

The class itself must attain to the use of the present book, if they would gain confidence and respect as teachers of the New Testament.

Professor Thayer is at present engaged upon an article for Messrs. T. & T. Clark's forthcoming *Dictionary of the Bible* on 'The Language of the New Testament.'

Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier have in the press a new volume by Dr. Alexander Whyte. It will contain the lectures on the municipal and military characters of *The Holy War*, and will form the third series of Dr. White's *Bunyan Characters*.

In a few days will be issued a new edition, completing the twenty-first thousand of the first series of *Bunyan Characters*; and also a new edition—the fourth thousand—of Dr. Whyte's *Appreciation of Jacob Behmen*.

Professor Orello Cone reviews Professor Stevens' new book, *The Johannine Theology*, in *The New World* for this quarter, and reviews it with favour. For, although Professor Cone dissents from very many of Dr. Stevens' positions, he willingly admires his 'rigid application of the

exegetical method.' One of the results of this rigid application of the exegetical method is Dr. Stevens' able and lucid refutation of the doctrine of Beyschlag and Wendt, that only an 'ethical' Sonship of Christ is taught in the Fourth Gospel, in connexion with which they maintain that it does not teach His pre-existence. 'Criticism,' says Dr. Stevens, 'can only avoid the conclusion that Jesus possessed the consciousness of having personally existed previous to His life on earth in an essential life-fellowship with God, either by unnatural interpretations of the passages which speak of that relation, or by discrediting the historical trustworthiness of the Fourth Gospel.'

With this conclusion Professor Cone agrees. But he immediately uses it to discredit the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. 'This exegesis,' he says, 'goes far enough to show, perhaps contrary to the author's purpose, the irreconcilability of the Synoptic and the Johannine Christologies. The "unity" of doctrine in the New Testament can hardly stand against this scientific and unprejudiced interpretation. The next logical step is to the admission that the Fourth Gospel represents a developed and unapostolic type of doctrine, unless one is prepared to discredit the Synoptic record as not based upon a genuine apostolic tradition.'

The Theology of the Epistle to the Romans.

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V. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH.

OUR study of the Epistle to the Romans has so far presented us with a melancholy picture. We have learnt the failure of man. We have learnt two conflicting facts:—On the one side, how man is alienated from God, how he has failed to develop his true nature, how he has fallen short of his ideal; and, on the other side, that he can in no way be satisfied with this. There is the supremacy of law demanding to be heard, coming with claims which can not be laid aside, inexorable in its character; and then there is God's declaration of judgment equally inexorable. We have learnt, too, that our own experience testifies to us that this after all is

a true account of the conditions of human life, and that the struggle by which it is represented is part of the spiritual experience of every individual. We have now to learn how God, by the gospel of His Son, has provided a remedy for the disease of mankind.

We will begin with going through the passages in which this is described. In iii. 21, St. Paul lays down two propositions. The first is that there has been a declaration, a revelation of the righteousness of God independent of this great principle of law. The second, that this is not a new departure, but is witnessed to, and is the completion and the

fulfilment of, the old Jewish revelation. The first proposition he expands more fully in vers. 22-30, the second in iii. 31 to iv. 25.

This righteousness of God is further defined as follows:—

1. It comes through faith, as was stated before, but here more definitely through faith in Jesus Christ.

2. It is universal, it comes to all men; this again we remember St. Paul had stated before, but here he is able to put it on much stronger grounds; he has proved the universal rule of sin, and the necessary correlative of that is the universal influence of the gospel.

3. We now get a further point added. It is a free gift, it is a pure act of grace by which God justifies or accounts righteous.

4. The means which makes this possible is 'the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,' a redemption which is apparently made possible, because Christ has been set forth as a 'propitiation,' and which is specially connected with the 'blood of Christ.'

5. Its final purpose is to show the righteousness of God—a righteousness which has two sides. On the one side, it declares God to be righteous; on the other, it declares that God justifies or accounts just the man who has faith in Jesus.

