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ARCHIVES

Justification by Faith in Modern Theology

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(Continued)

St. Paul's View of Faith

The LXX does not afford us much help as we try to understand what St. Paul means by faith, except in one respect, which will be clear later. There is, of course, in the Old Testament the apostle's great example of faith, the patriarch Abraham. The Psalms, moreover, are replete with expressions which are the accents of faith. As Stewart has well said, "The thing itself can be traced everywhere from Genesis to Malachi,"¹ and the same writer quite correctly points to Heb. 11 and its many examples of faith drawn from the Old Testament. But the term itself is rather rare. Paul, too, never attempts a definition. However, what the apostle does say about it, the parallel and contrasted ideas with which he brings faith into connection, quite decisively makes the modern view impossible.

First of all, faith is sharply contrasted with the works, or deeds, of the Law. The opening section of Romans, 1:18—3:20, concludes with the incisive statement: "Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." The context shows that "deeds of the Law" is a wide term including both the sacred law of the Jews and all laws which men regard as expressions of the divine will concerning them. The next verse introduces the thesis: "But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested," which v. 28 sums up: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." Ch. 4 supplies Scripture proof from the history of Abraham, whose righteousness did not come from works. The same contrast reappears in chs. 9—11: 9:30 ff.; 10:4-6; 11:6. In Galatians we have the

¹ James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ* (New York: Harper & Bros., n. d.), p. 174.

same antithesis, 2:16; 3:10 f.; 3:21 f.; also in Phil. 3:9. Paul's formulation "by faith, not by works" rigidly excludes all boasting. The central passage in which the righteousness of faith is described (Rom. 3:21-26) is followed by a rhetorical question and its answer: "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what Law [better: On what principle]? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." To boast in the Law was a fundamental Jewish attitude, but all boasting is excluded by faith, and Abraham, too, had no grounds for boasting before God. (Rom. 4:2)

Since faith excludes works and boasting, it is compatible only with grace. The phrase of Rom. 3:22, "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ," has a parallel in 3:24, "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." So grace, like faith, is placed by Paul in direct contrast to the Law and works (Rom. 6:19; 11:5 f.; Gal. 2:21; 5:4). Compare also Rom. 4:14-16 for the correlation of faith and grace, and then 5:20 for the contrast of Law and grace. A similar contrast underlies Rom. 11:32; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:8; Titus 3:5; 2 Tim. 1:9. Finally, the correlation of faith and grace is demonstrated also by the fact that either of the two can be used as a designation of the Christian Gospel. For faith in that sense see Paul's expression, the "obedience of faith" (ὕπακοή πίστεως), although this phrase can also be understood differently, and Gal. 3:23, "before faith came"; for grace we think of Gal. 2:21; 5:4; 2 Cor. 6:1.²

How does the modern view of faith fit this fundamental thought of St. Paul? We may take, for argument's sake, the definition of Stewart: "Faith is the utter self-abandonment to the God revealed in Jesus Christ."³ We may also consider the role he assigns to faith in justification: "This is what God sees when He justifies the ungodly. . . . His position may not have altered much, but his direction has been changed completely; and it is by direction, not position, that God judges."⁴

² Much of this is taken from the convenient presentation of R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (London: SCM Press, 1952), pp. 279—283.

³ Stewart, p. 182.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 256 f.

This view of faith simply ignores Paul's "not by works" and "boasting is excluded," and makes faith the greatest possible work. Bultmann states it directly, saying that the obedience of faith "is the genuine obedience which God's Law had indeed demanded" and "faith, as decision, is even pre-eminently the deed of man."⁵ Faith so described is not merely a good work; it is that good work which really embraces all good works. As condition for justification Stewart and those like him demand nothing less than a return to the First Commandment, that is, the heart and summary of all the commandments. The Pauline "by faith, not by works" becomes "by faith, that is, by the sum of all good works!"

