> This love of God and man is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit as we contemplate Christ's dying love for us,<sup>4</sup> and as we are united with Christ in baptism and the eucharist.<sup>5</sup> Thus by grace we receive that *habitus* of righteousness which makes us acceptable to God.

The views of Anselm and Abélard find their synthesis in the mystical theology of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and the scholastic theology of Peter Lombard (ca. 1100-1160).

Bernard is, as Harnack indicates,<sup>6</sup> the Ambrose of the middle ages. Like Ambrose he has an eloquent simplicity of style. Like Ambrose he clothes biblical truth in the language of devotion. And like Ambrose he anticipates Luther while avoiding the Reformer's excesses.

His mysticism involves no pantheistic identity of God and man.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, II. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., *Expositio*, II. iv.

<sup>3</sup> *Epitome*, xxxii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiii.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, III, p. 342.

God is God, perfect in power, in love and purity. And man is man, frail and ephemeral, made indeed in the image of God, but having lost that aspect of the image which consists in perfect love. Hence he is estranged from God, and in need of that reconciliation and restoration which only God can give. In his infinite grace God gives both in Christ, who is the Word of God incarnate, the Wisdom from on high, the Mediator between God and man,<sup>1</sup> the Lord of majesty who for our sake becomes the Servant in humility,<sup>2</sup> the glorious yet gracious Lover,<sup>3</sup> the Bridegroom of the church and the Bridegroom of the soul.<sup>4</sup>

In his threefold coming to us (his coming in his incarnation, his coming to our contemplation, and his final coming in power and glory) he effects both reconciliation and restoration.<sup>5</sup> This is liberation—the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Thou wast a prisoner, O Man, bound with the chains of sin and ignorance. He came down to thy prison, not to torment thee but to rescue thee. By wisdom he drove away thy darkness with the truth; by righteousness, which is of faith, he freely justified thee, loosing the bands of sin; by his own holiness of life he set thee an example and pointed out to thee thy homeward way. And, to crown all, he gave up his own soul to death and paid the price of our redemption out of his own pierced side. What has he left undone for thee, that he ought to have done? He has restored sight to the blind, released the captive, led back the wanderer to the road, pardoned the criminal. Who will not run willingly, eagerly, after the Doer of these things?<sup>6</sup>

Our running after him, our coming to him, our abiding with

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout the *Sermons on the Song of Songs*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, v.

him, is an act of faith, not of faith devoid of works, but faith that brings forth works.

You do right when you offer faith to God; you do right when you offer works. But, if you separate the two, then you do wrong. For 'faith without works is dead;' and lack of charity in action murders faith, just as Cain murdered Abel, so that God cannot respect your offering. Do you believe in Christ? Then do the works of Christ, so that your faith may live. Let love be to your faith as soul to body, and let your conduct prove that your faith is real.<sup>1</sup>

Yet though in faith we do the works of love, our hope of eternal salvation lies less in our work than in Christ's work. For as long as we are in this life we are immersed in temptations and sometimes fall into sin.

For everything belonging to the earth is shifting and unstable; but our Rock (i.e., Christ) is in heaven, and from it all our safety and stability derive ... I have perhaps done some great sin; my conscience will be troubled, but not decomposed, for I will remember the wounds of the Lord, 'wounded for our transgressions.' What sin is there so 'unto death' that Christ's death does not loose it? ... For what is wanting in myself I boldly claim out of my Lord's heart, whence mercy flows ... His body's open wounds lay bare the secret of his heart, that mighty mystery of love, the tender mercy of our God whereby the Dayspring from on High hath visited us ... The mercy of the Lord, then, is my merit; and truly I am not devoid of merit while his mercies do not fail. What if my sins are many? 'Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound.' And if the mercies of the Lord are from everlasting to everlasting, I likewise will sing of them everlastingly. Shall I sing of my own righteousness? No, Lord, I will make mention of thy righteousness. Need I be afraid lest there should not be enough of it to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

cover both of us? No; for thine is an everlasting righteousness ... Thy broad and endless righteousness will cover me and thee alike.<sup>1</sup>

'The mercy of the Lord, then, is my merit ... Thy broad and endless righteousness will cover me and thee alike.' Here is no anxious hoarding of merit through endless satisfactions, lest we fall into purgatory or hell. Here is rather that joyful trust in Christ (Bernard, like Luther, calls it *fiducia*) which knows that grace is sufficient; that perfect love which casts out fear.

If Bernard unites the partial views of Anselm and Abélard after the manner of Ambrose, Peter Lombard does so after the manner of Augustine.<sup>2</sup>

Christ reconciles us to God, he says, by offering himself to the Father as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.<sup>3</sup> By this sacrifice he merited for himself his glorious exaltation and for us liberation from sin and its punishment and entrance into paradise.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, however, Lombard avoids the use of Anselm's phrase 'the satisfaction of Christ'<sup>5</sup> since to him, as to Augustine, the sacrifice of Christ is not one which averts God's wrath, but one which evokes our love. Thus he writes:

We are reconciled to God, says the Apostle in Rom. 5, by the death of Christ. Which is not to be understood as meaning that Christ reconciled us to himself in that he began to love those he hated, as an enemy is reconciled to an enemy, so that those become friends who formerly hated each other ... For it is not since we are reconciled to him through the blood of the Son that he begins to love us, but before the foundation of the world, before we were anything at all. How, then, are those of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Hugo of St Victor had already united the Anselmic and Abelardian doctrines in his *De sacramentis christianiae fidei*, and Lombard is deeply indebted to Hugo.

<sup>3</sup> Loofs, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 456f.

<sup>4</sup> R. Seeberg, in *Realencyclopaedie* XI, p. 640.

<sup>5</sup> F. Loofs, *op. cit.*, II, p. 457.

us who love God reconciled to him? On account of sin we were hostile to him who showed only love to us, and in our hostility we worked against him, acting wickedly. Thus we were enemies of God, as sin is the enemy of righteousness. When, however, sin is expelled, such hostility is at an end, and we are reconciled to the righteous One as those whom he himself has justified. Christ, therefore, is termed the Mediator, since he stands between God and the men whom he reconciles to God. He reconciles them, however, by removing their offences from the sight of God, that is, by destroying those sins by which God was offended, and which made us his enemies.<sup>1</sup>

But how does he destroy our sin? Lombard answers:

Because through his death, as the Apostle says in Rom. 8, the love of God is revealed to us, that is, in the fact that God handed over his own Son to death for us sinners, there is manifest the extraordinary and laudable love of God for us. By this manifest token of such love we are moved and set on fire with love to God, who has done so much for us. And in this way we are justified, that is, being freed from sin, we are made righteous. The death of Christ thus justified us by kindling love in our hearts.<sup>2</sup>

Here, as in Augustine, reconciliation means our turning to God in obedience rather than his turning to us in grace, and justification means a moral transformation rather than a juridical verdict.

How does this justification, i.e., transformation, take place? By the contemplation of the love of Christ and the reception of the sacraments. Here, again, we find Lombard following Abélard. The only difference is that he has a completer doctrine of the sacraments. For, influenced by Gratian,<sup>3</sup> he has reached that view

<sup>1</sup> *Sententiarum*, III. xix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III. xix. 1.

<sup>3</sup> R. Seeberg, in *Realencyclopaedie* XI, p. 631.

of the sacraments which became normative for Catholic theology.

What is this normative sacramental teaching? It is that the sacraments are seven in number : baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony. Of these, the first five are significant for our relationship to God.

By baptism we are transformed by 'the renewing of the mind, so that one who through sin was the old man is created afresh by the discarding of vices and the addition of virtues.'<sup>1</sup>

By confirmation we are fortified for the conflicts of the Christian life by the 'donation of the Holy Spirit for strength.'<sup>2</sup>

By the eucharist, through the conversion (*conversio*) of the elements into the body and blood of our Lord, and the daily offering of his body and blood as a sacrifice in the Mass, 'we are perfected in goodness'<sup>3</sup> through the infusion of virtue, which essentially is love.<sup>4</sup>

By penance, which is intended primarily for the graver sins, being, as Tertullian said, the 'second plank after shipwreck,'<sup>5</sup> we receive absolution by confession and justification (i.e., transformation) through satisfaction.<sup>6</sup>

And by extreme unction we receive the forgiveness of sins and alleviation of infirmities.<sup>7</sup>

The sacraments, which are not merely signs of grace but means of sanctification,<sup>8</sup> are accordingly the media through which the merits of Christ are applied to us. According to our need at various stages on the Christian way they convey to us both remission of sins and transformation of life. Thus through the merits of Christ applied to us through the sacraments we are able to amass that merit which earns eternal life, though Lombard is careful to

<sup>1</sup> *Sententiarum*, IV. iii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> R. Seeberg, in *Realencyclopaedie* XI, p. 641.

<sup>3</sup> *Sententiarum*, IV. viii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. xii. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. xiv. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. xiv. 1.

<sup>7</sup> R. Seeberg, *Realencyclopaedie* XI, p. 641.

<sup>8</sup> R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, III, p. 287.

remind us, in the words of Augustine, that in rewarding our merits God is but crowning his own gifts.

Lombard is the last great figure of early scholasticism. With the dawn of the thirteenth century came that rediscovery of Aristotle in the west which gave scholasticism its noontide glory. High scholasticism (ca. 1200-1300) found its representatives both among the Franciscans (Alexander of Hales, Bonaventura, Duns Scotus) and the Dominicans (Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas). Late scholasticism (ca. 1300-1500) was dominated by the Franciscans (William of Occam, Pierre D'Ailly, Jean Gerson, Gabriel Biel), the Dominicans (Thomas Bradwardine, Gregor of Rimini) being able to do little more than protest against the rising tide of Franciscan semi-Pelagianism.

During the era of high scholasticism, both Franciscans and Dominicans advanced beyond Peter Lombard in their conception of the nature of reconciliation and in their doctrine of the work of Christ. Lombard, as we have seen, was content with Augustine's view that reconciliation is a unilateral turning of man to God rather than a mutual turning of God to man and man to God, and that consequently the work of Christ is to be seen in its effect on man rather than in its effect on God. This was unacceptable to men like Alexander, Bonaventura and Thomas. For the new movements of the age had emancipated them from Augustine's Neoplatonism, and enabled them to grasp afresh the biblical doctrines of the wrath of God, the mutuality of reconciliation, and the effect of Christ's death on God as well as on man.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas, for instance, says that apart from the sacrifice of Christ God both loves us and hates us at the same time, for 'God loves all men in respect of their nature, which he himself made; yet he hates them with respect to the crimes (*culpa*) which they commit against him.'<sup>2</sup> Consequently, 'Christ is not said to have reconciled us with God, in the sense that God began anew (*de novo*) to love us, since it is written (Jer. 31. 3): *I have loved thee with an*

<sup>1</sup> R. Seeberg, *Lb. d. Dg.*, III, pp. 432ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 49. a. 4.

*everlasting love*; but because the source of hatred was removed by the passion of Christ, both by the washing away of sin and through the compensation made by a more acceptable offering.<sup>1</sup> Now, to offer to God a compensating sacrifice for our sins is the same thing as to make satisfaction to God. Thomas therefore has no difficulty in accepting Anselm's term 'satisfaction' and affirming that 'the passion of Christ is not only a sufficient but a superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the human race; according to 1 Jn. 2. 2: *He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world.*'<sup>2</sup>

Christ, therefore, through his passion makes satisfaction for our sin, placates the wrath of God,<sup>3</sup> and releases us from the penalty of sin.<sup>4</sup> But he does more. He also frees us from the sin itself which makes us odious in the sight of God. Consequently,

Through the passion of Christ we have been delivered from the debt of punishment in two ways. In the first way, directly, in that Christ's passion was a sufficient and superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the human race; for when sufficient satisfaction has been made, the debt of punishment is abolished. In another way, indirectly, in that the passion of Christ is the cause of the remission of that sin upon which the debt of punishment rests.<sup>5</sup>

When Thomas speaks of the remission of sin he means the expulsion of sin as well as the pardon of sin.<sup>6</sup> Thus what he is saying is that Christ reconciles us to God both by offering to God a vicarious satisfaction for our sins and by transforming us by the expulsion of sin and the infusion of righteousness. For as the Mediator between God and man he is also the Head of a new humanity, the church which is his body.<sup>7</sup> And as Head of his

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 49. a. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 48. a. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 49. a. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 49. a. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 49. a. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 49. a. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 49. a. 1, 3.

mystical body, the church, he not only represents the church before God so that 'the whole church, Christ's mystic body, is reckoned as one person with its Head,' but also he 'operates with divine power in expelling sin' and 'in evoking love.'<sup>1</sup> It is in virtue of this love and the works of love that we are able to earn merit in the sight of God. Thomas, however, like Lombard, accepts the Augustinian principle that merit comes of grace, not grace of merit, so that in rewarding our merits God is but crowning his own gifts.

The final question for Thomas is: how do we become united with Christ our Head and receive his benefits? And his reply is: by faith and the sacraments of faith.

Faith, however, if it is truly to unite us with Christ so that we share in his benefits, must be a living faith replete with love, not a dead faith devoid of love.

The faith through which we are cleansed from sin is not unformed faith, which can exist along with sin, but faith formed by love (*fides formata per caritatem*); that so the passion of Christ may be applied to us, not merely to our minds, but also to our hearts.<sup>2</sup>

When Thomas speaks of *fides formata per caritatem* or *fides caritate formata* he is merely expressing in Platonic-Aristotelian terms what Augustine and Paul meant by 'faith working through love' and what James meant by a living faith as opposed to a dead faith, as is evidenced by the fact that he sometimes uses the phrase 'faith working through love.'<sup>3</sup>

As we are united with Christ by faith, so we are united with him by baptism, which is the sacrament of faith.<sup>4</sup> For in baptism a man is regenerated and 'incorporated in Christ by becoming a

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 49. a. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 49, a. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. Loofs, *op. cit.*, II, p. 463.

<sup>4</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, III,<sup>2</sup>q. 68. a. 1.

member of Christ.<sup>1</sup> By the other sacraments we are enabled to remain in Christ.

In all this the Franciscans, Alexander and Bonaventura, agree with Thomas, save on one point—the relation of grace and merit. In this matter, as we have seen, Thomas is thoroughly Augustinian, holding grace to be ever prior to merit, so that merit comes from grace but not grace from merit. The Franciscans are more Pelagian. They hold not only that merit comes from grace, but also that grace comes from merit. Accordingly, they distinguish two kinds of grace and two kinds of merit. The two kinds of grace are *gratia gratis data* (grace freely given) and *gratia gratum faciens* (grace which makes us acceptable). And the two kinds of merit are *meritum de congruo*<sup>2</sup> (merit of congruence) and *meritum de condigno*<sup>3</sup> (merit of worthiness).

*Gratia gratis data*<sup>4</sup> signifies the privilege we have of hearing exhortations to a good life. *Gratia gratum faciens* signifies the transforming grace which makes us acceptable to God. *Meritum de congruo* means a merit congruous with our human abilities but not with the divine demands, which nevertheless is accepted as merit by God in his gracious indulgence. *Meritum de condigno* means a merit which is truly worthy of God's acceptance.

Now the doctrine of the relation of grace and merit which runs through Franciscan theology from Bonaventura to Biel is the following. By God's grace freely given (*gratia gratis data*) we hear moral exhortations to a godly life. We must then do all we can to obey them and to dispose ourselves to receive the grace which transforms us (*gratia gratum faciens*). This effort earns us a certain amount of merit in the sight of God, not indeed a merit of worthiness but a merit of congruence (*meritum de congruo*).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., III, q. 68. a. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes called *meritum ex congruo* or *meritum congrui*.

<sup>3</sup> Sometimes called *meritum ex condigno* or *meritum condigni*.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase stems from Augustine, but has now lost its Augustinian meaning. For Augustine, all grace was *gratis data*, freely given, and included transforming grace as well as exhorting grace.

<sup>5</sup> Bonaventura, *Commentaria*, I, d. 41.<sup>a</sup>. 1. q. 1.

This merit then earns us the grace which transforms us (*gratia gratum faciens*),<sup>1</sup> and in virtue of this grace we are enabled to earn that merit of worthiness (*meritum de condigno*) which gives us a title to eternal life.<sup>2</sup>

This is the theology which dominated late scholasticism. It is found in Duns Scotus,<sup>3</sup> William of Occam,<sup>4</sup> and Gabriel Biel.<sup>5</sup> Those who sought to resist it, such as Thomas Bradwardine and Gregor of Rimini, were like men trying to stem a tidal wave. The tide of Franciscan semi-Pelagianism rolled on. It involved a doctrine of reconciliation which, while agreeing with Thomas Aquinas that the *foundation* of our reconciliation is the sacrificial vicarious suffering of Christ, taught that the *appropriation* of salvation begins with the merit (of congruence) gained by our unaided efforts to do the will of God. It is continued by the grace bestowed in the sacraments, and is completed by the merit (of worthiness) we amass by grace.<sup>6</sup>

This is the theology on which Luther was reared<sup>7</sup>—and against which he rebelled.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, II, d. 28. a. 2. q. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, d. 27. a. 2. q. 2.