And this revelation (vers. 27-30) has a very definite result in the relations of man to God. All sense of merit, all sense of boastful self-assertion is taken away. According to the old Jewish method, a man claimed to be righteous, demanded to be held just by God, because he had exactly fulfilled the law; but St. Paul declares two things, that this boast had, as a matter of fact, never been accomplished, no man could fulfil the law; and, secondly, that the new method was the free gift of God to man. Man is not justified on the principles of works, but on the principle of faith. The Jews cannot adhere to their old method. God is one; His dealings with all men are equal; He will justify the circumcised by means of the principle of faith which is already in them; He will justify the heathen world by that message of faith which is being preached or will be preached among them by the apostle.

And then (ver. 31), St. Paul passes to the second half of his statement. This Gospel is not something antagonistic to the old covenant, the old dispensation of law; it really carries out the principles which were underlying that method. Let us (chap. iv. 1) take the typical case of Abraham,

—Abraham who is always spoken of as the 'just' man, the one man who succeeded, in the case of the old dispensation, in obtaining this title,—and look first at the definite words of the Old Testament, 'Abraham believed God, and this was accounted to him for righteousness.' The very word used implies not merit or desert, but favour or grace. And this same word 'account' or 'impute' is used by David in a similar passage.

And look at the historical facts. This justification of Abraham had nothing to do with circumcision (ver. 9). Turn to Genesis xv. 6, and you will see that these words were spoken long before Abraham was circumcised; circumcision came afterwards as a seal. Like the seal put on a legal document recording a contract, the seal does not make the contract—it ratifies it, makes it valid; it is a sign of what is already done. Then again (ver. 13), it was long before the law was revealed, it was quite independent of it. And this was right and natural, for law is in its very nature, as we have seen, incapable of producing righteousness; it causes wrath and transgression. And again (ver. 16) the universality of the promises to Abraham was the result of its being a promise conditional on faith. A promise dependent on law would have affected only those to whom the law had come, but Abraham was described as the father of many nations. And this (ver. 19) was the result of the quickening power of faith, a power which enabled him to beget a son in his old age quite apart from all natural laws. Such a quickening power will be shown equally in our Christian lives if we exhibit that faith which starts from the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and includes also acceptance of His atonement for us.

The point and object, then, of these chapters is to define clearly the meaning of the phrase, *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐκ πίστεως*,—a phrase which is the keynote of, at any rate, this portion of the Epistle, and to prove from the Old Testament the truth of the doctrine which it expresses. And St. Paul, as his manner is, brings out strongly the force and power of his teaching by the passages which are devoted to proving it. The word means, as we have already learnt, 'The righteousness which is an attribute of God, and for that reason comes forth to man, and which comes to him through faith.' And this will bring us at once to a subject which has been, at any rate since the time of the Reformation, one of the most fertile sources of Christian controversy.

It has been. Except in some circles it can hardly be said that it is so now. To few people among us at the present time does the controversy about justification by faith appeal as a very imminent one. If in certain circles the old watchwords are still important, it is not the case in regard to the world generally. We can see that in this way. It is not in the least true to say that the interest in religious matters or religious controversy has ceased. Any leading review is bound to recognise the large number of readers to whom such subjects appeal; but a controversy about justification by faith would certainly not be a popular item.

We are not directly concerned with modern controversy. Our purpose is to elucidate St. Paul's teaching. But we cannot altogether neglect modern teaching, based upon the Epistle, in carrying out our aim, namely, to reconstruct for ourselves St. Paul's theory of the gospel, as we attempted to do his theory of unregenerate nature.

We shall clear the ground a little by at once bringing out one difference between the meaning of the Romans and some modern speculations. For there is a fundamental distinction between St. Paul's meaning of the words righteousness, or justification, and a great deal of exaggerated modern language, and the difference is this. In this modern usage 'justification' is either used definitely of the final account which men must give, or else with distinct reference to it. It is referred to the end and goal of the Christian's life, to what is often described, by a word which again may be ambiguous, as 'our salvation.' With St. Paul it as clearly refers primarily to the beginning of the Christian life, and at any rate to the condition of the Christians on earth.

This may be proved by a reference to the following facts:—(1) We saw that the meaning of the word 'righteousness' or *δικαιοσύνη* to the Jew, from whom St. Paul borrowed it, was clearly "uprightness" before God in this life; *δικαιος*, 'just,' means the man who is righteous, *δικαιοσύνη* 'righteousness,' is the quality of the man who is so accounted, and *δικαιώσις*, *δικαίω*, are the words describing the process or the action of God in accounting a man righteous. The 'just' Pharisee looked forward, of course, to the idea that there would be a future life and future rewards, but his primary thought was his state before God in this life.

