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"PAUL'S THEOLOGY IN THE GALATIAN LETTER."

Thesis presented by Elvst Eugene Moorman for degree of Master of Arts.

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Paul was the greatest man in the early church. He was the greatest worker and the greatest thinker. When compared with the other Apostles there is something wonderfully unique about him. He was Apostle by divine authority. He had authority and believed in that authority. He had a mission and believed in that mission. He was Apostle to the Gentiles—"Separated from my mother's womb to preach Christ among the heathen." Being the Apostle to the Gentiles and having to face the great problem of Judaism versus Heathendom, the great problem of the relation of the Law to the Gentiles, being compelled to find some common ground of faith and practice he became as was natural the theologian of the early church. He worked out his system by the aid of the spirit and his powerful mind and this system he defended as his gospel. He pronounced anathemas on any one, even an angel from heaven, who should dare to preach another gospel. He was proud of this gospel, the child of his brain, the offspring of his experience and spiritual guidance. Again and again he speaks of it as my gospel. This gospel or theology of Paul is best set forth in the Galatian and Roman letters. The Galatian give no more than a rough, hasty, crude but emphatic outline of Paul's theology. The Roman letter gives the developed, studied, enlarged and systemized gospel. It is calmly written. It is Paul's theological treatise. But though it be but an outline in the Galatian letter it is a complete outline and the fervor of it inspired by the conditions under which he wrote gives it a charm and a practical application which the Roman letter does not posses. It shall be my object then to consider the outline of Paul's theology as found in the Galatian letter. To that end it will be necessary to first see the conditions under which the letter was written and which called it forth. There is some controversy as to the exact location of the churches of Galatia to which this letter is directed. There are the North and South Galatian theories. It is not necessary to discuss these theories for they have little to do with the subject in hand. In either case the conditions would be the same. The people of Galatia were vacillating and unstable ready to follow the last man who spoke. If the South Galatian theory be accepted we have an illustration of their vacillating nature in the way they treated Paul at Lystra, ready at one moment to worship him as a god and at the next to stone him to death. After Paul had left the churches of Galatia some person or persons, enemies of Paul and Judaizers, had come to the churches and had undermined Paul's work by teaching that Paul was not an Apostle, that he was a time-server and sought to please men, that his gospel was not the true gospel but that Gentiles must become Jews, be circumcised and subject to the Law before they could enjoy the salvation offered in Jesus Christ. These charges drew forth from Paul the defense and statement of his gospel found in the Galatian letter.
Paul's theology here found can be classed under three heads:
1. THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE OF CHRIST. 2. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. 3. THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

1. THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.
Paul had a legal mind. By nature he was a jurist. He was acquainted with and interested in the commercial world. His theology was molded by his legal and commercial way of thinking. This tendency is clearly seen in the value he ascribes to the death of Christ. Christ's death was a sacrifice in its nature vicarious. The passages in the Galatian letter which show his doctrine upon this point are:
Gal. i: 4. "Who gave himself for our sins."
Gal. iii: 13. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law having become a curse for us."

These two references are the intimations we have in the Galatian letter of Paul's doctrine of redemption through the death of Christ. These references are strengthened and supplemented by other passages from Paul's writings some of which I quote:
1 Cor. xv: 3. "He died for our sins according to the scripture."
2 Cor. v: 15. "...died for all."
Rom. v: 10. "We were reconciled to God through the death of Christ."
Rom. iii: 24, 25. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith by his blood."

Stevens says that this last passage is the locus classicus for this phase of Pauline teaching and that all other passages bearing upon the subject should be studied in the light of this. It will be noticed also that this passage introduces the great tenet of Paul "justification by faith" and shows the close relation that exists between two of Paul's articles of theology. The vicarious sacrifice "and justification by faith". This last article we consider later. But as we are concerned with the theology of the Galatian letter we will make the passages found in it the center of our discussion rather than the passage in Romans iii. as Stevens suggests.