<sup>3</sup> R. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 734ff. W. Koehler, *op. cit.*, I, p. 342.

<sup>4</sup> A. Harnack, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 653f. R. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 765ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Epithoma*, II, d. 27. q. 1.

<sup>6</sup> P. Tschackert, art. Biel, *Realencyclopaedie* (3. Aufl.), III, pp. 209f. Cf. H. Bornkamm, *Luthers geistige Welt*, 2. Aufl., Gütersloh, 1953, p. 184.

<sup>7</sup> A. C. McGiffert, *Martin Luther*, New York, 1911, p. 34. G. Rupp, *The Righteousness of God, Luther Studies*, London, 1953, p. 88. E. Seeberg, *Luthers Theologie in ihren Grundzügen*, 2. Aufl., Stuttgart, 1950, p. 33.

## Chapter IV

### THE RESTORED RELATIONSHIP IN PROTESTANTISM AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM

THE Reformation of the sixteenth century was a complex movement involving many forces: intellectual, cultural, social, political, national, and religious. Unquestionably, however, the decisive factor was religious.<sup>1</sup> Luther's basic question, which, as Heinrich Bornkamm remarks, is the fundamental question of Christianity,<sup>2</sup> was :*'Wie kriege ich einen gnädigen Gott?'* ('How can I find a gracious God?'). The church of his day, with her system of penance, mortifications, satisfactions, merits and indulgences, failed to provide him with an answer. Indeed, the longer he followed the method prescribed by his church, the more desperate he became. Deliverance came only when, after days and nights of study in the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans, by a sudden illumination, he understood the biblical meaning of the 'righteousness of God,' the distinction between law and gospel, and the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith.<sup>3</sup> Now, he says, he felt as though he had been completely reborn, and had entered paradise through open doors.<sup>4</sup> From this time onward, as Karl Holl<sup>5</sup> and Heinrich Bornkamm<sup>6</sup> have shown, he

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Whale, *The Protestant Tradition*, 1955, p. 8; K. Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, 11. Aufl. 1957, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> H. Bornkamm, *Luthers geistige Welt*, 2. Aufl. 1953, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> The illumination came to him in the monastery tower at Wittenberg. The date is uncertain. Dates ranging from 1509 (R. Seeberg) to 1519 (H. Grisar) have been suggested. The present consensus of opinion favours a date around 1514. See e.g. G. Rupp, *The Righteousness of God, Luther Studies*, 1953, p. 137; E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times*, 1950, p. 288; K. D. Schmidt, *Kirchengeschichte*, 3. Aufl. 1960, pp. 280f.

<sup>4</sup> *Praefatio zur Gesamtausgabe seiner Werke*, W.A. 54, p. 186.

<sup>5</sup> *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I, *Luther*, pp. 111ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

had a new theology which contrasted sharply with the old, a theology of grace rather than of merit, a theology of the satisfaction of Christ rather than of our satisfaction, a theology of faith rather than of works.

This does not mean, however, that his doctrine of justification had reached its final form. Possibly it never did, for Luther was too volcanic to achieve complete stability. What is certain is that he nowhere gives a complete account of his doctrine of justification, that he was not wholly consistent in the meaning he attached to the word 'justification,'<sup>1</sup> and that as time passed he tended to shift the emphasis from 'Christ in us' to 'Christ for us' as the ground of justification.<sup>2</sup> He had, moreover, a disconcerting manner of uniting faith and works in such an indissoluble unity that it would seem impossible to separate them, and yet insisting that we are justified by faith alone, i.e., faith without works.

Luther's doctrine of justification is thus by no means unequivocal, and it is not surprising that his followers were soon involved in serious controversies regarding the nature of justification, the grounds of justification, and the relation of faith and works,<sup>3</sup> controversies which were resolved only by the publication of the *Formula of Concord* in 1577, and even then not to the satisfaction of all.

Luther, however, profound, dynamic, and indispensable though he was, was not the only Reformer. Alongside him in Wittenberg was his younger contemporary Melancthon. In Zürich were Zwingli and the Anabaptists, in Geneva Calvin, in Strasbourg Bucer, and in Canterbury Cranmer. All had ideas similar to Luther's, but not identical with his. The era of the Reformation was followed, moreover, by that of Orthodoxy, this in turn by Pietism and the Evangelical Revival, this in turn by Liberalism, and this in turn by contemporary theology. During

<sup>1</sup> Reinhold Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV. 1, pp. 294ff.

<sup>2</sup> Reinhold Seeberg, *op. cit.*, IV 1, pp. 315; Erich Seeberg, *Luthers Theologie in ihren Grundzügen*, 2. Aufl. 1950, pp. 118f.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of these controversies see Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, II. 1, 1912, pp. 325-500.

these successive eras the Protestant doctrine of justification, which even in its beginnings was not completely uniform, has undergone considerable change. It is therefore misleading to speak of *the* Protestant doctrine of justification. We can speak only of Protestant doctrine in its various expressions. Catholic doctrine has been relatively stable since its formulation at the Council of Trent. Protestant doctrine has been far more varied.

## A. PROTESTANT DOCTRINE

### I. *The Theology of the Reformation*

#### a. *Lutheran Doctrine*

The source of Luther's doctrine of justification was his illumination in the monastery tower at Wittenberg, when he found a gracious God in discovering the meaning of the 'righteousness of God' in Rom. 1. 17. He describes the experience himself in these words:

I was seized with an intense longing to understand Paul in his letter to the Romans. What had hitherto hindered my comprehension was not coldness of heart, but a single word in the first chapter, namely, 'the righteousness of God is revealed in it,' i.e. in the gospel. I simply hated this word 'righteousness of God.' For I had been taught, in accordance with the usage and custom of all the doctors, to understand it in the philosophical sense of that so-called formal or active righteousness (*iustitia*) in virtue of which God is just (*iustus*) and so punishes sinners and wicked men.

And I felt that, despite my irreproachable life as a monk, in the sight of God (*coram Deo*) I was nothing but a sinner with an exceedingly troubled conscience, who could not hope to placate God with my satisfactions ...

At length, by the grace of God, after days and nights of study, I fixed my attention on the context of the words,

namely, 'The righteousness of God is therein revealed, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.' It was then that I began to understand the righteousness of God as the righteousness in which the righteous lives by the gift of God, namely, by faith. I then began to understand the meaning of the passage to be that the righteousness of God which is revealed in the gospel is the passive righteousness by which the merciful God makes us righteous by faith, as it is written, 'the righteous shall live by faith.' Now I felt as though I had been completely reborn, and had entered paradise through open doors. At once the whole of scripture took on a new aspect ... As greatly as I had once hated this word 'righteousness of God', as greatly now I loved this word, in which I now gloried as the sweetest of all words. And so this word of Paul became to me the very gate of paradise.<sup>1</sup>

Here Luther makes four affirmations. Firstly, that before his illumination he had conceived the righteousness of God as that quality of God, strict justice, in which he gives to every one what he deserves and therefore condemns sinners. Secondly, that in consequence he had sought in vain to meet the demands of this justice by merit and satisfactions. Thirdly, that through his illumination he recognized that the 'righteousness of God' of which Paul speaks is not a quality of God (active righteousness), but a gift of God (passive righteousness), a gift of righteousness given by God in grace and received by man in faith. And fourthly, that in consequence we do not have to *win* a gracious God by merits and satisfactions, but receive the gift of a God who already is gracious through the work of Christ.

His next step was to recognize what it means to become righteous in the biblical sense. He had begun, of course, with the Aristotelian-scholastic concept of righteousness as a quality in man (*hexis, habitus*) produced by doing good deeds. But by the time he lectured on Romans in 1915-16 he had come to see that

<sup>1</sup> *Praefatio* zur Gesamtausgabe seiner Werke, W.A. 54, pp. 185f.

to be 'righteous' in the biblical sense means to be righteous in the sight of God rather than to possess a *habitus* of righteousness.

'Righteousness' and 'unrighteousness' are understood in the Bible in quite a different sense than by the philosophers and jurists. This is evident from the fact that the latter maintain that it is a quality of the soul. But righteousness as understood in the Bible depends on the divine verdict rather than on the quality (*Beschaffenheit*) of guilty men. It is not the man who possesses this quality who is righteous. No; he is utterly and completely sinful and unrighteous. It is rather the man whom God in pure grace regards as righteous and allows to count as righteous in his sight, because he confesses his sin and calls upon the righteousness of God.<sup>1</sup>

This new conception of the meaning of righteousness meant a new conception of the meaning of justification. For to be justified means to be made righteous. But if being made righteous means receiving a divine verdict of acquittal rather than receiving a *habitus* of righteousness, being justified means receiving a verdict of acquittal rather than receiving a new quality of righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

To be 'righteous in the sight of God' is the same thing as 'to be justified by God.' It is not because a man is righteous that he is regarded as righteous by God, but rather because he is regarded as righteous by God he is righteous.<sup>3</sup>

Justification has become again what it was in the New Testament: a relational concept describing the relationship of man and

<sup>1</sup> *Vorlesung über den Römerbrief*, comment on Rom. 4. 7 (Münchener Ausgabe, p. 188).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K. Holl, *Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief, in Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte, I, Luther*, p. 114. Luther, however, as Holl points out (pp. 127f.), still sometimes used the word in the old sense.

<sup>3</sup> *Vorlesung über den Römerbrief*, comment on Rom. 2. 13 (Münchener Ausgabe, p. 67).

God, a relationship in which, as Karl Holl justly remarks, man is accepted by God, accepted as righteous and accepted to fellowship.<sup>1</sup>

How are we justified? Not by *our* satisfactions, says Luther, but by *Christ's*. Not by our works, but by our faith.

Not by our satisfactions, but by Christ's. Here Luther goes a step beyond Anselm. The latter had exalted Christ's satisfaction without excluding ours. Luther both exalts Christ's and excludes ours.

When the heart of the one who believes on Jesus blames and reproaches him because he has done evil, he turns away from his heart and seeks refuge in Christ, saying: he has made satisfaction for me, he is righteous, he is my defence, he has died for me, and made his righteousness to be mine as he made my sin to be his. And if he has made it to be his own, I no longer have it, and am free; and if he has made his righteousness to be mine, I am henceforth righteous in the same righteousness as he.<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing I can do, no satisfaction I can make to atone for sin.

There is no penance, no satisfaction for sin, no earning of grace, no salvation, save by faith in Christ ... He is the man whom God looks at for us, and through whose merit alone forgives our sins and is gracious to us and saves us.<sup>3</sup>

Christ is the Mediator between God and man, the High Priest who offers himself as the sacrificial Lamb, the Servant of the Lord who suffers for the sins of his people. He became sin for us, that

<sup>1</sup> K. Holl, *op. cit.*, pp. 114f.

<sup>2</sup> *Vorlesung über den Römerbrief*, comment on Rom. 2. 15 (Münchener Ausgabe p. 73).

<sup>3</sup> Kirchenpostille Dreikönig. Mt. 2. 1ff. Cited Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie*, Neue Ausgabe 1927, II, p. 273.

we might become the righteousness of God in him.<sup>1</sup> This is the doctrine of the 'marvellous exchange,' the 'blessed exchange,' 'the happy exchange' which plays so large a part in Luther's theology. It finds expression already in a letter he wrote to Georg Spenlein in 1516:

Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, and I am thy sin; thou hast assumed that which is mine, and given me that which is thine.<sup>2</sup>

This is expanded in his *Freedom of a Christian Man*:

Now begins the happy exchange (*fröhlich wechsel*) and transaction. Christ is both God and man, for ever without sin. His righteousness is invincible, eternal and almighty. Since now, for the sake of the wedding ring (i.e. faith), he makes the sins of the believing soul his own, and acts as though he had committed them, these sins are in him swallowed up and devoured. For his invincible righteousness is too strong for sin. And so the believing soul through her dowry, i.e. her faith, is freed from all her sins and endowed with the eternal righteousness of the Bridegroom, Christ. Is not this a happy event, in which the rich and noble and righteous Bridegroom, Christ, takes the poor despised prostitute of a soul in marriage, and thus frees her from all evils and endows her with every blessing?<sup>3</sup>

It is expressed more fully in the large *Commentary on Galatians* of 1531-35. The core of his teaching is this:

So, making a happy exchange with us, he took upon him our sinful person, and gave us his innocent and victorious person: wherewith we being now clothed, are freed from the curse of the law ... Now he thus bearing the sin of the whole

<sup>1</sup> Theodosius Harnack, op. cit., II, pp. 201ff.

<sup>2</sup> Tu, domine Jesu, es iustitia mea, ego autem sum peccatum tuum: tu assumisti meum et dedisti tuum.

<sup>3</sup> *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, 1520. (Clemen Ausgabe, II, pp. 15f.)

world in our person, was taken, suffered, was crucified and put to death, and became a curse for us ... By faith only therefore we are made righteous, for faith alone layeth hold upon this victory of Christ ... For according to Paul's divinity, there is no sin, no death, no malediction any more in the world, but in Christ, who is the Lamb of God that hath taken away the sins of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the marvellous exchange leads us to Luther's second major thesis: we are justified by faith, not by works.

For the exchange is for Luther a marriage, a sharing, a fellowship, a communion, a marriage and fellowship in which the bride shares her poverty (i.e. her sin) with her Bridegroom, and he shares his riches (i.e. his righteousness) with his bride.

Christ bestows his riches on us through his vicarious death for our sins and through his living presence as the risen Lord. And we receive his riches in faith. For faith unites us with Christ.

Not only does faith make the soul full of grace and freedom and blessedness, but faith unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom. And through this marriage, as St Paul teaches, Christ and the soul become one flesh ... they share all things in common, so that that which is Christ's becomes the possession of the believing soul.<sup>2</sup>

Faith is the wedding ring that unites us with Christ,<sup>3</sup> enfolding him as a ring enfolds a precious stone.

Faith taketh hold of Christ, and hath him present, and holdeth him inclosed, as the ring doth the precious stone.<sup>4</sup>

We are united both with the Christ who died for us and the Christ who lives in us. With the Christ who died for us, since

<sup>1</sup> *Commentary on Galatians*, 1531-35. Watson's edition, pp. 276ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, Clemen Ausgabe, II, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Clemen Ausgabe, II, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Commentary on Galatians*, 1531-35, on Gal. 2. 16 (Watson's translation, p. 137).

He has made satisfaction for me ... and made his righteousness to be mine, as he made my sin to be his. And if he has made my sin to be his own, I no longer have it and am free; and if he has made his righteousness to be mine, I am henceforth righteous in the same righteousness as he.<sup>1</sup>

And with the Christ who lives in us, since

One who is truly a Christian must be born of Christ and grow on the Vine which is Christ ... My whole heart must be renewed and transformed, so that I become a new growth, planted in the Vine which is Christ ... Then there will follow the fruits: the confession of the gospel, works of love, an obedient, patient and disciplined life.<sup>2</sup>

Faith, therefore, for Luther, is trust in Christ, union with Christ, life in Christ, a life of faith, hope, love and good works. Consequently,

This faith immediately carries along with it love and peace and joy and hope.<sup>3</sup>

See then how from faith flow love and joy in the Lord, and from love a free, willing, joyful life which serves our neighbour without thought of reward (*umbsonst*).<sup>4</sup>

Such a living, busy, active, mighty thing is faith that it can do no other than be incessantly doing good. Faith does not stop to ask whether good works should be done, but before one can ask has already done them and is ever doing them ... Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so assured

<sup>1</sup> *Vorlesung über den Römerbrief*, on Rom. 2. 15 (Münchener Ausgabe, p. 73).

<sup>2</sup> On John 15. 5. 1537. Cited T. Harnack, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 364f.

<sup>3</sup> *Sermon von den guten Werken*, 1520. (Luthers Werke, Clemen Ausgabe, I, p. 231).

<sup>4</sup> *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, 1520. (Luthers Werke, Clemen Ausgabe, II, p. 25.)

that it could die a thousand deaths. And this confidence and knowledge of divine grace makes us happy, courageous, and joyful towards God and towards all his creatures ... In consequence one becomes, without the slightest compulsion, willing and happy to do good to every one, to endure all things, from sheer love and praise of God who has shown him such grace. And thus one can no more separate works from faith than one can separate burning and glowing from a fire.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Luther resolutely unites faith with hope and love and obedience and good works. Yet with equal resolution he insists that we are justified *by faith alone*.