And (2) let us examine St. Paul's language. He

invariably looks upon justification as definitely passed, and as being the beginning of a Christian life. In ver. 1 he says, 'Having been justified by faith, let us have peace with God.' In vers. 9 and 10 he looks upon the process of justification as already passed, the process of salvation as one to come. Of course the one is a very considerable guarantee of the other, but they are distinct in their character. In one passage it is true that St. Paul uses the word quite clearly and definitely of the future judgment; in ii. 13 he tells us that the doers of law shall be accounted just, or justified, in the day when God will judge the secrets of men; but this is just one of those cases where St. Paul is not using the word in this technical sense, as is shown by the fact that he bases justification on works; and this he always does whenever he is speaking of the final judgment.

For these two reasons, from the historical meaning of the word, and from the usage of St. Paul, we arrive at the conclusion that justification is the initial act, and the initial act only in the Christian life. In fact, to anticipate a little, we shall find that the process of redemption is a long one, and we may divide it for convenience into two stages—(1) Justification, (2) Sanctification, as Protestant divines have generally done.

Justification we shall consider now, sanctification in our next paper. First, we consider the process of justification, afterwards the life of the justified, the results of justification.

Now, the first question we have to ask is what is the meaning of the word to 'justify,' *i.e.* of the Greek word *δικαίω*; which is translated for us sometimes by the word to 'justify,' sometimes to 'account righteous.' Does it mean 'to make righteous' or 'to account righteous.' This distinction has been made a far-reaching one, for it has been connected with a whole cycle of controversies, as to whether righteousness is infused or imputed. Now the controversy is, as we shall see ultimately, beside the point; but the meaning of the word need not really cause us any hesitation. *Δικαίω* means, quite clearly and definitely, 'to account righteous.' This is so—

1. Because it is the natural and proper meaning of the word in the Greek language.

2. It is the invariable usage elsewhere.

3. It is clearly implied by such passages as Rom. iv. 4. It is quite clear that St. Paul would not have spoken as he does there of free gift, or

grace, in imputing, if he had not meant something different to making just. It is quite clear, as we shall see, that there is a process of making righteous, or rather enabling a man to become righteous. It is equally clear that that special process in the Christian life, which is called by St. Paul *δικαίωσις*, and which we translate 'justification,' means accounting righteous.

Now in this process of justification there are two distinctions we must make, between what God has done for us and what we have to do on our side. We are justified by the redemption in the death of Christ Jesus, and what is demanded on our side is 'faith.'

The death of Christ—why was it necessary? Why could not God save man without this terrible sacrifice? How could he offer up the innocent for the guilty? We cannot believe in a God of wrath, accepting the death of a God of love as an atonement for the sins of mankind. The whole scheme is unreal to us, it conveys no meaning.

It is for these and similar reasons that there has been a strong reaction against the old Evangelical theology of the atonement. That that theology, at anyrate in its extreme forms, had many elements which were neither biblical nor valid, is undoubted, but the reaction has gone too far, and the attempt to eliminate from biblical theology this doctrine can only lead to much forced and unnatural exegesis. The idea of sacrifice, of propitiation, of propitiation to God, are clearly implied in this passage, and a long catena of passages from St. Paul's, St. Peter's, and St. John's epistles, from the Epistle to the Hebrews and our Lord's own words corroborate this teaching. We may not be able entirely to understand it, but we must not limit our beliefs concerning God by our own powers of comprehension.

Let us remember, first, that all such speculations as divorce and dissociate the work of the Father from the Son are erroneous. It is not God who has sacrificed His Son, or who has accepted the sacrifice of His Son, to appease His wrath. It is God who has sacrificed Himself, in the person of the Son. The Father and the Son are one; one in their action, one in their purpose, one in their wrath against sin, one in their love for mankind. If we are to realise for ourselves the Atonement, we must put aside all idea of ditheism or tritheism, and must try to realise and understand truly the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. We must not

divorce one element in Christianity from the rest, and then criticise this portion of the doctrine by itself.