The first reference given from Galatians, Gal. i: 4., of itself does not convey the idea of a vicarious act. Taken however with what other references show that Paul believed the most natural significance to give to it would be a vicarious significance. If the preposition used was "...or as some MSS. give it..." it would better bear such a construction. Gal. iii: 13, however, shows us plainly what significance Paul gave to the death of Christ. Paul quotes in this connection Deut. xxii: 23. "For the curse is he that is hanged." The reason that the one hanged was cursed of God was because this penalty was intended only to be assigned to those worthy of the curse of God. The Jews looked upon Christ as cursed for had he not been crucified? He had suffered the death of the lowest criminal. No doubt Paul often had to face and combat this slur. No doubt the Jews would often jeeringly throw at him the nature of Christ's death and the curse of it. How could such an one save the world? How could such be the
promised Messiah when the curse of God was upon him? And so Paul fighting them upon their own grounds accepted the condition that to hang upon a cross meant a curse. But Christ was pure and sinless and had done nothing worthy such a curse. The sin of humankind was great, their deeds were worthy the curse of the cross. Indeed God to be a just God and a righteous God must hold humankind accountable for their sin. The curse was upon us. But Christ who in his purity and sinlessness and divinity was accountable for no sin and deserving of no curse gave himself as a curse to ransom us from the curse which we deserved. Thus was the divine hatred of sin vindicated and man freed from the curse which the Law imposed upon him inasmuch as one under the Law was debtor to keep the whole Law which no man could do. If man could have kept the whole Law no Saviour would have been required. Christ took our place and suffered what we deserved to suffer. We in a manner take his place and enjoy what he deserved. "Thus God accomplishes an exchange in that what belongs to the sinner is imparted to Christ and conversely what belongs to Christ to the sinner." —Heinrici.

Before his conversion Paul had been an ardent zealot for the Law. His training had been rabbinical. His thought was molded by the sacred writings. This early training and this way of thinking are plainly seen in his theology. It is noticeable in this phase of his theology which we are considering. The sacrifice of Christ, according to Paul, is the same in intent and purpose as the sacrifices of the Jews in their sin offerings. The death of the animal in the sin offering was a vicarious sacrifice. These sin offerings were made necessary because those under the Law could not keep it and thus the punishment which they deserved was inflicted upon the animal. The same idea is prominent in the scape-goat. The writer of the Epistle to Barnabas uses the scape-goat as a type of Christ. And so it is that according to the scriptures he died for our sins. —I. Cor. xv: 3.

In the history of doctrine we have two general views of the atonement held by theologians. One is called the judicial view and the other the moral view. Which of these views if either did Paul hold? Anselm, perhaps, is the most radical of those who held to the judicial atonement. His belief is in brief as follows. Man owes obedience to God. Man has disobeyed God. Disobedient man owes not only obedience as formerly but also satisfaction for his sins. If he becomes obedient that is only his present duty and can not atone for past neglect. Moreover it is man and man only as the transgressor who must make this satisfaction. Man must; man cannot. So we have a paradox. Hence there arises the necessity of a God-man. Christ owes no satisfaction yet he gives his life. For this act Christ must be rewarded but all things of God's are already Christ's. God must reward; God cannot. So arises the second paradox. But Christ turns the reward due him to the credit of mankind and so makes full atonement for them. Abelard is the father of the moral view. Christ's passion
was to win the love of mankind. It was not to reconcile an offended God to sinful mankind but to reconcile sinful mankind to a loving God. God shows mankind his love in order to win them back in obedience to him. That God should be satisfied or reconciled by the slaying of his innocent son is inconsistent with the love of God. The very idea is repugnant and untenable.