Now, it is true, Bultmann, in the work of his just quoted, strongly denies that this criticism is just, and his argument will be reproduced in his own words:

As true obedience, "faith" is freed from the suspicion of being an accomplishment, a "work." As an accomplishment it would not be obedience, since in an accomplishment the will does not surrender but asserts itself; in it, a merely formal renunciation takes place in that the will lets the content of its accomplishment be dictated by an authority lying outside of itself, but precisely in so doing it has a right to be proud of its accomplishment. "Faith" — the radical renunciation of accomplishment, the obedient submission to the God-determined way of salvation, the taking over of the cross of Christ — is the free deed of obedience in which the new self constitutes itself in place of the old. As this sort of decision, it is a deed in the true sense. In a true deed the doer himself is inseparable from it, while in a "work" he stands side by side with what he does.⁶

How much of this do we find in St. Paul? Where does he labor so painfully to distinguish between "deed" and "work"? The result of such painful labor is to make the deed of faith as difficult a task as can be imagined. By this deed the "new self constitutes itself in place of the old"; through it "doer" and "deed" are "inseparable." In other words, the sinner is told not merely that he must be good but also that he must be completely good; not merely to do good "works" but also to bring about the "deed" of faith; in short, that

⁵ Bultmann, pp. 315 and 284.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 315 f.

he must be born again and that he must meet that condition before he can be justified. Now, the demand for regeneration as condition for entrance into the kingdom God is made by no other than Jesus Himself, and the Christian Church has never denied the necessity. On the other hand, it is idle to deny that such a thing is a work, by calling it a deed. It is a prodigious task, quite beyond the capacity of men to perform. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" It is, of course, not a task beyond God's omnipotence. When one, however, attaches regeneration as a condition to justification, and calls it faith, one has left out of consideration the Pauline negative: "not by works," "apart from the Law," "Where is boasting? It is excluded."

Another feature of the Pauline statements on faith is the very firm connection between faith and its object. This connection appears in the many passages where an object is mentioned, whether this is introduced by a $\delta\tau\iota$ clause, or marked by the prepositions $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, $\epsilon\nu$, $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$, $\epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}$, or by an objective genitive.⁷ More important is a parallel statement like that of Rom. 10:9, where "confess" and "believe" correspond. The linking of "believing" with "hearing," "preaching," "sending" in Rom. 10:14-17 points strongly in the same direction, as do the passages where "believing" and "knowing" are closely united, Rom. 6:8 f.; 2 Cor. 4:13 f. Bultmann points to the use of "know" as synonymous with "believe" also in the following passages: 1 Thess. 5:2; Rom. 6:3; 8:28; 13:11; 14:14; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:2 f.; 15:58; 2 Cor. 5:1; 8:9. The parallel he adduces — Rom. 1:5, "for obedience to the faith among all nations," and 2 Cor. 4:6, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus" — is another very instructive one.⁸ Another pertinent observation of Bultmann's is that Paul

⁷ Recently there appeared a revival of the view that $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ with a following genitive should in certain places be translated as "faithfulness" and the genitive taken as a subjective one. This view is defended by Gabriel Hebert ("'Faithfulness' and 'Faith,'" *The Reformed Theological Review* [June 1955], pp. 33—40). He asserts this meaning for the following passages: Rom. 3:22, 25 ("through Divine Faithfulness, in His Blood"), 26; Gal. 3:22; Phil. 3:9; Eph. 3:12; Col. 2:12; Gal. 2:16 (*bis*), 20. He is inclined to see it, too, in Phil. 1:27; 2 Thess. 2:13. Whether this view is right or not will not be investigated here. The argument of this paper as such is not affected by this view.

⁸ Bultmann, p. 318.

never describes faith as a state of soul nor its beginning as a psychological process.⁹

Faith, then, is not an attitude of the soul, complete in itself, an independent virtue, not piety, or trust in God in general. It is something directed away from man to God, to Christ. The precise object of faith we may set aside for the moment. Another most important observation concerning the relation of faith to its object must be made first.