And then, when we try to realise and give a meaning to the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, we shall do so in all humility. If we look back through the centuries of Christian speculation, there is no more humiliating thought than the greatness of human error on this point. Each age has developed theories, and they have been found inadequate in subsequent times. The history of the theory of the Atonement is the history of human imperfection. Remembering this, let us suggest to ourselves one or two reasons which may help us to understand God's work.

Why was the Atonement necessary? In the first place, because God is righteous, absolutely righteous; and a necessary element in righteousness must be that conception of the heinousness of sin, which we call God's wrath, which we recognise shall be a part of every human character, in the form of righteous indignation against what is wrong. If sin is, as we have seen, a fact; if God is perfectly righteous; if God feels this wrath against sin, which He who is perfectly righteous must feel, in the presence of what is evil—then it was necessary for the character of God that he should show forth His indignation. It was necessary, to use human language, that he might preserve His consistency. And so, in the person of the Son, he condescended to a life of temptation and to bearing a human body; and, bearing the whole weight of human sin in His person on the Cross, He died to show His wrath against sin.

And, next, it was necessary for our sakes, and to show us what sin is. By the death of Christ our sins are forgiven, by the death of Christ all that state of rebellion into which we have fallen is, as far as God is concerned, ended.

A decree of amnesty has been set forth; we are asked to come in and accept it. Our sins are forgiven, and this has been by God's own act. But the heinousness of sin remains. And there was a danger, lest, if this had been done by a simple act of God, we might forget it. Sin is so easily forgiven, we might say, why not let us sin again; God will forgive. And so to impress upon us that God—as He is righteous and as He abhors evil—cannot forgive sins, He submitted, in the person of the Son, to the death on the cross, and all the agony, the humiliation, which that implies—intensified as

it must have been by the divine consciousness of its meaning, that He might exhibit to us all the heinousness and the blackness of sin, and yet that He might show His love in redeeming us from it.

Such speculations may help us to understand what is very difficult for us. But whether we can understand, whether we can explain it or not, the fact is truer than an explanation. At anyrate we are certain of the forgiveness of sins, and we are certain of the sacrifice that was necessary to bring about this forgiveness. And the two alike appeal to our gratitude and our love; they appeal to our highest religious instincts; they fill us with hope, for the evil of the past is gone; they fill us with a feeling of love, of that love of God which must be an element in all high religion. The reality of Christ's sacrifice nerves us to a life of sacrifice, the certainty of the victory braces us for the struggle; and, like the redeemed of Israel who returned from the Babylonian captivity, we can sing our songs of praise to God with a light heart and the joyousness of hope. We can build again the walls of Jerusalem which have been broken down, and repair the breaches in the sanctuary. We are to raise on earth a temple meet for the habitation of God.

But what is the condition by which we take to ourselves the benefits of Christ's death? How do we accept the amnesty which has been offered? By faith. It is not faith by which we are justified, it is not faith by which we are saved, but faith is the condition on which we are saved. Faith is a complicated process. It begins by the intellectual grasp of certain facts. The starting-point of our faith, the starting-point—for St. Paul always remembers his religious experiences—of St. Paul's own faith was an acceptance of the fact of the resurrection; that exhibition of the divine power had proved that He who had died upon the cross was Himself the Son of God. 'If thou wilt believe in thine heart that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, thou shalt be saved'; and this belief in the resurrection implies more, it implies a belief that Jesus is the Son of God; it implies a belief in His work, and an acceptance of the power of His death. First of all, there must be the mental grasp of the conditions of salvation. But we do not stop here. 'With the heart,' says St. Paul, 'man believeth unto righteousness.' Faith is a change of the heart. It is not merely an intellectual assent, it is an undoubting con-

fidence in God which makes a man repose his whole trust in Him, rest his whole life in God's promises, and live in accordance with His commands. He gives himself up to God. And then faith is progressive. 'From faith to faith.' We give ourselves up to God; we are united with Him in that mystic union which St. Paul has described as the result of his own religious experiences; and as our faith grows stronger, the union becomes closer, until it rises into love, and we learn all the religious meaning of the love of God. Our earthly friendships will serve as a type—and it is not irreverent to make them so serve—of our religious life. Is there not first a period when we acquire faith in some person. It may be a single act, it may be a number of acts, which gradually make us have a feeling of confidence in his character and disposition towards us. And when we have got that feeling of confidence, when we think we are not mistaken, we at length let ourselves go. All that natural yearning for friendship, as for love and for sympathy, breaks out. We yield to our impulses which we may have restrained, and perhaps we may gain something of the strength and happiness which the highest and truest friendship or love can give. Such is the growth of the spiritual life; and as we have greater confidence in the God to whom we have given ourselves up, so we grow in spiritual strength, and in the satisfaction of all the highest aims of our nature.