For instance, in his *Freedom of a Christian Man* he says:

From this it is clear that a Christian man is free from all things and above all things, so that he needs no good work in order to be godly and blessed (*from und selig*), but faith brings him everything in abundance.<sup>2</sup>

In his German translation of Rom. 3. 28 ('For we hold that a man is justified by faith') he added the word *alone* (*allein durch den Glauben*), and always defended this insertion against the objections of the Romanists.<sup>3</sup>

And in his large *Commentary on Galatians* (1531-35) he both defends the doctrine of justification by faith *alone* and attacks the scholastic doctrine of justification by faith formed by love (*fides caritate formata*).

This is the true meaning of becoming a Christian, even to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the

<sup>1</sup> *Vorrede zum Römerbrief*. Cited Johannes von Walter, *Die Theologie Luthers*, 1940, pp. 274f.

<sup>2</sup> *Clemenausgabe*, II, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> In his *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* (1530) he writes: 'So ist es nicht allein recht, sondern auch hoch vonnöthen, dass man aufs Deutlichste und Völligste heraus sage: allein der Glaube ohne Werke macht fromm . . . Darum solls in meinem neuen Testament bleiben.' See T. Harnack, *op. cit.*, II, p. 341.

law. Here we must stand, not upon the wicked gloss of the schoolmen, which say, that faith then justifieth, when charity and good works are joined withal. With this pestilential gloss the sophisters (sc. schoolmen) have darkened and corrupted this and other like sentences in Paul, wherein he manifestly attributeth justification to faith only in Christ. But when a man heareth that he ought to believe in Christ, and yet notwithstanding, faith justifieth not except it be formed and furnished with charity, by and by he falleth from faith, and thus he thinketh: If faith without charity justifieth not, then is faith vain and unprofitable, and charity alone justifieth; for except faith be formed and beautified with charity, it is nothing ... We grant that we must teach also good works and charity, but it must be done in time and place, that is to say, when the question is concerning works, and toucheth not this article of justification. But here the question is, by what means we are justified and attain eternal life. To this we answer with Paul, that by faith only in Christ we are pronounced righteous, and not by the works of the law or charity ... Wherefore since we are now in the matter of justification, we reject and condemn all good works ... Thus we have always most certain and sure arguments which necessarily conclude that justification cometh by faith alone.<sup>1</sup>

This *sola fide* doctrine raises four questions. What did Luther mean by it? Why did he teach it? What were the historical results? Is it tenable?

(1) *What did Luther mean by sola fide?* The phrase *sola fide* was not invented by Luther. It had been used by Ambrose and Bernard. What they meant by it was clear. Holding that the only saving faith is that which works through love, they meant that we are justified by that faith alone that works through love. Is this all that Luther meant? Possibly, sometimes. Certainly his

<sup>1</sup> *Commentary on Galatians* (1531-35), Watson's translation, pp. 141-162.

stress on the unity of faith and works would lead us to expect this. But it is manifest that he sometimes meant something different. He meant that we are justified by faith alone, without love and works.

It is not only right but most necessary that we say in the plainest and fullest manner that faith alone without works justifies.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the interest of this 'faith alone without works' that he attacked the Augustinian-scholastic doctrine that we are justified by the faith that works through love (or is formed by love).

Now the truth of the Gospel is, that our righteousness cometh by faith alone, without the works of the law. The corruption or falsehood of the Gospel is, that we are justified by faith, but not without the works of the law. With this condition annexed, the false apostles preached the Gospel. Even so do our sophisters and Papists at this day. For they say that we must believe in Christ, and that faith is the foundation of our salvation: but it justifieth not, except it be furnished with charity. This is not the truth of the Gospel, but falsehood and dissimulation ... Wherefore those things which the popish schoolmen have taught concerning the justifying faith being furnished with charity, are nothing else but mere dreams.<sup>2</sup>

In passages such as these, faith alone manifestly means faith without love, faith without works.

(2) *Why did Luther stress the sola fide?* What drove him to this extreme position? Apparently five factors.

The first was the thrill of a new discovery and inborn tendency to exaggerate. Lortz rightly calls him the *doctor hyperbolicus*.<sup>3</sup> When he discovered that we are not justified by works alone he fell into the hyperbole that we are justified by faith alone.

<sup>1</sup> *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen*, 1530. Cited T. Harnack, *op. cit.*, II, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> *Commentary on Galatians*, 1531-35, on Gal. 2. 4f. (Watson's translation, pp. 98f.)

<sup>3</sup> *Die Reformation in Deutschland*, 3. Aufl. 1948, I, p. 151.

The second was his inability to distinguish between works of the law and works of faith. When he reads in Gal. 2. 16 that a man is justified not by works of the law but by faith in Christ, he leaps to the conclusion that 'works of the law' means all kinds of works, including works that flow from faith.

This is the true meaning of becoming a Christian, even to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law. Here we must stand, and not upon the wicked gloss of the schoolmen, which say that faith then justifieth, when charity and good works are joined withal. With this pestilential gloss the sophisters have darkened and corrupted this and other like sentences of Paul, wherein he manifestly attributeth justification to faith only in Christ ... Wherefore since we are now in the matter of justification, we reject and condemn all good works.<sup>1</sup>

The third reason was his fear of a relapse into the old doctrine of justification by works. This is apparent from his defence of the *sola fides* against the *fides caritate formata* in his large commentary on Galatians.

But when a man heareth that he ought to believe in Christ, yet notwithstanding, faith justifieth not except it be formed and furnished with charity, by and by he falleth from faith, and thus he thinketh: If faith without charity justifieth not, then is faith vain and unprofitable, and charity alone justifieth.<sup>2</sup>

This passage reveals two things: his fear of relapsing into justification by works, and his inability to conceive any alternative between justification by faith alone and justification by works alone. And what he cannot conceive is precisely that which the New Testament affirms: that we are justified by faith working through love.

<sup>1</sup> *Commentary on Galatians*, 1531-35, on Gal. 2. 16. (Watson's translation, pp. 141f.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The fourth reason for his insistence on the *sola* is his longing for the assurance of salvation (*Heilsgewissheit*).<sup>1</sup> He had lived so long in his Catholic years in a state of *Heilungewissheit* (uncertainty of salvation) bordering on *Unheilsgewissheit* (certainty of damnation) that when he escaped from this miry pit through the discovery of justification by faith he resolved never to fall into it again. Now he must have the assurance of salvation, and his doctrine of justification must be one which would ensure this. And, rightly or wrongly, he felt it could do so only if it removed works entirely from the doctrine of justification, for in this life they are always imperfect.

The fifth reason for emphasis on the *sola* and exclusion of love and good works from the doctrine of justification was his astounding inability to grasp the plain sense of certain scriptural passages. It seems almost inconceivable that one gifted with such extraordinary biblical insight could so misread certain parts of the Bible. Yet such was the case, as has been recognized not only by Roman Catholic scholars such as Josef Lortz,<sup>2</sup> but also by Protestant scholars such as Adolf Schlatter,<sup>3</sup> Walther von Loewenich,<sup>4</sup> Max Lackmann,<sup>5</sup> Wilfried Joest,<sup>6</sup> and Hans Asmussen.<sup>7</sup> Lortz's appraisal of Luther as an exegete seems indisputable. 'It is not the whole text which he reads,' says Lortz, 'which impresses Luther, but only that part of it which corresponds to and appeals to his powerful but one-sided genius and his momentary interest ... Luther does not react to the sacred text of revelation in its entirety, but only to certain parts of it, though to these with passionate intensity.'<sup>8</sup>

This may be illustrated by his interpretation of certain passages

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge*, 7. Aufl. 1957, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Reformation in Deutschland*, 3. Aufl. 1948, I, pp. 161ff.

<sup>3</sup> In many works, notably in his large commentaries on *Romans* and *James*.

<sup>4</sup> *Luther als Ausleger der Synoptiker*, 1954, particularly pp. 191ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Reformatorsche Rechtfertigungslehre*, 1958.

<sup>6</sup> *Gesetz und Freiheit*, 2. Aufl. 1956.

<sup>7</sup> *Warum noch lutherische Kirche?*, 1949.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, p. 161.

in the Gospel of Matthew, the Epistle to the Romans, and the Epistle of James.

In his treatment of the saying of Jesus that when the Son of man shall come he will 'repay every one according to his deeds' (Matt. 16. 27) and in his exegesis of the parable of judgment when the Son of man judges every one according to his works of love (Matt. 25. 31ff), Luther, as von Loewenich shows,<sup>1</sup> completely misses the salient point that justification is according to works, and drifts into peripheral considerations such as why the good works enumerated in Matt. 25. 31ff should all be forms of obedience to the fifth commandment of the decalogue.

Similarly, in his *Lectures on Romans*, when dealing with Rom. 2. 5ff he says not a word about Paul's unequivocal statement that God will 'render to every man according to his works,' but instead offers a eulogy on Christian patience. The words about justification according to works seem to have made no impression on his mind, whereas the word 'patience' did, and he concentrates his whole attention upon this.

This tendency to single out a few words and ignore the rest of a text is manifest in his reading of the discussion on faith and works in James 2. 14ff. When he comes to the words, 'You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone,' his gaze dwells on them in fascinated horror. He no longer remembers what James says in the rest of this passage, no longer recalls that Abraham's *faith* was active in his works and was imputed for righteousness. He sees nothing but the words, 'You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone,' with their rejection of his cherished doctrine of justification by faith alone. In the intensity of his emotional reaction he calls *James* a 'right strawy epistle' fit only for lighting the fire.<sup>2</sup> He simply cannot see that James is not teaching justification by works alone any more than Paul is teaching justification by faith alone, but that both are teaching justification through the faith that works through love.

<sup>1</sup> *Luther als Ausleger der Synoptiker*, pp. 196ff.

<sup>2</sup> M. Lackmann, *Reformatorsche Rechtfertigungslehre*, 1953, p. 45.

(3) *What were the historical results of the sola fide doctrine?* Luther's insistence on the word *sola* had three results. It decisively influenced subsequent Lutheranism. It widened the breach with Rome. And it threw Lutheranism into confusion and controversy.

It influenced Lutheranism both by its frequent repetition in Luther's own writings and by its inclusion in the Lutheran Confessions of Faith. It is found not only in the Schmalkald Articles (1537) which were written by Luther himself, but also in the Augsburg Confession (1530) and the Apology (1530), which were formulated by Melancthon, and in the Formula of Concord, composed by a group of scholars led by Andreae, Chemnitz, and Selnecker.

It widened the breach with Rome by unnecessary attacks on *fides caritate formata* in the name of *fides sola*. I say unnecessary, because the *fides caritate formata* (faith formed by love) was really nothing but the Pauline-Augustinian *fides quae per dilectionem operatur* (faith working through love) in scholastic dress, and the Lutherans repeatedly expressed their agreement with the doctrine that the faith which justifies is the faith that works through love.<sup>1</sup> So great however was their horror of falling into the error of justification by works alone that they fell into the opposite error of justification by faith alone, and elevated this into the 'article from which one cannot move or retreat, though heaven and earth fall.'<sup>2</sup> From this *fides sola* fortress they repeatedly attacked the *fides caritate formata* and every attempt to include works with faith in the doctrine of justification.<sup>3</sup> In this assault they were attacking not only the Catholic position, but also, unwittingly, their own.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Luther in his sermon on James 1. 17a (Kirchenpostille, 1536), Melancthon in the *Apology*, IV, Andreae, Chemnitz, etc., in the *Formula of Concord*, Solida Declaratio, III.

<sup>2</sup> Luther, *Schmalkaldische Artikel*. (*Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, 2. Aufl. 1952, p. 415.)

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, on Gal. 2. 16 (Watson's translation, pp. 131ff.; *Augsburg Confession*, XX; *Apology*, IV; *Formula of Concord*, Epitomy, III, Solida Declaratio, III, IV. See further E. Schlink, *Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften*, chs. III and IV; F. Brunstäd, *Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften*, pp. 103ff.

It was this attack upon their own position that led to confusion and controversy within their own ranks. Luther's teaching on justification by faith is, it seems to me, not merely paradoxical. It is inherently self-contradictory. The contradiction is apparent in a saying of Luther's which is quoted with approval in the *Formula of Concord*: 'Faith and works agree perfectly together and are inseparably connected, but it is faith alone without works that receives the blessing, yet faith is never alone.'<sup>1</sup> How can faith alone receive the blessing if faith is never alone? It was this dilemma which underlay the Majoristic controversy on faith and works.

Those who, like Menius and Major, held that the only faith that justifies is the faith that works through love, concluded that good works have a place in the justification and are necessary for salvation. Those who, like Amsdorf and Gallus, maintained that faith alone, i.e. faith apart from works, justifies, concluded that good works have no place in justification, and are not necessary for salvation. Some of them, e.g. Amsdorf, even went so far as to say that good works are harmful (*schädlich*) for salvation. The two sides met for six months in the Colloquy of Altenburg (1568-9)<sup>2</sup> without result.<sup>3</sup> The Formula of Concord tried to terminate the controversy by condemning both the statement that good works are necessary to salvation and the statement that good works are harmful to salvation. But it failed to offer a solution, being content to repeat Luther's dictum about faith alone receiving the blessing though faith is never alone, and dilate on this. It is significant however that in the Formula emphasis falls far more on 'faith alone' than upon the 'inseparable connection of faith and works.' For the Formula forms the foundation<sup>4</sup> of that Lutheran 'orthodoxy' which became notorious for its combination of doctrinal stringency with moral laxity, a laxity which eventually evoked

<sup>1</sup> *Konkordien formel*, Solida Declaratio, III. (Bekennntnisschriften, p. 928).

<sup>2</sup> The Colloquy was conducted to some extent by correspondence.

<sup>3</sup> Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, II, I, p. 395.

<sup>4</sup> K. Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, II. Aufl. 1956, p. 356.

Spener's *Pia Desideria* (1675) and Pietism, with their stress on the other aspect of Luther's doctrine, the inseparable connection of faith and works.<sup>1</sup>

(4) *Is the sola fide doctrine tenable?* As interpreted by Luther the doctrine of justification *sola fide* seems quite untenable. For it severs justifying faith from love and good works in a manner which runs counter both to Luther's better insights and to the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. The only saving faith known to Jesus was one that brings forth good works in love. The only justifying faith known to Paul was the faith that works through love. And the only justifying faith known to James was the faith that is perfected in works. Paul does not teach, as Luther imagined, that we are justified by faith alone. Neither does James teach, as Luther thought, that we are justified by works alone. But both teach the doctrine Luther came so near to but could not grasp—that we are justified by the faith that works through love.

*b. Zwingli, The Anabaptists, Bucer, Calvin*

This doctrine that Luther failed to grasp, that we are justified by the faith that works through love, was found by Zwingli. More balanced by nature than the German Reformer, better grounded in humanistic studies, and having been reared on Augustine and the *via antiqua* rather than on Occam and the *via moderna*, Zwingli seems to have had no difficulty in holding fast to Luther's 'inseparable connection of faith with love and works' and avoiding the excesses of *sola fideism*.

Like the Catholics and Luther, Zwingli accepted the doctrine of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ for our sins;<sup>2</sup> like Luther he believed that we receive the benefit of this satisfaction by faith;

<sup>1</sup> Spener in his *Pia Desideria* quotes Luther extensively, and feels that in pleading for a faith that works through love he is doing nothing but returning to 'unser theure Lutherus' (*Pia Desideria*, Aland's edition, 2. Aufl., p. 33).

<sup>2</sup> G. W. Locher, *Die Theologie Huldrych Zwinglis im Lichte seiner Christologie*, I, 1952, pp. 134ff.

but like the Catholics he always insisted that this saving and justifying faith is never faith alone, i.e. faith apart from love and works, but faith which manifests itself in love and works. 'And the more faith grows, the more the doing of all good things increases.'<sup>1</sup> For faith means union with Christ, 'putting on Christ' (*induitio Christi*), which means to put on both the imputed righteousness of the crucified Christ and the imparted righteousness of the risen Christ. 'To put on Christ means to become like the Redeemer himself.'<sup>2</sup> Hence there can be no talk of faith without love or faith without works, no setting of faith over against works,<sup>3</sup> no talk of faith *alone*, but only of the faith which by its very nature is hope and love and obedience as well as belief and trust, and which is therefore not faith alone but faith working through love.