Faith ceases to be faith if the object of faith is untrue. So much depends upon the truth of the object that, no matter what has gone on in the believer, it is of no avail and quite in vain if the object of faith is a lie. Nothing could show more plainly how important the object of faith is and how relatively unimportant in Paul's view is what goes on in the believer's mind and soul. 1 Cor. 15 is the main reference at this point. In anguished reply to the false idea current in Corinth that there was no such thing as the resurrection from the dead, Paul declares that such a belief would involve the denial of Christ's resurrection, but a dead Christ implies nothing less than the complete collapse of the Christian Gospel and of faith. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:14, 17). Faith without the proper object is an empty shell without kernel. Faith may be regeneration. It may be all that Stewart and Bultmann and others claim it to be, but, so far as Paul is concerned, all that is nothing if the object of such faith is not factual. All that these men claim for faith took place in the believing Christians at Corinth. Yet, says St. Paul, such faith is vain and empty if Christ did not rise from the dead. Of course, it may be said, the case Paul supposes is an unreal one. True faith could be aroused only by the true Gospel, and, therefore, the contingency Paul posits could never happen. Still, Paul supposes it, and the argument is not affected by the fact that the supposition is unreal. Faith is wholly what it is by virtue of its object. Once we have seen the supreme importance of the object of faith for the apostle, a conclusion like that of Stewart is seen to be quite mistaken: "Once

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

the sinner had his back to Christ: now his face is Christward. This is faith, and it holds the potency of a glorious future. This is what God sees; and seeing it, God declares a man righteous. God 'justifies' him."¹⁰ The true conclusion would be: "Once the sinner had his back to Christ: now his face is Christward. This is faith. . . . Christ is what God sees, as man does; and seeing Him, God declares man righteous. But if Christ had not risen, God would see only a man, would see nothing, and would not declare man righteous. God would condemn him." In 2 Thess. 2:11 we have a terrible counterpart to true faith and the punishment of God upon those who allow themselves to be deluded by Antichrist: "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." The same word for faith, for believing (*πιστεύειν*), is used, with no hint of a different meaning. Faith in the truth and faith in a lie differ in their object. The object of faith is all-important.

We have already seen how the view that justification is regeneration, or, to put it more accurately, that faith as regeneration is the great human condition for justification, does despite to the Pauline negative, "not by works." It will be readily seen now how the same teaching does despite to the second great fact which we have just outlined, viz., that faith is determined by its object. It is a most interesting fact, and one which we have met before in this study, how nicely the various elements of the truth of justification are adjusted to one another: man's sin, God's grace, works, faith, Christ and His redemption. At the point of the argument at which we have arrived we find that the more the theologian makes of faith as a necessary condition of justification and the more eloquently he describes faith in this capacity, the less he has to say about the part Christ plays in this great drama, and the more vague he is in saying that little. The modern attack on our understanding of St. Paul makes the renewal that follows faith essential to justification. In doing so it finds it hard to find a satisfactory place for the apostle's teaching concerning Jesus Christ. The object of faith, which is so important for St. Paul, becomes relatively unimportant for the modern theologian. We see this, for instance, in the fact that our modern representatives, while agreeing in their views of faith, differ quite considerably in their views of Christ's work,

¹⁰ Stewart, p. 257.

Taylor and Baillie and Dodd denying the vicarious sacrifice, Stewart and Brunner accepting it, Lewis warning against formulas of all kinds in connection with what Christ did.¹¹ This state of affairs must exist of necessity. The more one makes of the role of faith in justification as part of the situation which determines God's verdict, the less one must make of the role of Christ. Even the theologian cannot have his cake and eat it, too. And if the object of faith is relatively unimportant, then it is likely that there should exist a certain laxity about its formulation, and likely, further, that this laxity should be defended, as Lewis defends it. But if one thing is certain, it is that St. Paul was not lax nor vague nor careless nor unconcerned about who Jesus was and what He did and why He is all-important to faith. No theology which is unsatisfactory at this point can hope to speak for Paul. But where this teaching of the apostle is clearly grasped and presented, there it is likely, no, even certain, that the proper understanding of faith and justification will follow.

St. Paul and the Redemption in Christ Jesus

The most important passage for determining what the object of faith was to St. Paul is Rom. 3:21-26. The circle is drawn closer and closer in that text. "Righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ" (v. 22); "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 24); "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (ἰλαστήριον) through faith in His blood" (v. 25). The importance of the last idea, especially of the word ἰλαστήριον, has been well pointed out by Denney: "The decisive word in this passage is propitiation — ἰλαστήριον — and without entering at this point further into detail of interpretation, it will be admitted that it is only because Jesus Christ has the character or power of being propitiation that there is revealed in Him a divine righteousness the revelation of which is gospel for sinners. Hence to comprehend ἰλαστήριον or propitiation as he comprehended it, is to have the only key to his gospel."¹² To begin

¹¹ The works of the writers referred to are listed in fn. 18 of the first installment of this study (January 1958).