Thus we have the two extremes of doctrine in relation to the atonement. It is certain that Paul's is not the moral view. Paul looks upon the death of Christ in a far different light. The text which we have considered—Gal. iii:13—would rather place Paul among those holding the judicial view. This verse shows that the death of Christ in Paul's estimation was vicarious in the fullest sense of the word. But could the radical views of Anselm be said to be similar to those of Paul? Have we any authority for saying that Paul held that Christ's death was to God a placation for man's contumely or that God being offended was thus appeased? "His words have been thought to involve this view—that Christ was punished; but if they had been so intended they would have surely been more explicit. There is no such statement that Christ died instead of "us; he is said to have died in our behalf or on behalf of our sins. If the statement "he became a curse for us" is urged as necessarily meaning that he came under a personal sense of God's displeasure,—that is was punished by literally suffering the penal infliction of the curse due to sin,—it must then be said that the kindred phrase "God made him to be sin for us" is to be as rigidly interpreted and cannot mean less than that God made him a sinner, a meaning which is however excluded by the next phrase "who knew no sin".—Stevens. It is evident that Paul's view is much less radical than Anselm's. Paul's view would correspond more nearly with that of John Duns Scotus. Christ's suffering and death were not a full and legal equivalent of the debt owed by man but God accepts them as such. God could have saved mankind by an angel or a mere man begotten without sin. All things are possible with God. But God chose to send his only begotten Son and thus express his love toward mankind, which love was intended to beget and excite love in humanity. It is certain however that Paul regards the death of Christ as the crowning act in our salvation. And the sinless life of Christ while it is an example and inspiration has yet more efficacy in making the death valuable and potent. Paul calls the death of Christ the one act of righteousness—Rom. v:18.

II. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.
Growing out of Paul's doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice and determined and shaped by it is Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. We will see later how Paul's doctrine of the new life in Christ grows out of justification by faith. Thus in reality Paul's whole theology is colored and toned by the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice. The vicarious sacrifice seems to be the foundation upon which he builds his theological structure. It is the key stone of the arch. It is the center of gravitation. We are introduced to the doc-
trine of justification by faith in the following passages:

Gal. ii: 16. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Christ, even as we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the Law for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."

Gal. ii: 21. "If righteousness come by the Law then Christ is dead in vain."

Gal. iii: 2. "Received ye the spirit by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith?"

Gal. iii: 6, 8. "Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness—so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

Gal. iii: 24. "Wherefore the Law was our school master to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."

These passages are quite enough to show all sides of this doctrine without appealing to the Roman letter or to other passages supporting and supplementing these. This doctrine Paul asserts repeatedly and strongly and defends by argument, illustration, and appeal to experience. He was most thoroughly convinced of its verity and surety through his own experience. Paul’s transition from the Law to faith was not accomplished without stirrings of soul, upheaval of old prejudices and conversion of thought. It was aided by the miraculous. In Paul there was a deep, thoroughgoing, radical, fundamental change. It was a great occurrence in Apostolic history and gave the widening, enlarging church an able supporter and defender, especially against Judaistical tendencies.

This doctrine has its appropriate place in this letter because of the conditions under which it was written. These conditions have already been referred to. The Jews following Paul kept insisting that by works of the Law mankind was justified and that one must first come under the Law in order to be in a position of salvation through Christ. To grant this would have been to deny all the efficacy of Christ’s life and death. Paul shows that no man can justify himself by his own works because they deserve so little merit, they are so meager and insufficient. It is impossible to keep the Law. Being under the Law and not keeping it brings dissatisfaction, sin and disapproval of God. But the work of Christ is that all deserting the Law and all those who never knew the Law through faith in him are justified and accounted righteous. Thus Paul is lead to rejoice in one place that his mission is to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Like a miner who after searching long for gold atlast strikes it rich and throwing his hat into the air gives vent to his joy and ecstasy, so Paul searching all those long years in the dirt and rubbish of Judaism, vainly searching for the gold of God’s love, atlast finds it in faith in Christ and proclaims and vouchers for the unsearchable riches of Christ."