This Pauline-Augustinian insight of Zwingli's was shared by many Anabaptists. 'Good works must be united with faith. We are not intended to be Christians simply with our mouths (*Maulchristen*), priding ourselves because we can say, "Look, we believe that Jesus Christ has suffered martyrdom and death for us," but our faith must be united with the works of love toward God and our neighbour. Any man who leaves his faith naked, unclothed with good works, transforms our Christian freedom into a fleshly freedom.'<sup>4</sup> This was said not in order to discredit justification by faith, but to establish the doctrine that we are justified by the faith that works through love, and not by a dead faith without works.

This was the viewpoint of the Strasbourg Reformer, Martin Bucer. Influenced first by Erasmus and Zwingli, then by Luther, he never forsook the Erasmian-Zwinglian unity of faith and works,<sup>5</sup> and could never follow Luther in speaking of faith alone.

<sup>1</sup> Cited H. Schmid, *Zwinglis Lehre von der göttlichen und menschlichen Gerechtigkeit*, 1959, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Cited H. Schmid, *ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> H. Schmid, *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Balthasar Hubmaier, cited W. Köhler, *Dogmengeschichte*, II, p. 358.

<sup>5</sup> R. Stupperrich, art. Bucer in *Religion in Geschichte*, 3. Aufl., I, p. 1456; W. Köhler, *Dogmengeschichte*, II, p. 362.

For faith, hope, love and works form one living unity. 'True faith in Christ can never exist without true trust in God, true hope of eternal life, true love to God and man, and constant zeal in all good works. Those who lack these virtues and this zeal in all good works have no true faith in Christ; they do not belong to him, nor are they his members; consequently, they are not Christians. And however much they may pride themselves on their faith, this faith of theirs is actually a dead faith, and therefore no true faith, as little as a dead man is a true man.'<sup>1</sup> We are justified not by *fides sola* but by *fides caritate efficax*.<sup>2</sup> What could be plainer—or sounder?

From this balanced biblical doctrine Calvin resiles into Luther's *solafideism*. He never seems to have looked for guidance to Zwingli, and indebted though he was to Bucer for his doctrines of the Spirit and the church, he was essentially the child of Luther and Melancthon in his doctrine of justification.

Like the Wittenberg reformers he defined justification in forensic terms and conceived it as identical with reconciliation.

A man is said to be justified in the sight of God when in the judgment of God he is deemed righteous, and is accepted on account of his righteousness.<sup>3</sup>

Justification, moreover, we thus define: The sinner being admitted into communion with Christ is, for his sake, reconciled to God, when purged with his blood he obtains the remission of sins, and clothed with righteousness just as if it were his own, stands secure before the judgment-seat of heaven.<sup>4</sup>

From justification he sharply distinguishes sanctification, which is not a forensic concept meaning to deem righteous, but

<sup>1</sup> Bucer, *Ein Summarischer vergriff der Christlichen lehre und Religion*, VIII, Strasbourg, 1548.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, III, pp. 151f.

<sup>3</sup> *Institutio*, III. xi. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III. xvii. 8.

a dynamic concept meaning to make righteous.<sup>1</sup> Though distinct, however, they are inseparably united in the believer.

Why, then, are we justified by faith? Because by faith we apprehend the righteousness of Christ, which alone reconciles us to God. This faith, however, you cannot apprehend without at the same time apprehending sanctification; for Christ 'is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1 Cor. 1. 30). Christ, therefore, justifies no man without also sanctifying him.<sup>2</sup>

Sanctification, however, consists in works. Hence the unity of justification and sanctification means the unity of faith and works, and Calvin occasionally acknowledges this:

We dream not of a faith which is devoid of good works, nor of a justification which can exist without them.<sup>3</sup>

Like Luther, however, he immediately renders this insight nugatory by opposing not only the scholastic *fides caritate formata*,<sup>4</sup> but also the Pauline *fides quae per dilectionem operatur*,<sup>5</sup> and insisting that we are justified *sola fide*.<sup>6</sup> And when we ask what this faith alone is by which we are justified we find that it has no necessary connection with love or works at all.

We shall now have a full definition of faith if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup>

Faith has been reduced to *fiducia*, trust, reliance, assurance, but not so much trust in Christ as trust in the divine promise and

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., III. xvi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., III. xvi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., III. xvi. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., III. xv. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., III. xi. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., III. xvii. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., III. ii. 7.

favour. In so far as it is trust in Christ, it is trust in Christ *for us* rather than in Christ *in us*. This is in essence the Melancthonian concept of faith as expressed in the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Apology*.<sup>1</sup> It is a faith which could very well exist without love and good works.

Yet Calvin rightly feels, despite all his disavowals of *fides caritate formata* and *fides quae dilectionem operatur*, that a faith which is devoid of love and works cannot justify. Consequently, he falls into the Lutheran confusion of both affirming and denying that we are justified by the faith that works through love.

We dream not of a faith which is devoid of good works, nor of a justification which can exist without them: the only difference is, that while we acknowledge that faith and works are necessarily connected, we nevertheless place justification in faith, not in works.<sup>2</sup>

We, indeed, acknowledge with Paul, that the only faith which justifies is that which works by love (Gal. 5. 6); but love does not give it its justifying efficacy.<sup>3</sup>

His confusion, like Luther's, results from a horror of relapsing into the doctrine of justification by works alone, which would render justification uncertain. This, he feels, must be avoided at all costs.<sup>4</sup> Even at the cost of denying, against his better judgment, that works have any place in the doctrine of justification. Hence, we are justified *sola fide*, by faith alone apart from works—even though justifying faith is never apart from works!

Naturally, his *solafideism* brought him into conflict with the

<sup>1</sup> *Die Augsburgische Confession*, IV. (Bekennnisschriften, p. 56). *Apologie der Confession*, IV. (Bekennnisschriften, pp. 169ff).

<sup>2</sup> *Institutio*, III. xvi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III. xi. 20.

<sup>4</sup> The two supreme principles governing the doctrine of justification are, he says, 'that the glory of God be maintained unimpaired, and that our consciences, in view of his tribunal, be secured in peaceful rest and calm tranquility.' (*Inst.* III. xiii. 1.)

Catholics regarding the interpretation of James 2. 14ff. How can we exclude works from justification and say that a man is justified by faith alone when James says: 'You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone'? Luther had made short work of this objection by calling the Epistle of James an epistle of straw and denying it a place among the truly canonical books. Calvin's conception of scripture as the word of God would not permit him to do this. He was therefore obliged to attempt to reconcile the Epistle of James with the doctrine of justification by faith alone. For 'by the mouth of Paul the Spirit declares that Abraham obtained justification by faith, not by works; we also teach that all are justified by faith without the works of the law. By James the same Spirit declares that both Abraham's justification and ours consist of works, and not of faith only. It is certain that the Spirit cannot be at variance with himself.' How then are the two to be reconciled? By recognizing, says Calvin, that Paul and James are using the word 'justify' in quite different senses. Paul, thinking of our justification in the sight of God, is discussing the *imputation* of righteousness. James, thinking of our justification in the sight of men, is discussing the *demonstration* of righteousness. Hence, Paul can speak of our being justified by faith alone, without works, and James can speak of our being justified not by faith alone but only by the faith that is perfected by works.<sup>1</sup>

This is specious, but hardly convincing. For two reasons. In the first place, James is concerned not with the demonstration of *righteousness*, but with the demonstration of *faith*. 'Show me your *faith* apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith' (Ja. 2. 18). And in the second place, he is concerned with salvation itself, not merely with its demonstration. For he begins his whole discussion of justification with the question, 'What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith *save* him?' (Ja. 2.14). The justification he is discussing is precisely the same as that which Paul has in mind—the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., III. xvii. 11, 12.

justification of man in the sight of God. And it is concerning *this* justification that he says: 'You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone' (Ja. 2. 24).

It is significant that in his *Commentary on James* Calvin makes no comment whatever on this verse, but passes directly from verse 23 to verse 25!<sup>1</sup>

*c. The Reformed (Presbyterian) Confessions*

The Reformed confessions of faith, like the Lutheran, unanimously affirm that justification is a forensic judgment of God establishing a new relationship between God and man, and that it is effected by the grace of God in the work of Christ and received in faith.

In their formulation of the doctrine of justification by faith they reflect the thought of Luther and Calvin rather than of Zwingli and Bucer. While stressing the indivisibility of faith and works they divide faith from works, maintaining that we are justified not by works, but by faith alone.

This is true even of the *Second Helvetic Confession* of 1566, written by Zwingli's successor in Zürich, Heinrich Bullinger.<sup>2</sup>

Here we are told that Christian faith is an efficacious faith that works through love and brings forth good works,<sup>3</sup> but that 'we receive this justification not by any works, but by faith in the mercy of God and in Christ, so that we teach and believe with the Apostle that sinful man is justified by faith alone in Christ' not by the law or any works.<sup>4</sup>

The French Confession of 1559, written by Calvin himself

<sup>1</sup> *In omnes Novi Testamenti epistolas commentarii*, ed. Tholuck, III, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> This is explained by the fact that, though a Swiss, Bullinger had read Luther and Melancthon during his student days in Germany before returning to Switzerland to join Zwingli in the work of reformation in Zürich. Moreover, after Zwingli's early death at Kappel (1531) he was considerably influenced by Calvin.

<sup>3</sup> *Second Helvetic Confession*, XVI. 4, 5. (Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, III, p. 269.)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, XV. 4. (Schaff, *op. cit.*, III, p. 267.)

and one of his pupils, displays the same contradiction.<sup>1</sup> So does the closely related *Belgic Confession* of 1561.<sup>2</sup>

The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 stresses the *sola fide* without even mentioning the inseparable connection of faith and works.

But the *Westminster Confession* of 1647 stresses the unity of faith and works without mentioning the *sola fide*. It calls faith the 'alone instrument' (*unicum instrumentum*) of justification, but immediately adds that it is not alone. Its admirable statement runs:

Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone (*solitaria*) in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.<sup>3</sup>

Here at length, for the first time in Reformed Confessions, we have a consistent doctrine of the faith that justifies. It is the faith 'that is ever accompanied with all other saving grace,' a living faith that acts, the faith that works through love. No longer are we told that the faith which justifies is one that brings forth works, and yet we are saved by faith alone, apart from works. We are told that we are justified by that alone which works through love. The Augustinian-Erasmian-Zwinglian-Bucerian conception has triumphed over the Lutheran-Melanchthonian-Calvinistic, and brought us nearer to the Bible. There is now no need to attribute to Paul a *sola* he never used (Luther and Calvin), no need to reject the Epistle of James as an epistle of straw (Luther) or resort to grotesque exegesis (Calvin), and no need to conceal the New Testament teaching of a judgment according to works. Accordingly the Westminster Confession can close with a chapter on the last judgment, which is a judgment according to works:

<sup>1</sup> *French Confession of Faith*, XX-XXII.

<sup>2</sup> *Belgic Confession*, XXII-XXIV.

<sup>3</sup> *Westminster Confession*, XI.

God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Eighteenth-Century Evangelicalism—Edwards and Wesley

While agreeing with each other and their Protestant predecessors that justification is a forensic judgment of acquittal made possible by the grace of God through the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, the two great evangelists of the eighteenth century differ radically from each other in their formulation of the doctrine of justification by faith.

Edwards follows the Lutheran-Calvinistic tradition, insisting on justification by faith *alone*. Wesley follows the Augustinian-Erasmian-Zwinglian-Bucerian tradition, which, as we have seen found expression in the Westminster Confession, declaring that we are justified by the faith that works through love.

Edwards' views are presented in his *Discourse on Justification by Faith Alone*.<sup>2</sup> Here he states his fundamental thesis as follows: 'that we are justified only by faith in Christ, and not by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own.'<sup>3</sup> This is a thoroughly ambiguous sentence, and Edwards' reformulations of it, such as 'that we are justified by faith only, without any manner of goodness of our own' make it no clearer. What does he mean by 'by faith only'? Does he mean 'by that faith alone that works through love'? Or does he mean 'by faith alone, apart from works of love'? Sometimes one has the impression he means the former, for he says that 'a truly Christian walk, and the acts of an evangelical,

<sup>1</sup> *Westminster Confession*, XXXIII. (Schaff, op. cit., III, pp. 671f.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, London Edition, 1839, I, pp. 622ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 622.

child-like, believing obedience, are concerned in the affair of our justification.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, when he deals with the question of the teaching of Paul and James one has the impression that he means the latter, i.e. that we are justified by faith apart from works of love. For he insists that James and Paul use the word 'faith' in precisely the same sense,<sup>2</sup> and since James manifestly uses it in the sense of 'faith without works' it is logical to assume that Edwards conceives Paul to have used it in the same sense. In this case, 'faith alone' would mean 'faith without works.' But Edwards never makes his meaning clear, and his whole doctrine remains shrouded in obscurity.

No such obscurity mars Wesley's doctrine. The only saving faith he knows is the 'faith which worketh by love.'<sup>3</sup> He recognizes of course that when we first believe in Christ we are devoid of good works, for good works do not precede justification, but follow it.<sup>4</sup> *Initially*, therefore, we are justified by faith alone, or by faith without works. Wesley therefore can preach thus to the unconverted:

Whosoever therefore thou art, who desirest to be forgiven and reconciled to the favour of God, do not say in thy heart, 'I must *first do this*; I must *first* conquer every sin; break off every evil word and work, and do all good to all men; or, I must *first* go to church, receive the Lord's supper, hear more sermons, and say more prayers.' Alas, my brother! thou art clean gone out of the way. Thou art still 'ignorant of the righteousness of God,' and art 'seeking to establish thy own righteousness,' as the ground of thy reconciliation. Knowest thou not, that thou canst do nothing but sin, till thou art reconciled to God? Wherefore, then, dost thou say, 'I must do this and this *first*, and then I shall believe?' Nay, but *first*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 642.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 650.

<sup>3</sup> Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, London Edition, 1874, III, p. 355.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 65.

believe! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the propitiation for thy sins. Let this good foundation first be laid, and then thou shalt do all things well.<sup>1</sup>

We are justified *initially* therefore by a faith which has not yet brought forth good works. But we are justified *ultimately* only by a faith that brings forth good works.

We are, doubtless, justified by faith. This is the corner-stone of the whole Christian building. We are justified without the works of the law, as any previous condition of justification; but they are an immediate fruit of that faith whereby we are justified. So that if good works do not follow our faith, even all inward and outward holiness, it is plain our faith is nothing worth; we are yet in our sins. Therefore, that we are justified by faith, even by faith without works, is no ground for making void the law through faith; or for imagining that faith is a dispensation from any kind or degree of holiness ... He (sc. St Paul) does teach that there is no righteousness *before* faith; but where does he teach that there is none *after* it?<sup>2</sup>

The only faith which will justify us at the Last Judgment is one embracing repentance, trust, love and good works. Wesley therefore concludes his sermon on *The Great Assize* with the words:

Why should one of you be found on the left hand at his appearing? He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; by repentance, to faith in a bleeding Lord; by faith, to spotless love, to the full image of God renewed in the heart, and producing all holiness of conversation. Can you doubt of this, when you remember, the Judge of all is likewise the Saviour of all? Hath he not bought you with his own blood, that ye might not perish, but have everlasting

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 81ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 504f.

life? ... O that ye may give yourselves to Him who gave himself for you, in humble faith, in holy, active, patient love! So shall ye rejoice with exceeding joy in his day, when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Holding this view of justification by faith that works through love, Wesley had no difficulty in reconciling the teaching of Paul with that of James without resort to fantastic exegesis. Commenting on Ja. 2. 14ff in his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, he writes:

From Ja. 1. 22 the apostle has been enforcing Christian practice. He now applies to those who neglect this, under the pretence of faith. St Paul had taught that 'a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law.' This some began already to wrest to their own destruction. Wherefore St James, purposely repeating (verses 21, 23, 25) the same phrases, testimonies, and examples which St Paul had used (Rom. iv. 3, Heb. xi. 17, 31), refutes not the doctrine of St Paul, but the error of those who abused it. There is, therefore, no contradiction between the apostles: they both delivered the truth of God, but in a different manner, as having to do with different kinds of men ... He (sc. St James) does not, therefore, teach that true faith *can*, but that it *cannot*, subsist without works: nor does he oppose faith to works; but that empty name of faith, to real faith working by love. *Can that faith* 'which is without works' *save him*? No more than it can profit his neighbour ... St James's justification by works is the fruit of St Paul's justification by faith ... There is no contradiction between the apostles: because (1) they do not speak of the same faith: St Paul speaks of *living* faith; St James here, of *dead* faith: (2) they do not speak of the same works: St Paul speaking of works antecedent to faith; St James, of works subsequent to it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 204f.

<sup>2</sup> *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 1954 edition, pp. 861-863.

O excellent Wesley! Excellent comment! Excellent biblical balance!

### 3. Nineteenth-Century Liberalism

During the nineteenth century the doctrine of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ for our sins was repeatedly challenged by the movement commonly known as liberalism.