¹² James Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), p. 152.

with this idea of ἱλαστήριον is to begin with the center of Paul's view of Christ's work for men, and to it all else that he has to say about that work can most easily be related.

In his work *The Bible and the Greeks*, C. H. Dodd examines also the LXX use of the Greek ἰλάσκεσθαι and the words derived from it or connected with its stem — ἱλαστήριον of course is one — and he does so in relation to the Hebrew words which they translate, chiefly those derived from the root ַפּפּ. The results of his investigation are: (1) The LXX translators did not look on ἰλάσκεσθαι as meaning "to propitiate" when used of the religion of Israel, although they did use it in that sense when referring to heathen religions; (2) Hellenistic Judaism did not regard the cultus as a means of pacifying a displeased God, but as a means of delivering man from sin, and it looks in the last resort to God Himself to perform that deliverance; (3) for Paul, for whom LXX usage is constantly determinative, the meaning of ἱλαστήριον in Rom. 3:25 is that of expiation, not of propitiation. We may let these conclusions stand without granting the thought underlying Dodd's presentation that there is no such thing as the propitiation of God's anger at all in the New Testament or the Old.¹³

Granted that we should associate the idea of expiation rather than that of propitiation with ἱλαστήριον, what does the apostle mean by calling Jesus ἱλαστήριον? The choice lies among the general translations "means of expiation" (taking ἱλαστήριον as neuter), or "expiator" (taking it as masculine), or the more specific "mercy seat." There is no doubt at all in the mind of the writer that the last-mentioned translation is the right one. The only form embodying the ἰλάσκομαι stem that Paul uses is this word, and this word he uses only here. Plainly his use of the term gives us no clue. But the word ἱλαστήριον is the standing LXX translation for the ַפּפּ. As a technical term for this part of the ark of the covenant ἱλαστήριον is used by Philo. There is not one chance in a hundred that Paul used a technical term like this in any other sense but the common one. And all the more so, since

¹³ Dodd is supported by Friedrich Buechsel, "ἰλάσκομαι," *TWNT*, III, 315—317. This view has been challenged by Roger R. Nicole, *Westminster Theological Journal*, XVII, 2 (May, 1955), pp. 117—157. [EDITORIAL NOTE: See also Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 125—185.]

he makes not the slightest attempt to elucidate its meaning. The fact, too, that the writer to the Hebrews uses ἱλαστήριον (9:5) in precisely this technical sense is supporting evidence for the translation "mercy seat" here in Rom. 3:25. The figure of speech underlying this use of ἱλαστήριον for Jesus is a bold one, it is true, but not bolder than the comparison between Baptism and circumcision in Col. 2:11 f., or the thought of Christ's nailing the writ against us to His cross a few verses later, or even the likening of Jews and Gentiles to natural and wild olive branches in Rom. 11. The apostle evidently means that Jesus Christ is for all the world what the mercy seat was for Israel.

The mercy seat, described fully, together with its guarding cherubim, in Ex. 25:17-22, was set on top of the ark in which the testimony of God was put. According to Ex. 25:22, God promised to meet Moses and commune with him from above the mercy seat. But these features concerning the mercy seat are not important for Paul in Rom. 3. His addition of ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ shows what was important for him, the connection of the mercy seat with blood and the ceremony of the great Day of Atonement. On this day the high priest, according to Lev. 16, was to sprinkle, first, the blood of a bullock and then the blood of a goat upon and before the mercy seat, to make atonement for his own sins and for the sins of the people. The atonement was through, and by virtue of, the blood, that blood in which resides life.¹⁴ Even if ἱλαστήριον is taken more generally as "means of atonement," it is still that which atones for the sins of men, by which redemption is brought about, and through which God's righteousness is revealed. That St. Paul in Rom. 3:25 with ἱλαστήριον ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ looks on Christ's death on the cross as a vicarious sacrifice is too clear to be denied. His death instead of our death, His lifeblood shed that we might have life—this is the meaning of the crucifixion.