In coming to an understanding of this doctrine of Paul we must determine what Paul meant by justification or righteousness. 2. What relation faith sustains to righteousness. 3. The relation of this doctrine to the Law and the work of the Law.
Paul used the word righteousness in its technical sense, rather than in its usual sense. It was imputed righteousness rather than inherent righteousness. The noun translated righteousness and the verb translated to justify are from the same root. Righteousness used of God denotes his holiness. Righteousness used of Christ denotes his perfection and sinlessness. Righteousness used of man in its usual sense denotes perfection, right being, sinlessness. One who kept both the letter and the spirit of the Law would be inherently righteous. And this is the way the Jews looked upon righteousness and justification. They became righteous by the works of the Law. This Paul says cannot be done for no one can keep the whole Law. The righteousness which Paul applies to man is not inherent righteousness but imputed righteousness. It is the righteousness of God, conferred and possessed. Canon Farrar defines justification as used by Paul as "A new relation of reconcilement between God and man." Thayer says "In the writings of Paul ἀκατάστασις has a peculiar meaning opposed to the views of the Jews and Judaizing christains—the righteousness which God ascribes." Sanday says "The righteousness of which the Apostle is speaking not only proceeds from God but is the righteousness of God himself; it is however not as inherent in the divine essence but as going forth and embracing the personalities of men." This last clause gives a new turn to the thought of implied righteousness. Sanday thinks that too much has been made out of the expression righteousness of God and that Paul does not use it in as legal and technical sense as has been taught. He refers to two men who have recently protested against the usual accepted view; Dr. A. Robertson in the Thinker for Nov. 1898 and Dr. Barmley in the Pulpit Commentary. It seems not to be contrary to Paul's thought that righteousness to a certain extent is inherent. God's righteousness is not thrown over man like a cloak hiding his foulness and sin and not changing him. God's righteousness is rather a live, vitalizing power given unto man which tends to conform mankind to the likeness of God, growing in grace through faith. Yet it is a gift, it is not won by merit as the Jews held but a free gift through faith.

This brings us to the consideration of the relation which Paul understood to exist between faith and righteousness. Why is righteousness imputed to man on the condition of faith? What relation does one bear to the other? What connection is there between the two? There are two views held. 1. There is no real connection. God is willing to accept faith in Jesus Christ and bestow righteousness. 2. Faith and righteousness are intimately connected. Faith is incipient righteousness, the beginning of righteousness. As to the first—This view corresponds to and is the logical outcome of Paul's judicial doctrine of the atonement. Through faith in Christ we accept Christ's substitutionary sacrifice. Faith is the condition on which God bestows righteousness or accepts Christ's sacrifice as valid in our behalf. Faith and righteousness then are connected not because one partakes of the properties of the other, not because faith is necessarily an act of righteousness but
because faith is the condition of righteousness, a condition which God has imposed and has agreed to accept, a condition which makes valid the work of Christ. The Law of Moses which would give inherent righteousness none could keep. The law of faith which brings imputed righteousness all could keep.

The second way of looking at the relation of faith and righteousness, namely to regard faith as a principle of righteousness, arises from a desire to divest Paul's teaching of their cold, calculating legality and read into them a deep inner, ethical meaning and significance. According to this view faith bears the relation to righteousness which a part bears to a whole. Faith in itself is righteousness. "It is not merely a condition of being pronounced righteous; it is the actual entrance upon the righteous life, because it is the beginning of glad and loyal service." -- Stevens. This view opposes the idea of imputed righteousness and makes faith to be the beginning of an inherent righteousness into which one grows by growing into the likeness of and taking on the spirit and mind of him in whom the faith is. To prosecute this view farther would lead into a study and discussion of the use and content of the word faith in the scriptures, a study and discussion which the limit and scope of this paper will not allow. Most scholars hold that to construct a purely ethical view of Paul's teaching of justification involves exegetical violence. Lyman Abbott to the contrary notwithstanding. Lipsius, a German scholar, has made perhaps the best and most convincing argument for the vital, ethical relation between faith and righteousness as expressed and taught by Paul, but the fact that this scholar now retreats from and disclaims the arguments of his which have convinced so many others, goes far to establish the impossibility of building such a view upon anything but perverted exegesis.