It had been challenged of course by the Socinians in the sixteenth century, and the arguments of Socinus against the idea of vicarious satisfaction were frequently revived by liberal theologians.

The Socinians had argued that the vicarious satisfaction of Christ for our sins is both unnecessary and impossible. It is unnecessary because we can be justified by our own good works.<sup>1</sup> And it is impossible for three reasons. Firstly, because justice and mercy are mutually exclusive. If God is merciful to forgive our sin, there is no justice to be satisfied.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, because satisfaction and pardon are mutually exclusive. If God pardons, he needs no satisfaction.<sup>3</sup> And thirdly, because punishment, being personal, cannot be transferred from one person to another.<sup>4</sup>

Arguments akin to these are advanced against the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction by Schleiermacher. There is, says Schleiermacher, no such thing as the wrath of God,<sup>5</sup> and therefore there can be no question of Christ's bearing it for us.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, since punishment cannot be transferred from one person to another, there can be no such thing as vicarious punishment or vicarious satisfaction.<sup>7</sup> We are therefore not justified in the sight of God by

<sup>1</sup> Faustus Socinus, *Opera*, Toulmin's edition, I, p. 665. (Cf. *Racovian Catechism*, V. viii. E. Tr., p. 308.)

<sup>2</sup> *Racovian Catechism*, V. viii.

<sup>3</sup> Faustus Socinus, *Opera*, I, p. 665.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 665.

<sup>5</sup> *The Christian Faith* (E. Tr., ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, Edinburgh 1928), p. 503.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 460.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 460.

the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. How then are we justified? By the power of the indwelling Christ, says Schleiermacher, enabling us to do the will of God, and so become the objects of his favour.<sup>1</sup> For

Justification presupposes something in respect of which a person is justified; and since no error is possible to the Supreme Being it must be assumed that something has happened to a man between his former and his present state by which the divine displeasure has been removed and without which he could not become the object of the divine favour.<sup>2</sup>

God thus declares us righteous because he has first made us righteous. This of course is nothing but a revival of the old Osiandrian doctrine.

Albrecht Ritschl rejects the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction as vigorously as Schleiermacher.

God, says Ritschl, is nothing but love,<sup>3</sup> and his righteousness nothing but grace.<sup>4</sup> Now grace excludes wrath.<sup>5</sup> There can therefore be no opposition between the divine wrath and grace which could in some way be resolved by the suffering of Christ.

The assumption of an opposition between God's grace or love and his righteousness, which in relation to sinful humanity could lead to a contradiction between them, which could then be resolved by the action of Christ, is unbiblical ... The assumption that any of the Old Testament sacrifices, in analogy with which the death of Christ is interpreted, were intended to change the attitude of God from wrath to grace, is unbiblical ... The assumption that the ritual of sacrifice involves a punishment

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 455.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 480.

<sup>3</sup> *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, 3. Aufl. 1889, III, pp. 256ff.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., II, p. 173; III, pp. 248ff.; p. 446.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., II, p. 211.

which falls not upon the culprit but upon the victim offered in his place, is unbiblical.<sup>1</sup>

Neither the Suffering Servant of Is. 53 nor the Ransom Saying of Jesus (Mk. 10. 45) has any connection, says Ritschl, with the idea of vicarious satisfaction.<sup>2</sup>

God needs no mediation to induce him to forgive. He forgives freely, directly, of his own free grace.

The ground of justification or forgiveness of sins is the benevolent, gracious, merciful will of God to allow sinners access to him.<sup>3</sup>

Justification is the forgiveness of the sinner while he is yet a sinner.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore a synthetic rather than analytic judgment.<sup>5</sup> God does not wait till he has transformed the sinner into a righteous man before accepting him, as Schleiermacher held. He accepts him as a sinner, in purest grace.

Horace Bushnell, like Schleiermacher and Ritschl, will hear nothing of vicarious satisfaction. God is love; consequently he requires no satisfaction.<sup>6</sup> Even if he did, this could not be supplied by way of *vicarious* satisfaction, for

It belongs to the very idea of punishment that it fall on the transgressor himself, not on any other, even though he be willing to receive it.<sup>7</sup>

Bushnell admits that Christ is sometimes referred to in Scripture as a sacrifice, but like Socinus claims that 'this does not mean that He took their ill-desert upon Him by some mysterious act of imputation, or had their punishments transferred to His

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., III, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., II, 68, 84.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., III, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., III, p. 103.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., III, p. 104.

<sup>6</sup> *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, 1866, p. 223.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 423.

person.<sup>1</sup> For in Scripture 'there is no vestige of retributive quality in the sacrifices ... they are never offered as a legal substitution.'<sup>2</sup>

John McLeod Campbell rejects both vicarious satisfaction and the imputation of righteousness.

There is no real fitness to atone for sin in penal sufferings, whether endured by ourselves or by another for us.<sup>3</sup>

We cannot conceive of the Son of God enduring a penal infliction in the very act of honouring His Father.<sup>4</sup>

Justification cannot be by the imputation of righteousness.<sup>5</sup>

Yet he cannot accept the thesis of the 'modern Calvinists' (which was of course that of Ritschl) that the grace of God excludes wrath and punishment. He feels that

Owen and Edwards do not err in believing that the righteousness of God connects sin with misery.<sup>6</sup>

His problem is therefore to find a solution which will exclude vicarious satisfaction yet include retribution. He finds it in a doctrine, which as far as I know is without precedent either in Scripture or tradition.<sup>7</sup>

God, he says, reacts to sin both in wrath and in grace.<sup>8</sup> Christ absorbs this wrath for us, not by way of vicarious suffering for sin, but by way of vicarious confession of sin.

That oneness of mind with the Father, which towards man took the form of condemnation of sin, would, in the Son's dealing with the Father in relation to our sins, take the form

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Forgiveness and Law*, 1874, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> *The Nature of the Atonement*, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>7</sup> As far as Scripture is concerned, W. J. Wolf makes the same comment in *No Cross, No Crown*, 1957, p. 126.

<sup>8</sup> *The Nature of the Atonement*, p. 171.

of a perfect confession of our sins. This confession as to its nature, must have been a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God to the sin of man ... He who so responds to the divine wrath against sin, saying, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, who judgest so,' is necessarily receiving the full apprehension and realization of that wrath ... and in that perfect response in Amen to the mind of God in relation to sin is the wrath of God rightly met, and that is accorded to justice which is its due, and could alone satisfy it.<sup>1</sup>

Campbell's theory of vicarious confession finds its echo in R. C. Moberly's doctrine of vicarious penitence.<sup>2</sup>

G. B. Stevens and Hastings Rashdall reject the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, but decline to follow Campbell or Moberly. Both admit that vicarious satisfaction is taught in the Pauline Epistles. But Paul, they contend, deviated from the teaching of Jesus, and the teaching of Jesus alone is normative. According to the teaching of Jesus, God is a God of love who forgives in pure grace without need of satisfaction. Consequently, says Stevens,

I repudiate the ideas of a propitiation or placation of God's wrath in the sufferings of Christ, the removal of hindrances to forgiveness by his sufferings, the substitution of his death for the penalty for sin, and the accomplishment of an 'objective' satisfaction of any kind wrought upon him *ab extra*.<sup>3</sup>

How does God justify us? By accepting the will for the deed! We are sinners, but we desire not to be, and God accepts our desire *in lieu* of the deed.

Justification by faith is God's acceptance of the will for the deed. Salvation is by aspiration ... God accepts and treats us,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-137.

<sup>2</sup> *Atonement and Personality*, 1910.

<sup>3</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, 1905, p. 432.

not according to what we are, but according to what we would like to be. The measure of a man in the eyes of God is not his performance, but his desire.<sup>1</sup>

Another novel doctrine without precedent either in Scripture or tradition!

Rashdall follows a different line—that of Schleiermacher. We are justified in the sight of God, he says, not because Christ has made vicarious satisfaction for our sins, but because he transforms us by his example, thus making us worthy of God's acceptance.

Christ's whole life was a sacrifice which takes away sin in the only way in which sin can really be taken away, and that is making the sinner actually better.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. *Contemporary Trends*

During the present century liberalism has suffered eclipse through the assault of fundamentalism, the rise of dialectical theology, the renaissance of Reformation theology, and the resurgence of biblical theology.

The concurrent resurgence of Reformation and biblical theology has inevitably raised the question whether the Reformers correctly interpreted the biblical message.

Three matters in particular affecting the doctrine of the relation of God and man have received attention: the nature of grace; the nature of justification, sanctification, and reconciliation; and the relation of faith and works.

##### a. *The Nature of Grace*

Since the days of Augustine, Catholics have tended to regard grace as a gift of God that transforms us rather than as an attitude of God that forgives us. By reaction, Protestants have tended to regard it as an attitude that forgives us rather than as a gift that

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>2</sup> *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, p. 454.

transforms us. Recent research has shown that in the New Testament it is both.<sup>1</sup> 'We must here think,' says W. Manson, 'not merely of a Divine attitude of favour or mere willingness to bless but of a Divine self-giving that exerts itself in action, and that dynamically creates its own results in righteousness.'<sup>2</sup> Grace, like so many other New Testament words, describes essentially a divine action: an action resulting from an attitude and resulting in a gift.<sup>3</sup> If the Bible is to be taken seriously, both Catholic and Protestant systematic theology will need to rethink the doctrine of grace. This rethinking has barely begun.

*b. The Nature of Justification, Sanctification and Reconciliation*

When Luther lectured on Romans in 1515-16 he had already recognized that 'justify' is essentially a forensic term signifying 'to pronounce righteous.' For long however he continued to use the word both in the forensic sense of deeming righteous and in the dynamic sense of making righteous. So did Melanchthon.<sup>4</sup> In the *Augsburg Confession* no definition of justification is given, and in the *Apology for the Confession* Melanchthon defines justification as both 'to be made righteous or regenerated' and 'to be pronounced or reputed righteous.'<sup>5</sup>

Both Luther and Melanchthon however later increasingly stressed the forensic aspect of justification, and tended to restrict it to a *declaration* of righteousness.<sup>6</sup> In this they were followed

<sup>1</sup> W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*; J. Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*; R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, pp. 283ff.; W. Manson, 'Grace in the New Testament,' in *The Doctrine of Grace*, ed. W. T. Whitley, pp. 33ff.; A. Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 281ff.

<sup>2</sup> *The Doctrine of Grace*, ed. W. T. Whitley, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, p. 283.

<sup>4</sup> P. Althaus, *Die lutherische Rechtfertigungslehre und ihre heutigen Kritiker*, 1951, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Apologie IV*, Latin text. (*Bekennnisschriften*, p. 174.)

<sup>6</sup> P. Althaus, *Die lutherische Rechtfertigungslehre*, p. 10. In a letter of 1555, quoted by Engelland (*Melanchthon*, p. 315), Melanchthon says it means to be regarded as righteous, not to be inwardly transformed.

by Calvin, who rigidly distinguished justification as a forensic act of God from sanctification as a dynamic act of God. Subsequent Protestant orthodoxy conceived justification as a purely forensic act of God, rigorously differentiating it from that dynamic act of God which Lutherans customarily called regeneration or renewal and Calvinists sanctification. This pattern of thought still prevails in Paul Althaus<sup>1</sup> and Charles Hodge.<sup>2</sup>

Today, however, this rigid distinction between justification and sanctification is being seriously questioned by biblical theology. In the New Testament, as Schrenk,<sup>3</sup> Hofer,<sup>4</sup> Brunner,<sup>5</sup> Dilschneider,<sup>6</sup> Richardson,<sup>7</sup> Joest,<sup>8</sup> and Dantine<sup>9</sup> have shown, justification, while essentially a forensic term, always involved a moral transformation in the person justified. For we are justified by faith, and faith unites us with Christ, with the Christ who died for us and the Christ who lives in us. To have faith is therefore to be in Christ, and to be in Christ is to be in the Spirit and thus fulfil the just requirement of the law (Rom. 8. 1ff). Accordingly, when we are justified by faith, we are not only *declared* righteous; we *become* righteous. 'The sinner,' says Emil Brunner, 'is not merely declared righteous by God, but through his union with Christ he becomes a different man. For he is now "in Christ," and being thus united with God he receives the Holy Spirit.'<sup>10</sup> Justification is therefore, as Hans Hofer rightly sees, a dynamic as well as forensic affair. In the teaching of Paul, says Hofer, 'Justification means not merely the forgiveness of sins, but also testing, transformation, being endued with power for new life and action ... According to Paul sanctification is so intimately

<sup>1</sup> *Die christliche Wahrheit*, II, pp. 401ff.; 447ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Systematic Theology*, III, pp. 118ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Th. W. B.*, II, pp. 213ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Rechtfertigungsverkündigung des Paulus nach neuerer Forschung*, 1940.

<sup>5</sup> *Der Römerbrief*, 1948, pp. 134ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Gegenwart Christi*, 1948, II, pp. 102ff.

<sup>7</sup> *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 232ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Gesetz und Freiheit*, 2. Aufl. 1956, pp. 148ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Die Gerechtmachung des Gottlosen*, 1959, p. 44.

<sup>10</sup> *Der Römerbrief*, p. 135.

and organically united with justification that it is impossible to speak of justification without including sanctification ... Justification therefore in the thought of Paul has a broader character and connotation than in the thought of Luther. It has not only a forensic but also a dynamic character.<sup>1</sup> This is recognized by Alan Richardson when he writes: 'It is our incorporation into Christ which is our title to righteousness and therefore acquittal. God treats us as righteous, because we are righteous in so far as we are "in Christ." It is not that God treats us "as if" we were righteous. In Christ we *are* righteous even now.'<sup>2</sup> The same truth had been perceived years ago by that man of remarkable biblical insight, James Denney:

When a man believes in this sense, he does the only thing which is right to do in the presence of Christ, and it puts him right with God. It really puts him right. There is nothing imaginary or fictitious about it. Sinner as he is, his whole being comes into a new relation to God through his faith, a relation in which there is no condemnation.<sup>3</sup>

Biblical theology is thus obliging us to recognize that the earlier views of Luther and Melancthon were better than their later ones. Justification in the New Testament is not *merely* a forensic term. It is a forensic term with a dynamic aspect.

This biblical insight has already begun to influence systematic theology. Lecturing in Uppsala in 1937, Emil Brunner said:

The Word of God promises us righteousness, it declares the sinner to be righteous, i.e. as one who is right with God, with whom God deals as with a son, not as with a rebel. This new personal status—Paul calls it adoption or the right of sonship—is grounded completely in the will of God and has its reality in

<sup>1</sup> *Die Rechtfertigungsverkündigung des Paulus nach neuerer Forschung*. Cited O. A. Dilschneider, *Gegenwart Christi*, II, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> James Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, 1917, p. 164.

the Word of God alone. It is in truth, as Luther said, an 'alien righteousness.' 'Christ is my righteousness.' But the Bible does not stop here, like so many theologians. It goes further and says: This righteousness will now become really yours. God does not merely *declare*; he *creates* a new man. And this new man is not merely something promised but something already realized, even though imperfectly.<sup>1</sup>

Karl Barth takes the same view of justification.

The divine pardon is no mere pardon 'as if' man were not a sinner. Precisely as pardon it is a creative work of God, in virtue of which the man who is the same 'old man' that he was and still is, is no longer the same, but has already become a different man: the man he is to be, the new man.<sup>2</sup>

And finally, E. L. Mascall takes the same view. The nature of justification, he declares, is not to be decided

merely by determining the precise meaning of the verb *dikaioo* in the New Testament. The real question is whether or not the justification and regeneration of the sinner bring about a real change in him. Does his nature remain in all essentials what it was, although he no longer vaunts his own independence of God but acknowledges himself to be a sinner, or is he, on the other hand, brought into a new, a living union with Christ, through which his whole nature can become supernaturalized, first in its essence and then, as man co-operates with grace, in its operations as well? It is, I would urge, manifest, not only that the lives of the saints themselves clearly indicate that the second alternative gives the true answer, but also that this is what a sound doctrine of God would lead us to expect. For, since God is the Creator, he cannot impute without imparting.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Wahrheit als Begegnung*, 1938, p. 76. Cf. *Dogmatik*, III, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, IV, I, p. 667.

<sup>3</sup> *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, 1946, p. 182.