In this central passage it is made quite clear that the love of God as well as the wrath of God was at work in the atonement. God set Christ forth (προέθετο) in the actual event of the cru-

¹⁴ Johannes Hermann, "ἱλάσκομαι, ἱλασμός," TWNT, p. 311: "Klar und deutlich ist aber jedenfalls die Angabe, dass Jahwe das Blut als Sühnmittel gegeben und bestimmt hat und dass es dazu geeignet und wirksam ist, kraft der im Blut enthaltenen ψῆ, d. h. der Seele, des Lebens."

cifixion and, of course, in a way, in the message of the cross (Gal. 3:1). Certainly the whole sacrifice was set in motion by God. Truly God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son. But in doing so God revealed His justice, too, for the apostle gives as the reason for the atonement the following: "to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." Never before the death on Calvary had God shown forth His full wrath against sin. What men had seen previously was *πάρεσις*, leniency towards sin, a passing by of sins. What sin really means in God's sight can, however, no longer be a matter of doubt after God set forth His Son as *ἱλαστήριον* on the cross.¹⁵ Just how we are to picture to ourselves the existence in the one God of the two seemingly contrary attitudes of love that gave His Son and anger against sin that condemned Him may be hard for us. But it is certainly wrong for theologians, in condemning an older theology which made much of the idea of reconciliation and propitiation of the Father by the Son, to run to the opposite extreme of denying that there is any such thing about the redemption of the world at all. Now, it is true that St. Paul never speaks of God's being reconciled or propitiated, but in Rom. 1:17 f. he does speak of a divine righteousness which "somehow confronts and neutralizes a divine wrath" (the phrase is Denney's), and in the passage before us at the moment he does mention the double aspect of judgment and grace in God's righteousness. It is not a bad solution of the problem when Denney declares that we "can only conceive of it as God taking part with us against Himself."¹⁶ And although the conceit is perhaps overbold, and although we may query the word "necessities," there is at bottom the genuine Paul in these words of the same writer: "The propitiation is the satisfaction of divine necessities, and it has value not only for us, but for God. In that sense, though Christ is God's gift to us, the propitiation is objective; it is the voice of God, no less than that of the sinner, which says, 'Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in Thee I find.' And this is our hope towards God.

¹⁵ For a brief and neat presentation of this thought, cf. Paul Althaus, *Der Brief an die Römer*, in *Das Neue Testament Deutsch*, 6th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1949), p. 29.

¹⁶ Denney, p. 143.

It is not that the love of God has inspired us to repent, but that Christ in the love of God has borne our sins."¹⁷

The whole teaching of St. Paul in his other letters concerning the work of Christ is in harmony with his statements in Rom. 3:25. The cross and resurrection of Christ stand in the center of the apostle's teaching (1 Cor. 1:18 ff.; 15:3 ff.). His message is the preaching of the cross, and he will teach nothing but this (1 Cor. 2:2; Gal. 3:1; 6:14). With the preaching of the cross the resurrection is inseparably joined (1 Cor. 15:13 ff.). Christ's death took place for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3; 11:23 ff.). Through sin the relation between God and man had become one of enmity (Rom. 1:18 ff.; 5:10). Peace (Rom. 5:1) can be established only through atonement, expiation, for God's justice and anger against sin cannot be ignored. The atonement cannot be provided by men; God must provide it. This atonement God did provide through His Son, whom He sent into the world of sinful men, delivering Him up into death (Rom. 8:32; Gal. 1:4). The cross of Christ is an act of God's love (2 Cor. 5:18 ff.; Rom. 5:8). God condemned sin by sending His Son into the world of sin (Rom. 8:3). He treated the innocent as a guilty one (2 Cor. 5:21) and punished His Son with the curse of the Law, its curse against sin (Gal. 3:13). Even as God gave His Son, so the Son gave Himself as an offering for the world's sins (Eph. 5:2), a willing service of obedience to His Father (Phil. 2:5 ff.). As a result of this deed of Christ for the world, there is for men no condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Since God treated His Son as sin for the world's sake, He can treat the sinner as righteous (2 Cor. 5:21), and the resurrection of Jesus His Son is proof of this new situation (Rom. 8:34; 4:25). If we take all the apostle's utterances into consideration, we have complete confirmation of the meaning seen in Rom. 3:25 in a previous paragraph. Christ's death is vicarious atonement. Christ is obedient in the place of all, and suffers condemnation in the place of all; thereby the demands of God's righteousness are met. This is the objective fact, the objective happening, to which faith clings. Faith is, however, no longer faith truly if the object of faith is distorted or changed.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 162.