This, then, is our justification; the beginning of our spiritual life. Let us come back to that metaphor in which we tried to explain the idea of sin—Rebellion. We said that sin represented a state of alienation from God, a state of rebellion. Now, justification—the process of justification—is in the nature of an act of amnesty, a doing away with this state of alienation. God has redeemed man in Christ. Anything that had to be removed on God's side has been removed through His sacrifice, in the person of His Son. A decree of amnesty, of forgiveness, has been sent forth, and a loyal acceptance of that amnesty will be reckoned as an equivalent for an exact performance of every legal obligation.

Perhaps there are one or two objections which may be raised—(1) The idea of justification has been considered to be disastrous, because it is unreal. Christ's merits are, it is said, imputed to us. Now, that is just the sort of misapprehension which arises from reading into St. Paul what he never, as a

matter of fact, says. The only imputation is that of 'faith' for righteousness, *i.e.* the acceptance of a loyal disposition of mind for the rigorous performance of a legal code. Righteousness—the state of uprightness in the sight of God—is gained by a loyal disposition of heart and mind towards Him. (2) Again, it has been said, owing to the death of Christ and His merits, God imputes to us that which we do not possess. Now, this feeling of unreality has arisen because men have attempted to put the whole process in legal phraseology, and in the form of something like a contract, and because they have considered that faith was all that was demanded of them. We shall have to work out, in our next lecture, the subsequent Christian process; but does not, as a matter of fact, this feeling of unreality go, if we once realise that this is not the whole of Christianity, not all that it requires of mankind, but only the beginning? It is necessary to do away with that state of alienation from God, that state of rebellion in which man is, and by putting men into a right relation with God, enabling them to work out their own salvation. It looks forward to, and will end in, salvation, but it is only the beginning, not the final step.

St. Paul's theory of justification, or righteousness by faith, then, is this. Examining his own past history, and his theory of human life, he realises that there are two hindrances which had

made it impossible for him, as it had been impossible for mankind as a whole, to realise the law of righteousness. One was the constant, ever-present feeling of the alienation from God, which the consciousness of sin produced; the other was his feeling of human weakness, of the incapacity of mankind to keep any law exactly and fully. To both of these difficulties the gospel of Christ, as he had realised it in his life and as he had preached it, gave a full and complete answer. On the one hand, there was now no necessary alienation from God. Anything which it was necessary should be done had been done. Full satisfaction had been given. How or in what way the death of Christ had done so it was not necessary to understand. Satisfaction had been given; mankind had been redeemed. That on the one side. And on the other, new conditions were made for man. In order that he might accept this position of being a loyal subject, which had been won for him, not an exact performance of legal obligation was demanded, but faith and loyalty. He must change his heart; be no longer in a state of isolation, or rebellion and pride. He must come to God in a spirit of humble, trusting faith. If he does so his Christian life will begin in a changed spirit, God will accept him; and henceforth he will be able to live a life of holiness and righteousness (as he had attempted under law) under new and different conditions. Justification is what makes a moral life possible.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF II. CORINTHIANS.

2 COR. V. 21.

'Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (R.V.).

EXPOSITION.

The Received Text and the Authorized Version attach the twenty-first verse to this exhortation by 'for': 'For Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf.' The 'for' is spurious, and though it is not inept, the sentence gains greatly in impressiveness by its omission. The apostle does not point out the connexion for us: in simply

declaring the manner in which God reconciled the world to Himself—the process by which, the cost at which, He made peace—he leaves us to feel how vast is the boon which is offered to us in the gospel, how tremendous the responsibility of rejecting it. To refuse 'the reconciliation' is to condemn the death in which the Sinless One was made sin on our behalf.—DENNEY.

Him who knew no sin.—The words are, in the first instance, an assertion of the absolute sinlessness of Christ. All other men had an experience of its power, gained by yielding to it. He alone gained this experience by resisting it, and yet suffering its effects. None could 'convict Him of