Now if we are being obliged to recognize that justification has a creative as well as a forensic aspect, we are no less beginning to see that in the Bible sanctification has a forensic as well as creative aspect.<sup>1</sup> For to be sanctified means to belong to God, and to belong to God means to be accepted by God as well as to be transformed by God. 'Sanctification,' says G. Stählin, 'in its New Testament connotation is not primarily that ethical perfecting which is placed in the centre by many Christian groups, but the establishment of fellowship with God, and through this fellowship participation in his holy nature.'<sup>2</sup>

This means that justification and sanctification in the Bible are parallel terms, not, as in traditional Calvinistic theology, supplementary terms. Both signify that forensic and dynamic action of God in which, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, he frees us from the guilt and power of sin, and gives to us the glorious liberty of the children of God. As soon as this is recognized, the old controversy whether justification is the ground of sanctification or sanctification of justification vanishes.

If our ideas of justification and sanctification have been modified in the light of biblical theology, so also has our idea of reconciliation.

The liberal view of reconciliation had been that since God is a God of grace and not of wrath, reconciliation cannot involve any propitiation of the wrath of God or any change in the attitude of God to man, but only a change in the attitude of man to God.

This idea was already challenged in the nineteenth century by that incomparable Scottish theologian, James Denney. Lecturing in 1894 in Chicago Theological Seminary he criticized Ritschl<sup>3</sup> and maintained that Christ made propitiation to God by suffering the wrath and curse of God vicariously for us.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See E. Gaugler, *Die Heiligung im Zeugnis der Schrift*, 1948; Alfred de Quervain, *Die Heiligung*, 1946; G. Stählin and W. Joest, art. Heiligung in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3. Aufl. 1959, III, pp. 178ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3. Aufl., III, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Studies in Theology*, 1895, pp. 125ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100ff.

In his *The Death of Christ* (1902) he elaborated these ideas, epitomizing them in the following passage:

In dying, as St Paul conceived it, He made our sin His own; he took it on Himself as the reality which it is in God's sight and to God's law: He became sin, became a curse for us. It is this which gives his death a propitiatory character and power; in other words, which makes it possible for God to be at once righteous and a God who accepts as righteous those who believe in Jesus ... I do not know any word which conveys the truth of this if 'vicarious' or 'substitutionary' does not, nor do I know any interpretation of Christ's death which enables us to regard it as a demonstration of love to sinners, if this vicarious or substitutionary character is denied.<sup>1</sup>

He reiterated these ideas in his *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (1917), showing that reconciliation involves both the propitiation of the wrath of God through the vicarious suffering of our Lord and our reception of Christ in faith.

Forgiveness, or justification, in the new era, has come to men in Christ, whom God has set forth in His blood as a propitiation; it has come in One who has realized to the uttermost in His own person all that sin meant, One who has drunk the cup our sins had mingled, One who has felt all the waves and billows break over Him in which God's reaction against sin come home to us sinners. This is the very essence of the *hilasterion* as Paul understands it. It bears witness, of course, to the goodness of God, for it is God who provides it, out of pure love, and it is the way of salvation; but it bears witness also to His severity, to His inexorable repulsion of evil, to a righteousness on which no shadow of moral unreality must ever fall.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Death of Christ*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, 1917, p. 159.

In his own day however Denney was somewhat of a lone wolf. The main stream of British scholarship was against him. Both Lightfoot and Westcott discounted wrath and propitiation as pagan notions, and interpreted *hilaskomai* and *hilasmos* as 'expiate' and 'expiation' rather than as 'propitiate' and 'propitiation'. In this they were followed by C. H. Dodd,<sup>1</sup> Donald Baillie,<sup>2</sup> and Alan Richardson.<sup>3</sup>

P. T. Forsyth and Vincent Taylor seem to feel the force of both views of reconciliation, and find it hard to decide for the one or for the other.

Forsyth, who studied under Ritschl in Göttingen, but was later influenced by the Reformers, never seems to have been able to escape the influence of either. His thought oscillates uneasily between affirmation<sup>4</sup> and denial<sup>5</sup> of propitiation, and he seeks to escape the dilemma by making an artificial distinction between punishment and penalty.<sup>6</sup>

Vincent Taylor displays a similar uncertainty in his trilogy *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (1937), *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching* (1940), and *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* (1941), but in his later work *The Cross of Christ* (1956) unequivocally rejects the idea of propitiation:

Let me say at once that, in speaking of Christ's deed as a sacrifice, I do not mean that His death 'propitiates' the Father so that, in consequence of it, He becomes gracious to sinners and forgives their sins.<sup>7</sup>

Recent years however have seen a marked reaction against this general tendency to discount wrath and propitiation. R. V. G. Tasker has affirmed in no uncertain terms the reality of the wrath

<sup>1</sup> *The Bible and the Greeks*, pp. 82ff.; *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, pp. 54ff.

<sup>2</sup> *God Was in Christ*, pp. 187ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 223ff.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*, pp. 248ff.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. *The Cruciality of the Cross*, pp. 40f.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. *The Work of Christ*, p. 162.

<sup>7</sup> *The Cross of Christ*, p. 91.

of God;<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris has shown that according to New Testament teaching the wrath of God is propitiated by the sacrifice of Christ;<sup>2</sup> and A. M. Hunter has shown that the idea of substitution is inherent in the teaching of Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

The German revolt against liberal ideas of reconciliation was more complete than the British. It came from several sides: from the Biblical School of Weiss (Johannes), Feine, Schlatter and Kittel; from the Dialectical School of Barth, Brunner and Bultmann; from the Luther Renaissance; and from Lutheran Confessional theologians such as Althaus and Elert.

The result has been that with few exceptions<sup>4</sup> German theology has maintained that the estrangement between God and man is mutual; that the wrath of God is real, and that reconciliation involves the propitiation of this wrath by the vicarious suffering of Christ. All these ideas are present, for instance, in Schlatter's *Das christliche Dogma* (1911), in Brunner's *Der Mittler* (1927), Barth's *Credo* (1935), Elert's *Der christliche Glaube* (1940), Bultman's *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (1948), and Althaus' *Die christliche Wahrheit* (1949). They are repeated by Brunner in his *Dogmatik II* (1950) and by Barth both in his *Dogmatik im Grundriss* (1947) and in his *Kirchliche Dogmatik II/I* and *IV/I*. Rarely in the whole history of Christian theology has the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction been stated more beautifully or biblically than by Barth:

There, where we, the unrighteous, ought to stand, there now stands he, the Righteous One, *dikaïos hyper adikon*, (1 Pet. 3. 18) ... And now there happens to him that which should happen to us: the condemnation of sin in the flesh (Rom. 8. 3). In his body (our body of flesh has become his) he bears our sins upon the tree (1 Pet. 2. 24). He dies for our sins (1 Pet. 3. 18; Rom. 6. 10). He becomes a curse for us, as it is written: 'cursed is every

<sup>1</sup> *The Biblical Doctrine of the Wrath of God*, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 1955, pp. 125ff.

<sup>3</sup> *The Work and Words of Jesus*, 1950, p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Büchsel's part of the article on *hilaskomai* in Kittel's *Wörterbuch*.

one that hangs upon the tree' (Gal. 3. 13). And all this takes place in order that for us there might be no longer any condemnation (Rom. 8. 1), in order that we who are under the law might be redeemed (Gal. 4. 5), i.e. redeemed from the curse of the law (Gal. 3. 13), in order that we might be saved from the wrath (Rom. 5. 9) and delivered from sin, so that by his stripes we might be healed (1 Pet. 2. 24) and redeemed from all iniquity (Tit. 2. 14). For through that event in which God 'reconciled us to himself' (*apokatallasssein* means literally 'exchange') and in which he made himself the object of his severity, of his condemning and punishing righteousness, in our place—in this event it became not only possible but also necessary and above all actual that he should not 'impute our trespasses to us' (2 Cor. 5. 19) ... And so, since he became sin for us we 'became the righteousness of God in Him' (1 Cor. 5. 21). That is the New Testament message of Good Friday: an event horrible in itself, and yet in all its horror pregnant with deliverance and comfort.<sup>1</sup>

*c. The Relation of Faith and Works and the Problem of the Sola Fide*

If there is one thing that Protestant theology is being obliged to learn from biblical theology it is that the only justifying and saving faith known to the New Testament is the faith that works through love.

This was demonstrated as early as 1885 by Adolf Schlatter in his massive *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*. Here Schlatter shows, in my view conclusively, that although James knows of a faith which speaks pious platitudes but does no deeds of love, and Paul knows of a faith that says, 'Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound,' neither Apostle regards this as authentic saving faith. The only faith which can justify us in the sight of God according to the whole New Testament witness, Synoptic, Johannine, Pauline, Petrine, and Jacobean, is the faith that in obedience brings forth works of love.

<sup>1</sup> *Kirchliche Dogmatik II.*, 1, pp. 447f.

This same thesis was proved in greater detail for the limited field of Pauline literature in 1899 by Hermann Cremer in his *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre*. It has been insisted upon in our own day by Friedrich Büchsel in his *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* and by Rudolf Bultmann, both in his *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* and in his article on *pistis* in Kittel's *Wörterbuch*.

The systematic theologians have been quick to learn from the New Testament scholars. Paul Althaus, who studied under Schlatter, stresses it again and again.<sup>1</sup> So do Friedrich Gogarten<sup>2</sup> and Gerhard Ebeling<sup>3</sup> among the Lutherans and Emil Brunner<sup>4</sup> and Karl Barth<sup>5</sup> among the Reformed. And above all, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Bonhoeffer begins his *Nachfolge* (*The Cost of Discipleship*) by contrasting 'cheap grace' with 'costly grace'.

Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ.

Costly grace is the hidden treasure in the field, for which a man goes and sells all that he has; the costly pearl, for the price of which the merchant disposes of all his goods; the kingship of Christ, for the sake of which a man tears out the eye that offends; the call of Jesus Christ, in response to which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.<sup>6</sup>

Faith and obedience, says Bonhoeffer, belong together.

Only the one who has faith obeys, and only the one who obeys has faith.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See his *Die christliche Wahrheit*, II, pp. 447ff.; *Die lutherische Rechtfertigungslehre und ihre heutigen Kritiker*, pp. 9ff.; *Die Gerechtigkeit des Menschen vor Gott* (in *Das Menschenbild im Lichte des Evangeliums, Festschrift für Emil Brunner*, pp. 38ff.).

<sup>2</sup> *Die Verkündigung Jesu Christi*, pp. 96, 107, 112.

<sup>3</sup> *Das Wesen des christlichen Glaubens*, pp. 26, 64, 163, 199, 222.

<sup>4</sup> *Dogmatik III*, pp. 196, 251, 272, 294.

<sup>5</sup> *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, IV. 1, pp. 689ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Nachfolge*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Accordingly, those alone who have the faith that brings forth works will be justified in the final judgment.

The sanctified community alone will be saved from wrath in the day of Jesus Christ; for the Lord will judge according to our works without respect of persons. Each man's work will be made manifest, and he will give to each 'according to what he has done in his bodily life, whether good or evil' (2 Cor. 5. 10; Rom. 2. 6ff; Matt. 16. 26) ... Who will then abide? He who is found having good works. Not the hearers of the law but the doers of the law will be justified (Rom. 2. 13) ... Because we shall be judged according to our good works, we are commanded to do good works. That fear of good works whereby we seek to justify our bad works is something entirely unknown to the Bible. Nowhere does the Scripture set faith and good works in opposition in such a way that good works could be considered destructive of faith. It is rather bad works that hinder and destroy faith. Grace and action belong together. There is no faith without good works, and no good works without faith.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem natural to expect men holding such views on the unity of faith and works to drop the traditional Lutheran-Calvinistic formula that we are justified by faith alone, and say rather with Augustine, Erasmus, Zwingli, Bucer and the Westminster Confession that we are justified by the faith that works through love.

This however seems difficult for them, and, with the exception of Emil Brunner, they still cling with varying tenacity to the traditional formula that we are justified *by faith alone*.

The most tenacious is perhaps Paul Althaus. Despite all that he has said concerning the unity of faith and works, he approvingly quotes Luther's sayings that 'works are necessary to salvation, none the less they do not cause salvation, since faith alone gives

<sup>1</sup> *Nachfolge*, pp. 214f.

life'<sup>1</sup> and that 'in the matter of justification faith and works are utterly opposed to each other,'<sup>2</sup> and claims that Luther was right in rejecting the teaching of James.

Here one must choose between Paul and James ... One is obliged to say that James' necessary struggle against a lazy faith resulted in an unfortunate theological expression in his formula of justification by works (2. 21, 24). This was Luther's judgment in his *Preface to the Epistle of James* ... and we agree with him.<sup>3</sup>

In his systematic theology, *Die christliche Wahrheit*, he says:

Justification thus takes place *sola fide*. Anyone who rejects the *sola* has destroyed and surrendered everything. For faith is nothing but receptivity, nothing but letting that which God does happen to us. Any one who wants to add anything to faith in the question of man's standing in the sight of God (*Geltung vor Gott*) has entirely forsaken the dimension of faith. Here there is no room for any 'both-and,' but only for the *particula exclusiva: sola fide*.<sup>4</sup>

Exactly like Luther and Calvin, Althaus conjoins faith and works in indissoluble unity, but severs them completely as soon as he begins to speak of justification.

So does Karl Barth, though less emphatically. In the *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, IV/1, 61, he deals with justification under the four headings: 1. The Problem of Justification, 2. The Judgment of God, 3. The Acquittal of Man, 4. Justification by Faith Alone. He not only uses the Lutheran-Calvinistic phrase 'justification by faith alone,' but approves both Luther's opposition between faith and works<sup>5</sup> and his insertion of the word *sola* in Rom. 3. 28.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Die lutherische Rechtfertigungslehre und ihre heutigen Kritiker*, 1951, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33f.

<sup>4</sup> *Die christliche Wahrheit*, II, p. 410.

<sup>5</sup> *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, IV. 1, p. 693.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 1, p. 695.

Consequently, despite his assertion that 'where there is justification there is sanctification; where there is faith there is also love and works,'<sup>1</sup> he feels obliged to insist that we are justified by faith alone. Why? Because, he says, the *sola fide* is the 'weak but necessary echo of the *solus Christus*.'<sup>2</sup> One is constrained to ask whether *fides quae per charitatem operatur* (faith which works through love, Gal. 5. 6) would not be an equally necessary but more adequate (and more biblical) echo?

Even Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who in his *Nachfolge* so forcibly stresses the inseparable unity of faith and works, in his *Ethik* relapses into *sola fideism*, though like Luther and the Formula of Concord he adds immediately that faith is never alone. We are, he says,

Justified by grace alone. But not only by grace alone, but also by faith alone. This is the teaching of Scripture and the Reformation. Neither love nor hope can justify a life, but only faith ... There is therefore no other way of justification for my life than by faith alone. But faith is never alone, for as surely as faith means the real presence of Christ, it means love and hope through him. If love and hope were not present, faith would be but a false faith, an apparent faith, a hypocritical self-imagined faith, which can never justify.<sup>3</sup>

If justifying faith is never alone, but ever conjoined with hope and love and good works, why say that we are justified by faith alone? Why not rather say that we are justified by the faith that works through love? Does this sound too Catholic? It certainly sounds biblical. For in that very epistle which he wrote to refute the doctrine that we are justified by works of the law, Paul says:

You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 1, p. 701.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 1, p. 706.

<sup>3</sup> *Ethik*, pp. 75f.

Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love (Gal. 5. 4-6).

Emil Brunner is thoroughly aware of the force of this biblical argument. For although he occasionally inadvertently allows the phrase 'by faith alone' to creep into his writings, he never stresses its importance, but on the contrary insists over and over again that the only faith that justifies is one that works in love and lives in hope.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

The Roman Catholic reply to the Reformers' doctrine of justification was formulated at the sixth session (1546-7) of the Council of Trent.

The session was lively, frequently stormy. Thomists were arrayed against Scotists, Augustinians against Semi-Pelagians. Certain members of the Council were deeply convinced that some of the Reformers' ideas were sound, and should be incorporated in Catholic doctrine. Others were adamantly opposed to all Protestant notions. Contarini, Sanfelice and Florimontius, for instance, wished to include a strong emphasis on justification *by faith*. Seripando fought valiantly for the forensic (alongside the dynamic) concept of justification. But they were resolutely opposed by the Jesuits.

The first draft of the decrees found so little favour that it was never seriously discussed. The second, prepared by Seripando under the direction of Cervino, was at least discussed, but suddenly a third was presented by the papal legates, and accepted with a few amendments.<sup>2</sup>

The decrees of Trent on justification thus represent a compro-

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen*, pp. 65-68, 101f., 266; *Dogmatik III*, pp. 164, 200, 207, 251, 442, 472.

<sup>2</sup> An account of the negotiations is found in H. Rückert, *Die Rechtfertigungslehre auf dem tridentinischen Konzil*, 1925, and in R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV. 2, pp. 763ff.

mise, a compromise however which, while making a few slight concessions to Protestant thought,<sup>1</sup> is characterized by considerable anti-Protestant bias.<sup>2</sup>

The questions at issue between Catholics and Protestants regarding justification were basically two: the nature of justification and the manner of justification.