The moderns corrupt and distort this object of faith in various ways. The most common is so to preach the atonement that it becomes not something by which a new situation between God and man is created but something by which God's true nature is revealed. We recall Dodd: "With the Gospels before us, we must either agree with the enemies of Jesus that He suffered justly for an attitude to sin which undermined the foundations of morality; or we must concede that this way of dealing with sinful men is inherently divine, and an index of God's unchanging attitude to sinners."¹⁸ That is to say, Christ's life and death are a demonstration of the real mind of God. Taylor, we saw, says much the same. Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, pp. 157—202, makes much of the cost to God of forgiveness, but as the following representative sentences show, there is no vicarious sacrifice.

If we use the terminology of the ancient sacrificial system, we should remember that in the last analysis the only offering we can make to God is the offering of ourselves in faith and love. What Jesus offered to God was Himself. But to offer oneself thus to God means at the same time to love men without limit, and so to carry the load of their sins. That is what Jesus did. . . . But if, on the deepest interpretation, that was not only an offering made by a man to God, but also a sacrifice made by God Himself, then it is part of the sacrifice that God is continually making, because He is infinite Love confronted with human sin. And it is an *expiatory* [italics in text] sacrifice, because sin is a dreadfully real thing which love cannot tolerate or lightly pass over, and it is only out of the suffering of such inexorable love that true forgiveness, as distinct from an indulgent amnesty, could ever come. That is the objective process of atonement that goes on in the very life of God.¹⁹

But with this objective process of atonement, Baillie tells us, there goes on a subjective process which cannot be separated from the objective thing. This subjective thing he defines as "a reconciling of us to God through a persuasion in our hearts that there is no obstacle, a realizing of His eternal love."²⁰ So here again atone-

¹⁸ C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 58 f.

¹⁹ D. M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, p. 198.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

ment does not mean the creation of a new situation by God, but the removal of religious error, the cross being merely the revelation of the truth concerning God over against the sinner, i. e., that He is a God who forgives. With such a view of the atonement or object of faith, it is quite understandable that faith must be defined, above all, as a change in the heart of man, and justification must become a declaring righteous on the basis of such change. Behind this whole view of the atonement lies the prime error, which Brunner very capably unmasks in his work *The Mediator*, the error covered by the phrase of Anselm which Brunner uses repeatedly: *nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum*. As Brunner rightly states: "The more serious our view of guilt, the more clearly we perceive the necessity for an objective — and not merely subjective — Atonement."²¹ Although Brunner teaches a truly objective atonement, and teaches it forcibly, he, too, corrupts the object of faith, as Paul understood it, by making faith, faith as regeneration, a necessary condition for justification. Brunner says:

Thus the central point, where the subjective and the objective aspects of Atonement meet, is this: the Word of divine justification. As a Word it means nothing unless it is heard, and, indeed, heard in such a way that it is believed. . . . Justification means this miracle: that Christ takes our place and we take His. Here the objective vicarious offering has become a process of exchange. . . . Apart from this transaction, forgiveness is not credible; for it contradicts the holiness of God. . . .

It is only in this subjective experience, in faith, that the Atonement becomes real. But this subjective experience is completely objective in character. For this is what it means: that my "self" is crossed out, displaced, and replaced by Christ, the Divine Word.²²

Justification becomes on this view a nice balance between the work of God in Christ and the faith of the unbeliever. Faith is not pure reception. But faith in justification *is*, according to St. Paul, pure reception. This important fact will be discussed at some length in the final installment of our present study.

(To be concluded)

²¹ Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*, p. 451.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 524; cf. p. 528.