Before leaving this division of Paul's theology, -- justification by faith --, let us see according to his teaching what relation the Law has to it. What was the use of the Law? What was its work? Paul has been opposing the Law as we have seen. He has said that it is useless in bringing righteousness to mankind, that it brings only sin. He has been placing faith in opposition to the Law and showing the superiority of faith and the inferiority of the Law. Are we to gather from this that Paul thought God had made a mistake when he gave the Law? Is Paul nullifying the Law? What is the use of the Law according to Paul's theology? In one place Paul asks "What advantage then hath the Jew?" And he answers "Much every way. Chiefly that because unto them were committed the oracles of God." The Law then according to Paul was an advantage. Paul sought to show the real object and purpose of the Law and its true place in the scheme of salvation. He was establishing it upon a firmer basis because he was establishing it upon its true basis. Though indeed to the Jew it seemed as if he was not only nullifying it but was also calling it sin. Representing the world of humanity or at least the Jewish world as a child growing into youth and on in age Paul shows how the law acted as a school master to bring this
8.

growing one to Christ. He shows how the heir while a child is different in no way from a servant being under and subject to tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. This is just and right and better for the child for thus shall he be better prepared for the heritage into which he shall eventually enter. Under the Law then as a child the world was a servant. The Law brought a consciousness of guilt. It prepared the way for sonship which we have under faith. The Law enforced bondage. Faith in Christ brought liberty. The Law has accomplished its work. The world has passed out of its childhood. The appointed time of the Father has come and the world has been redeemed from its bondage and servitude and received into the adoption of sonship and heirship according to the promises.

III. THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

This part of Paul's theology has to do especially with the life of the Christian. We have been considering that which leads to acceptance with God; the way in which it has been made possible for mankind to come into justification or sonship. And if we take a wholly legal view of Paul's theology up to this point we will have some trouble in making this article of his teaching coincide with the rest. Taking a cold legal view of what we have seen to be Paul's theology up to this point and we have Christ suffering our punishment and righteousness being imputed to us upon our belief or faith in him. If this is the manner of obtaining justification and works have no efficacy at all why is it necessary for a believer in Christ to be better than other men, why is it necessary for a saved person to avoid or shun sin? So long as he believes he is justified. But such conclusions can only be drawn from a misunderstanding of Paul's two great articles of theology. Faith with Paul meant more than mere intellectual assent. Intellectual assent is not the faith that justifies. Thus we are led to see that faith itself is the foundation of right-being and right doing. Faith is expressed outwardly and inwardly. We must give the word faith as used by Paul a wonderful content in order to make it consistent with his teaching in regard to the new life in Christ. Faith expressed in life is Paul's faith.

The references to this new life in Christ found in Galatians are:

Gal.ii:20. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Gal.iii:27. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."


These references present to us a death and life emblematic of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Through faith which is the mainspring and energizer we are to die to the old
life and rise to walk in newness of life which is not our
life but the Christ life formed in us so that for us to live
is to present the the life of Christ. It is hard to say
whether Paul’s words here are to be taken literally or figu-
atively, whether he was using metaphors or not. It seems as
one reads such references as these that Paul taught a mystic-
al union between Christ and the believer, that not a life like
the Christ life was formed in one but that the Christ life it-
self was formed in one. This new life in Christ is the contin-
uation and perpetuation of that which was made in Christ’s
suffering.

Looking at the teaching of the Galatian letter as a
whole and trying to get a unified impression of it one is im-
pressed above all by the spirit of liberty that pervades it.
Paul’s theology is a theology of liberty. Freedom from the
rudiments of the world, freedom from sin, the body of this
death, freedom from the Law, freedom and liberty in Jesus Christ
—these are the sentiments that prevail. He desires to see
the Galatians free from the bondage with which the Judaizers
desired to encumber them. Some one giving an outline of Gal-
atians has brought it under three heads thus:

I. The Apostle of Liberty.
II. The Gospel of Liberty.
III. The Practice of Liberty.

Luther fighting for liberty of belief and practice and fre-
dom from superstition and ignorance of the Catholic church
found in the Galatian letter a spirit that inspired him. He
says: “The epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. I have be-
trothed myself to it. It is my wife.”

References:
Pauline Theology.—Stevens.
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Galatians.—Endicott.
Romans.—Sanday.
Pulpit Commentary.