The nature of justification is variously described in the decrees of Trent. It is redemption and remission of sins.<sup>3</sup> It is translation into the kingdom of Christ,<sup>4</sup> which means 'translation from that state in which man is born a child of the first Adam to the state of grace and of the "adoption of sins" (Rom. 1. 15) of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ.'<sup>5</sup> The definition however which has most potently influenced subsequent Catholic theology is the one given at the beginning of Chapter Seven, where justification is said to be 'not merely remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man through the voluntary reception of grace and gifts, whereby an unjust man becomes a just man, and an enemy a friend, that he might be "an heir according to hope of life eternal" (Tit. 3. 7).'<sup>6</sup> The key words of this definition are: 'not merely remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.' What does this mean?

There is no doubt about the meaning of the phrase, 'the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.' It signifies a dynamic act by which God morally transforms a man. But what does the 'remission of sins' mean? There lies the crux. For the words are

<sup>1</sup> E.g. the retention of the phrase 'remission of sins' in the definition of justification (though this phrase, as we shall shortly see, is ambiguous), and the mention of faith, not indeed as a 'cause' of justification, but in some way related to it.

<sup>2</sup> This is admitted today by the Catholic scholar, Hans Küng, *Rechtfertigung*, 1957, p. 215. It had previously been pointed out by Protestant scholars such as Reinhold Seeberg, Karl Heussi, Kenneth S. Latourette and Kurt Dietrich Schmidt.

<sup>3</sup> *Decretum de iustificatione*, Cap. 3. (Denzinger, 795.)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Cap. 3. (Denzinger, 795.)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Cap. 4. (Denzinger, 796.)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Cap. 7. (Denzinger, 799.)

notoriously ambiguous. They can mean either the pardon of sin or the expulsion of sin. Some Catholic authors, e.g. Newman,<sup>1</sup> Scheeben,<sup>2</sup> Küng,<sup>3</sup> interpret them as the pardon of sin; others, e.g. Bartmann,<sup>4</sup> Dickamp-Jüssen,<sup>5</sup> Ott,<sup>6</sup> as the expulsion of sin. Where it is taken in the former sense, justification is forensic or declarative as well as dynamic. Where it is taken in the latter sense, justification remains exclusively dynamic.

Now there can be no doubt that the main emphasis of Catholic theology has been on the dynamic aspect of justification. This emphasis is manifest in the very wording of the Tridentine decrees. They do not say that it is *both* remission of sins *and* renewal of life, but that it is *not merely* remission of sins *but also* renewal of life.<sup>7</sup> The emphasis is on the dynamic rather than on the declarative aspect. This is understandable when we remember that Trent is basically seeking to perpetuate medieval over against Protestant ideas. It is further understandable that this tendency has in general characterized subsequent Catholic theology. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that there exists a tradition in Catholicism as well as in Protestantism, which sees justification as both a declarative and dynamic event.

This tradition finds brilliant expression in John Henry Newman's *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*, first published in 1838 while Newman was still an Anglican, but re-issued unchanged in 1874 after he had become a Catholic.

Justification is, says Newman, 'in the proper meaning of the

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on Justification*, p. 101. This work, though first issued in 1838 when Newman was still an Anglican, was re-issued in 1874 when he was a Catholic, and is accepted as a standard work of Catholic theology. See H. Küng, *Rechtfertigung*, 1957, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Mysterien des Christentums*, pp. 508ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Rechtfertigung*, 1957, pp. 206ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Grundriss der Dogmatik*, pp. 143f.

<sup>5</sup> *Katholische Dogmatik*, II, pp. 527ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Grundriss der Dogmatik*, pp. 302f.

<sup>7</sup> Similarly we are later told that when we are justified 'not only are we reputed' but we are truly called and are righteous, receiving righteousness within us. (Denzinger, 799.)

word, a *declaration* of righteousness.<sup>1</sup> 'It supposes a judicial process, that is, an accuser, a judgment-seat, and a prisoner.'<sup>2</sup> But since 'the justifying grace of God effects what it declares,'<sup>3</sup> 'he who is declared righteous is thereby actually made righteous,'<sup>4</sup> so that justification is 'a pronouncing righteous while it proceeds to make righteous.'<sup>5</sup>

This view of justification as both forensic and dynamic is set forth in the *Catholic Dictionary*,<sup>6</sup> and propounded in detail by Hans Küng in his recent book on justification.<sup>7</sup> In the first part of this work Küng presents a summary of Karl Barth's doctrine of justification, which Barth himself in an accompanying letter says is completely accurate.<sup>8</sup> In the second part, devoted to a 'Catholic reflection' on Barth's doctrine, Küng comes to the conclusion that there is very little difference between Barth's teaching and his own, and in particular that they both agree in regarding justification as both a declarative and dynamic event. Küng's own view of the nature of justification is expressed as follows:

The word 'justification' as such signifies actually 'to declare righteous' and not 'inner renewal'. Does it follow that God's declaration of righteousness brings with it no inner renewal? On the contrary! Everything depends on the fact that it is *God's* declaration of righteousness. This is no mere word of a man, but the *vox Domini, potens in virtute*. The word of God, in contradistinction to the word of man, *accomplishes* what it declares. God said, Let there be light! And there was light ... God declares the verdict: 'Thou art righteous.' And the sinner

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> *A Catholic Dictionary*, 15th edn., revised by P. E. Hallett, 1951, p. 484.

<sup>7</sup> *Rechtfertigung: Die Lehre Karl Barths und eine katholische Besinnung*, Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln, Switzerland, 1957.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

is righteous, actually and really, outwardly and inwardly, completely and entirely righteous; his sins are forgiven him, and he is righteous in his heart ... The declaration of righteousness is the cause of something which previously was not, but now is ... In short, God's *declaration* of righteousness is, as God's declaration of righteousness, at one and the same time an act of making righteous.<sup>1</sup>

Justification is, he says in a pregnant phrase, 'a declaring righteous which makes righteous (*Gerechtersprechung, die gerecht macht*).'<sup>2</sup>

Thus contemporary Catholic theology joins hands with recent Protestant theology in regarding justification as both declarative and dynamic. Both are actually embracing the older Erasmian-Zwinglian-Bucerian tradition accepted by many Anglicans, and to which the *early* Luther and Melancthon belonged.

Turning now to the *manner* of justification, we find this subject dealt with at Trent under the title the *causes* of justification.

These causes are said by the Council to be five. The final cause is 'the glory of God and of Christ, and life eternal.'

The efficient cause is 'a merciful God who gratuitously "washes and sanctifies" (I Cor. 6. 11).'

The meritorious cause is 'His most beloved only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, "who when we were enemies" (cf. Rom. 5. 10), "for the exceeding love wherewith he loved us" (Eph. 2. 4) merited justification for us by his most holy passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction to us to God the Father.'

The instrumental cause is 'the sacrament of baptism, which is the "sacrament of faith".'

And the formal cause is 'the "righteousness of God, not that by which he himself is righteous, but by which he makes us righteous," that, namely, by which, when we are endowed with it by him, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

and not only are we reputed, but we are truly called and are righteous ...'<sup>1</sup>

It is instructive to compare these statements with Calvin's enumeration of the causes of justification in the third book of the *Institutes*.

Calvin makes no mention of the formal cause. But in regard to the other causes, he is substantially, if not completely, in agreement with Trent.

He agrees verbally with the Council that the efficient cause is the mercy of God.<sup>2</sup> He agrees substantially with Trent that the final cause is the glory of God, though he uses the phrase 'the demonstration of the divine righteousness and the praise of his goodness,' and says nothing about eternal life. Furthermore, he agrees with Trent that Christ is a cause of justification, the only difference being that whereas Trent calls Christ the 'meritorious cause,' Calvin calls him the 'material cause.'<sup>3</sup> The difference is insignificant.

In regard to the instrumental cause, there is a difference, which turns out however to be more apparent than real. Trent says that the instrumental cause is 'the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith.'<sup>4</sup> Calvin says that it is faith.<sup>5</sup> Yet Trent links baptism directly with faith and speaks of the 'faith which bestows life eternal.'<sup>6</sup> And Calvin speaks of our being ingrafted into Christ and accounted children of God through baptism as well as through faith.<sup>7</sup> Thus both Trent and Calvin treat faith and baptism as co-ordinate instrumental causes of justification. From the biblical standpoint, as we have seen, there is no inconsistency in this. The inconsistency of both Trent and Calvin resides in the fact that

<sup>1</sup> All five causes are given in chapter 7 of the *Decretum de iustificatione*. (Denzinger, 799.)

<sup>2</sup> *Institutio*, III. xiv. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Institutio*, III, xiv. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Decretum de iustificatio*, Cap. 7. (Denzinger, 799.)

<sup>5</sup> *Institutio*, III. xiv. 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Decretum de iustificatio*, Cap. 7. (Denzinger, 800.)

<sup>7</sup> *Institutio*, IV. xv. 1.

while advocating *infant* baptism they write as though baptism and faith were indissolubly connected.

Despite these striking agreements between Trent and Calvin regarding the causes of justification, there remain certain characteristic differences between the teaching of the Council and that of the Reformers.

The first is the differing stress placed on faith. In the decrees of Trent faith is incidental. In the teaching of the Reformers, as in the New Testament, it is central. *Glaubst Du, so hast Du; glaubst Du nicht, so hast Du nicht* (Luther).

The second is in the description of justifying faith. The Reformers, it will be remembered, spoke equivocally. Sometimes they spoke as though justifying faith were always conjoined with hope and love and good works. Sometimes they spoke as though faith alone could justify without love and works. The Council shows no equivocation or uncertainty on this point. Like the New Testament, it inseparably unites justifying faith with hope and love and works.

Hence man through Jesus Christ, into whom he is ingrafted, receives in the said justification together with the remission of sins all these (gifts) infused at the same time: faith, hope, and love. For faith, unless hope and love be added to it, neither unites one perfectly with Christ, nor makes him a living member of his body. For this reason it is most truly said that 'faith without works is dead' (Jas. 2. 17ff), and is of no profit, and 'in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works through love' (Gal. 5. 6; 6. 15).<sup>1</sup>

This stress on the faith that works through love rather than on faith alone has remained characteristic of Catholic theology. Not that Catholic authors are inflexibly opposed to the use of the phrase 'by faith alone.' It was used, according to Küng, by Origen,

<sup>1</sup> *Decretum de iustificatio*, Cap. 7. (Denzinger, 800).

Hilary, Basil, Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas and in several translations of the Bible before Luther's.<sup>1</sup> And it has been used by standard Catholic divines since Trent. But only on the clear understanding that it means unequivocally that faith alone which works through love.<sup>2</sup> It is in this sense that Küng is willing to join Barth in using it. He writes thus:

The formula 'sola fide' can be understood in orthodox fashion, and one can understand Luther's *allein* as a meaningful illumination of Rom. 3. 28 ... 'Sola fide' makes excellent sense when it is intended to signify that which we have emphasized in all preceding chapters, that is, that man is utterly unable to justify himself. In his justification the sinner can offer nothing but what he receives from the grace of God. He stands before God with utterly empty hands ... He is justified by the grace of God alone. He accomplishes nothing, he does nothing. He simply submits himself to God's justification ... Faith is in very deed trust (*Vertrauen*). It is the faith of Abraham. The sinner is justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that stands in opposition to those works which are done in living union (*Willensgemeinschaft*) with Christ or to that love and virtue that rest on faith. Love is not absent from justification; it cannot be. The faith by which a man is justified is in the fullest sense of the words a living faith, *fides viva* ... Justification by living faith does not mean justification by faith *and* works. But living faith is active in works. It is *fides quae per caritatem operatur* (Gal. 5. 6). How could it be otherwise? For 'though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing' (I Cor. 13. 2).

Could anything be more unequivocal? Or evangelical? Or biblical?

<sup>1</sup> *Rechtfertigung*, pp. 243f.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. M. J. Scheeben, *Die Mystereien des Christentums*, p. 534; Diekamp-Jüssen, *Katholische Dogmatik*, II, p. 544; H. Küng, *Rechtfertigung*, pp. 243ff.

The third difference between Catholics and Protestants regarding the manner of justification is the question of penance. The Reformers virtually abolished penance, with its sacramental acts of contrition, confession, absolution and satisfaction. Trent retained it, for the reclamation of fallen believers:

Those who by sin have fallen away from the received grace of justification will again be able to be justified when, roused by God through the sacrament of penance, they by the merit of Christ shall have attended to the recovery of the grace lost. For this manner of justification is the reparation of one fallen, which the Holy Fathers have aptly called a second plank after the shipwreck of lost grace ... Hence it must be taught that the repentance of a Christian after his fall is very different from that at his baptism, and that it includes not only a cessation from sins, and a detestation of them, or 'a contrite and humble heart' (Ps. 50. 19), but also the sacramental confession of the same ... and sacerdotal absolution, as well as satisfaction by fasting, almsgiving, prayers, and other devout exercises of the spiritual life ...<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent Catholicism has strictly adhered to this doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> *Decretum de iustificatio*, Cap. 14. (Denzinger, 807.)

## Chapter V

### CONCLUSION

What are the results of our study, and what kind of doctrine can we build on them?

#### A. RESULTS

##### 1. *Terminology*

Many words have been used to describe our new relationship to God. In the Old Testament, the principal word is 'covenant.' In the New Testament this word is still prominent, but is supplemented by many others: the kingdom of God, the righteousness of God, justification, reconciliation, adoption, peace, sanctification, etc.

In the history of Christian thought all these words are used, but the three which remain most conspicuous are reconciliation, justification, and sanctification. Let us look at these.

##### *a. Reconciliation*

In the New Testament, as we have seen, reconciliation is a mutual affair. God is reconciled to man as he lays aside his wrath and turns to man in grace, and man is reconciled to God as he lays aside his waywardness and turns to God in obedience.

Occasionally, as to some extent in Augustine and Lombard and more completely in Protestant liberalism, this sense of mutuality is lost. The wrath of God is obscured, the idea of propitiation questioned, and reconciliation seen simply as man's turning to God in faith and obedience.

But more often, as in Ambrose, Gregory, Thomas, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and most Protestant and Catholic theology

since the Reformation, reconciliation retains its mutuality, as in the Bible. God is reconciled to man as he lays aside his wrath and turns to man in grace, and man is reconciled to God as he turns to God in trustful obedience.

### b. Justification

In the Bible, justification means the rectification of the relationship between God and man so that God is able to declare man right in his sight. It is basically a forensic term signifying 'to declare righteous', 'to acquit', but involves a dynamic action as well as a forensic judgment, since God makes right those he declares right in order that he may acquit them in the final judgment. For though we are justified by grace (Rom. 3. 24), this grace is both forgiving *and transforming*. And though we are justified by faith apart from the works of the law (Rom. 3. 28), we are not justified by faith apart from works of love, for the final judgment is precisely according to these works (Mt. 25. 31ff; Rom. 2. 5-16; Jas. 2. 14ff; Rev. 20. 11ff.). We are justified by *faith active in love* (Gal. 5. 6). Justification therefore is both a forensic and dynamic act.

Now as the church moved into the Gentile world, one of these aspects, namely the forensic, became obscured. For in Hellenistic-Roman thought, righteousness is a quality (*habitus*) possessed by man rather than a standing in the sight of God. Furthermore, the New Testament word *dikaion* (justify) was rendered into Latin by *iustificare*, which in virtue of its derivation from *facere*, to make, easily conveys the impression of making righteous. Consequently, many Latin Fathers, including Augustine, understood justification dynamically as a *making righteous*. And such was Augustine's authority, that this idea dominated subsequent theology until the rise of Occamism in the late middle ages.

The Occamists understood justification as acceptance (*acceptatio*), and it is not surprising that Luther, who was reared in Occamism, understood it in this sense. But, especially in his earlier work, he did not overlook its dynamic aspect. Nor did Melancthon.

Certainly Zwingli did not,<sup>1</sup> and Bucer strongly insisted on the dual nature of justification as a forensic-dynamic act.<sup>2</sup>

It was, as far as I know, Calvin who first made it a *purely* forensic concept, differentiating it rigorously from sanctification, which he regarded as a *purely* dynamic concept.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, it was this purely forensic concept of justification which triumphed not only in Calvinism<sup>4</sup> but also in Lutheranism<sup>5</sup> and Anglicanism.<sup>6</sup>

The consequence was that for four centuries Protestants insisted on the purely forensic nature of justification. Meanwhile, the Roman Catholics defined it at Trent as 'not only the remission of sins but also the sanctification and renovation of the inner man,' and continued to think of it predominantly in Augustinian fashion as a dynamic event, although some, such as John Henry Newman, caught clear glimpses of its forensic nature.

Consequently, in general, Protestants conceived justification forensically and Catholics dynamically, and endless misunderstandings and polemics ensued.

During recent years, however, Protestants have increasingly perceived its dynamic nature and Catholics its forensic nature, and there is a growing consensus on both sides that it is essentially a forensic-dynamic concept. This is largely the fruit of the many careful studies in biblical theology which have flourished both in Catholicism and in Protestantism. On the Catholic side however

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Schmidt, *Zwinglis Lehre von der göttlichen und menschlichen Gerechtigkeit*, Zürich 1959, pp. 154-157.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, III, pp. 140-152.

<sup>3</sup> *Institutio*, III. xvi. 1. See also W. Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, E. Tr. London 1956, pp. 126-139.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. *Confessio Gallicana*, xviii-xxiii; *Confessio Belgica*, xx-xxiv; *Westminster Confession*, xi-xiii, H. Heppel, *Reformierte Dogmatik*, Loci xxi-xxii; C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, III, pp. 114-258.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. *Konkordienformel*, Epitome III and Solida Declaratio III; Lutheran Orthodoxy (see J. A. Dorner, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie*, pp. 572-584, and Grutzmacher-Muras, *Quellen-Handbuch der systematischen Theologie*, I, pp. 28-30), P. Althaus, *Die christliche Wahrheit*, II, pp. 401-414).

<sup>6</sup> *The Thirty Nine Articles*, XI.

it is also the result of the influence of John Henry Newman, who carried his Calvinistic heritage into the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup>

### *c. Sanctification*

In the New Testament, reconciliation, justification and sanctification are parallel terms. 'Reconciliation' is a social word signifying a change of relationship from discord to concord. 'Justification' is a regal-legal word signifying a change of relationship from condemnation to acquittal. 'Sanctification' is a cultic word signifying a change of relationship from secular to sacred. All three indicate that the relationship between God and man is rectified as estrangement yields to fellowship (reconciliation), condemnation to acquittal (justification), rejection to acceptance (sanctification).

Sanctification in the Bible, like reconciliation and justification, is essentially acceptance: God's acceptance of man as his child and servant, and man's acceptance of God as his Father and Lord. It means that we belong to God, being accepted into his fellowship and service. 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine' (Is. 43. 1). 'Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. *But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God' (1 Cor. 6. 9-11). That is sanctification as the New Testament understands it. Like justification, it means being accepted and transformed by God.

In the history of Christian doctrine the word has customarily retained this dual sense of acceptance and transformation through the grace of God. But as grace, particularly from the time of Augustine, came to be thought of as a transforming power rather than a forgiving spirit, sanctification came to be conceived

<sup>1</sup> See Gustave Weigel's Foreword to Newman's *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Image Book Edition, 1960, p. 15.

as transformation rather than as acceptance. Nevertheless the thought of acceptance was never wholly absent from sanctification until Calvin made sanctification a purely dynamic term, as he made justification a purely forensic term.

This unbiblical Calvinistic distinction between justification and sanctification soon prevailed throughout Protestantism, and created a problem which had not hitherto existed: the problem of the *relation* of justification and sanctification. It is a problem which should never have arisen, and which can never be satisfactorily solved. For if we say that justification is an analytical judgment, thus making justification dependent on sanctification (Schleiermacher), it is hard to see how we can be justified at the beginning of our Christian life, since we are not yet sanctified. And if on the contrary we say that justification is a synthetic judgment, thus making justification independent of sanctification, (Ritschl), it is hard to see why we need be sanctified at all, and why works are important in the final judgment. The only tolerable solution, apparently, is the one implied rather than affirmed in Wesley's sermons. For when he preached to the unconverted, assuring them of the pardon of their sins, he offered them a justification which needed no preceding sanctification. But when he preached to the converted and turned their gaze to the final judgment, he preached a justification which required a preceding sanctification. Evidently, he considered justification to be *initially* independent of sanctification, but *ultimately* dependent on it.

Now it seems to me that as long as we continue to make rigid distinction between justification and sanctification, this is the only solution consistent with the *whole* of the New Testament evidence. But why make this distinction when the New Testament does not? Why not rather, with the New Testament, regard justification and sanctification as *parallel* if not identical terms, each signifying both acceptance by God and transformation by God?

This we shall do in the ensuing construction.

## 2. Doctrine

The transformation of our relationship to God, whether it be called reconciliation, justification or sanctification, takes place according to the New Testament by the initiative of God and the response of man.

The initiative of God is the redeeming grace of God manifest in the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The response of man is faith in God manifest in works of love.

Now the fact that the initiative of God involves the work of the whole trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, means that any doctrine which omits either the work of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Spirit, is inadequate. Theologies, for instance, such as Pelagianism and much Liberal Protestantism, which obscure the work of the Son and Spirit, are manifestly defective.

And since the only human response which elicits justification is *faith working through love*, it is clear that any teaching which obscures this is misleading. We need to be very careful therefore in our use of the phrase 'justification by faith alone.' The phrase is permissible if we make it crystal clear that the faith we are speaking of is not faith divorced from works of love, but faith active in works of love (Jas. 2. 2of). But if we allow it to convey the impression that we can be justified by faith apart from works of love, it is mischievous and heretical. And that it often has conveyed this impression in Protestant thought is beyond question.

Since it is not a biblical phrase, and is often used to express very unbiblical doctrine, I think we do best to avoid it, and to say, with Paul and Augustine, that we are justified by *faith working through love*, or with the Schoolmen, by *faith formed by love*, provided we remember that love no less than faith is the gift of God. In its beginnings, the love may be imperfect, or, as the Schoolmen said, inchoate, but is intended to grow ever more perfect as faith unites us more fully with Christ through the fellowship of the church, the hearing of the Word of God, the reception of the sacraments, and private prayer and devotion.

## B. CONSTRUCTION

Bearing these results in mind, let us now attempt in briefest fashion to construct a doctrine of the restoration of the relationship of God and man.

Following biblical example, we need not be restrictive in our terminology. We may call this restoration of relationships the making of a new covenant, the establishment of the kingdom of God, the manifestation of the righteousness of God, justification, reconciliation, adoption, peace, regeneration, liberation, redemption, sanctification. All these, in biblical usage, are parallel terms, drawn indeed from many spheres of life—the political, the social, the legal, the cultic—but all descriptive of this new relationship into which we are brought by the grace of God.

Now a change of relationship implies three things: an old relationship, a new relationship, and the transformation of the one into the other.

### 1. *The Old Relationship*

The old relationship is one conditioned by sin. Sin means missing the mark by turning from God, turning from his grace and glory, turning from his power and pardon, turning from his ways to walk in one's own. It means pride rather than humility, disobedience rather than obedience, autonomy rather than theonomy, freedom *from* God instead of freedom *for* God—freedom from his grace, freedom from his power, freedom from his sovereignty, freedom from his will. It means leaving the freedom of the Father's home for the 'freedom' of a foreign land.

Now this turning away from God, this assertion of independence, this revolt against God's love and lordship, this departure for the foreign land, cannot remain without its consequences. It alienates us from God. And as it alienates us from him, it alienates him from us. It evokes his wrath and condemnation and punishment. And not only does it alienate us from God and God from us, but it also alienates us from our fellow men, turning families

into feuds, friends into foes, concord into conflict, amity into enmity. And in this alienation from God and from one another, we find ourselves alienated from ourselves, split personalities, men of bad conscience, filled with guilt and dread, fear and anxiety, perplexity and despair, hopelessness and restlessness. Life becomes empty, meaningless, nauseating, unendurable; we grow cold and callous, vindictive and vengeful.

Who knows this alienation from ourselves better than our modern nihilists and existentialists—a Nietzsche, a Sartre, a Camus? Who knew it better than the Apostle Paul (Rom. 7)? He called it death (Rom. 7. 10f)—not merely a *Sein zum Tode* (Heidegger), but a living death. And he knew its cause—sin. ‘For the wages of sin is death’ (Rom. 6. 23). And he knew its ultimate outcome—‘eternal ruin, cut off from the presence of the Lord and the splendour of his might’ (2 Thess. 1. 9, *New English Bible*). For when man cuts himself off from the presence of the Lord and the splendour of his might, he is ultimately cut off from the presence of the Lord and the splendour of his might. And this is hell.

## 2. *The New Relationship*

This whole relationship of man and God and man and man is changed by the saving action of God through Christ and the Spirit.

Man is turned around, turned toward God instead of away from God. This is *conversion* (*metanoia*), a change of mind, a change of heart, a change of life, a change of direction. He now looks toward God instead of away from him, moves toward God instead of away from him; moves toward him in faith and hope and love and obedience. His life becomes theocentric rather than egocentric, theonomous rather than autonomous.

This brings a new *freedom* (*eleutheria*): freedom *for* God rather than freedom *from* God. Yet it is both a freedom *from* and a freedom *for*. It is freedom from the wrath and condemnation of God, freedom from the guilt and power of sin, freedom from bondage to the devil, from dread and fear and despair, from emptiness and

meaninglessness, from death and hell; and it is freedom for God's grace and glory, his pardon and power, his presence and service—a presence and service in which life once more becomes pure and purposeful, confident and hopeful, serene and joyful. It is the glorious liberty *of the children of God*.

This freedom is, of course, *redemption (apolutrosis)*, redemption from wrath and sin and the devil and death and hell, and redemption to God and grace and righteousness and life and heaven.

This means that we belong to God once more. I am my Lord's and he is mine. This is nothing less than *adoption (huiiothesia)* and *regeneration (palingenesia)* as the children of God.

This means that we belong once more to the family of God, which is but another phrase for the *kingdom of God (basileia tou theou)*. For the Father is the King, and the children of the Father are the servants of the King. As they trust him as Father, so they serve him as King, for faith is both trust and obedience.

Now the kingdom of God is the *righteousness of God (dikaiosune theou)*. For when we trust God as Father and serve him as King, the relationship of God and man is set right again. And this is precisely what is meant in the Bible by rightness or righteousness. Furthermore, since this right relationship is the work of God and the gift of God, it is called the righteousness of God—'God's way of righting wrong,' as the New English Bible aptly translates *dikaiosune theou* in Rom. 1. 17.

This 'way of righting wrong' is what the Bible means by *justification (dikaiosis)*. For in both Testaments, as Norman H. Snaith says, 'to be justified' means to be brought into right relations with a person.<sup>1</sup> And to be justified in the sight of God means to be brought into right relations with him.

How are we brought into the right relations with God? Both by being accepted by God and by being transformed by him. God's work of justification has thus both a forensic and dynamic aspect.

Now to be brought into a right relationship with God is to be

<sup>1</sup> In Alan Richardson's *Theological Word Book of the Bible*, p. 118.

reconciled with God. Justification is thus *reconciliation* (*katallage*). The relationship which formerly was strained, hostile, discordant, now becomes relaxed, friendly, harmonious. God and man are now at one.

Now reconciliation is both mutual and dual. It is mutual in the sense that God is reconciled to man and man is reconciled to God. God lays aside his wrath and turns to man in grace, and man lays aside the disobedience of unfaith and turns to God in the obedience of faith. And it is dual in the sense that it is a reconciliation between man and God *and* a reconciliation between man and man. It cannot be the one without being the other. For just as the cross had two dimensions, an upright and a crosspiece, so the reconciliation wrought by the cross has two dimensions, a vertical and horizontal, the vertical linking man with God and the horizontal linking man with man.

This means that we can be reconciled to God only as we are reconciled to our fellow men. That is why we are taught to pray, 'Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.' We forgive one another as God forgives us (Eph. 4. 32), but God forgives us as we forgive one another (Mt. 6. 12). We are reconciled to one another as we are reconciled to God, but we are reconciled to God only as we are reconciled to one another. What does this mean for our divided Christendom, our warring denominations, our hate-filled 'Christians', our segregated churches?

Now reconciliation brings *peace* (*eirene*)—peace with God, peace with one another, peace with ourselves.

And what is this peace with God but *sanctification* (*hagiasmos*)? For to have peace with God is to belong to God. And what is sanctification but belonging to God? Belonging to God as Father and belonging to him as King; trusting God as children and serving him as subjects. We are no longer our own; we are the Lord's.

We are his, if we are his at all, in every realm and relationship of life; his in solitude and society, his in work and worship, his in

duty and leisure, his in the church, his in the home, his in business, his in society, his in culture.

And *whatever* you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Col. 3. 17).

So shall no part of day or night  
From sacredness be free;  
But *all my life*, in every step,  
Be fellowship with Thee. (H. Bonar).

### 3. *The Transformation of the Relationship*

How is our relationship changed from the old to the new? By the initiative of God in grace and the response of man in faith.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God (Eph. 2. 8).

The initiative of God is the act of the whole Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The grace is both pardoning and transforming.

The work of the Father is that of commission: commissioning the Son and Spirit to go forth to seek and to save that which was lost.

The work of the Son and Spirit is that of mission: going forth at the bidding of the Father to seek and to save that which was lost—and restore it to God.

The work of Christ in restoring us to God is the *whole* redeeming work of Christ, not merely a part of it. Evangelicals sometimes make the mistake of locating it solely in the cross. The cross is indeed the focal point of this restoration of man to God, for it was on the cross that 'Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God' (1 Pet. 3. 18), but the cross is not the whole, but only part, of the work of Christ for our restoration to God. The whole embraces his incarnation, in which he became man for us men and for our

salvation; his baptism, in which he identified himself with the sinners he came to save; his temptation in which he resisted all attempts to save them apart from this identification; his ministry, in which he both pardoned sins and transformed the sinners; his death, in which he bore the penalty of sin for us (on our behalf and in our stead); his resurrection, in which he rose to justify us (Rom. 4. 25); his ascension and exaltation, in which he reigns over his own and continued intercession for us and his return, in which he will finally vindicate us and dwell with us for ever in the joy and glory of the kingdom. His work is one integral whole, past, present and future. It is therefore not true to say merely that he has saved us, or merely that he is saving us, or merely that he will save us. It is only true to say that he who has saved us is still saving us, and will continue to save us—as long as we let ourselves be saved.

The work of the Spirit in restoring us to God is the *whole* redeeming work of the Spirit: the work of the Spirit in baptism and ministry of our Lord, the work of the Spirit in mediating Christ to us through the outward witness of the church in her words and deeds, scriptures and sacraments, and through the inward witness of the Spirit, bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

This grace of God expressed in the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for our redemption is both pardoning and transforming grace. If the Augustinian-Catholic tradition has erred in partially obscuring the pardoning aspect of grace, the Lutheran-Protestant tradition has equally erred in partially obscuring the transforming aspect of grace. Both aspects are equally prominent in the New Testament. God rectifies the relationship of the sinner to himself both by pardoning the sin and by transforming the sinner. He *breaks* the power of *cancelled* sin. He saves us from sin's *guilt and power*. And it is this *dual* freedom from sin that is designated in the New Testament by such terms as justification, adoption, reconciliation, sanctification.

Such is the grace of God which transforms our relationship

with God: it is past, present and future grace; pardoning and transforming grace.

How do we receive this grace? Through faith. But only through a *living* faith that believes the gospel, trusts in Christ, and obeys his will in works of love. Not through a dead faith that merely believes, but does not trust and obey. That is the faith of demons (Jas. 2. 19). Nor through a faith that believes and trusts, but fails to obey. That is the faith of prattlers (Mt. 7. 21). But through a faith that believes and trusts and obeys: a faith that works through love. That is the faith of Christians (Gal. 5. 6). And this faith alone justifies us in the sight of God and transforms our whole relationship to God.

Let me therefore repeat the warning against the careless use of the phrase 'justification *by faith alone*.' For the phrase is ambiguous. It may mean that we are justified by that faith alone which works through love. This is the sense in which it was used by Origen, Hilary, Basil, Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrosiaster, Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas,<sup>1</sup> and in this sense it is true. But it may mean that we are justified by faith apart from works of love. In this sense it is false. For *this* faith is identical not with the living faith which justifies, but with the dead faith which cannot justify (Jas. 2. 14ff).

Let us use the phrase, therefore, only if we make it crystal clear that the faith we are speaking of is the faith that works through love. Otherwise, let us say quite simply and directly that we are justified, reconciled, sanctified, redeemed, set free for the liberty of the children of God, which is liberty for the service of the King, by *faith working through love* (Gal. 5. 6).

This is the only faith that brings us into a right relationship with God, as it brings us into a right relationship with others and with ourselves. For it is faith and hope and love and works in one.

Lord, increase our faith—the faith that works through love.

<sup>1</sup> See H. Küng, *Rechtfertigung*, p. 244.

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