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THE SECOND ARTICLE.

THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

(Continued.)

Rev. 5, 9: *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.*

Thou, Christ, wast slain as the only offering well pleasing to God. Thus we were *redeemed*, bought back from the slavery of sin and iniquity, from the servitude of Satan, and became Christ's own, Eph. 5, 2; Hebr. 9, 14. Thou hast given *Thy blood* as the redemption-money, as a ransom, to the Judge, and it had the power to quench God's wrath. For Thy blood is God's blood, Acts 20, 28. — Indeed, we are bought with a price,

1 Cor. 6, 19. Now by right of purchase we Christians are Christ's own, and He is our Lord.

Is. 53, 11: *He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.*

This passage speaks of the redemptive work of Christ. "*He shall see of the travail of His soul.*" Christ suffered not only in His body, but also in His soul. His *soul*, too, was *in travail*. The work is accomplished. Now He shall see the fruits of this travail. As v. 10 expresses it: "He shall see His seed" — the *ecclesia* — "and shall be satisfied." (Acts 20, 28.) He has bought the Church of God with His own blood. The Gospel is preached. Sinners, who have caused the travail of His soul, are won thereby. They acclaim Him their King. This the exalted Christ views with satisfaction. He took away the sin of the world, John 1, 29; He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1 John 2, 2. He bought even them that deny Him, 2 Pet. 2, 1. He would have all men to be saved, but, alas! of many He must weepingly complain: "Ye would not." But still there are some who receive Him, believe in Him. These constitute the Church. As these believers are added to the Church, either one by one, or in great numbers, Christ sees of the travail of His soul, and views it with great satisfaction. His work bears results. "*He shall see and be satisfied with the travail of His soul.*" "*By His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many.*" Christ, the righteous Servant, shall *justify* many, shall make many righteous. He is not only righteous in Himself, but also the one who makes others — sinners — righteous, righteous before God. The means with which He accomplishes this is expressed in the phrase: "*by His knowledge,*" or as it may also be translated: "*by the knowledge of Himself.*" Both renditions say the same thing essentially. "By the knowledge of Himself" says that the many shall know Him = believe in Him. The former, "by His knowledge," says: Christ possesses this knowledge. This knowledge He imparts to others. The contents of this knowledge are

essentially Christ's sufferings and death, their purpose and effect, in short, the Gospel of our salvation. Through it Christ imparts knowledge, knowledge of Himself as the Savior, implants faith in the heart. Thus the righteousness merited by Him is applied to the many—they are justified, made righteous before God. Thus the many are robed in Christ's righteousness. This Christ sees, and is satisfied with the travail of His soul.

An outflow of this righteousness of faith is the righteousness of life. Before God the believers are holy, but their life is still imperfect. Iniquities—sins—are still to be found on account of the weakness of the flesh. We need consolation therefor. It is this: "*For (and) He shall bear their iniquities.*" By one offering Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified. But this offering, this propitiation, has continuous power. The exalted Christ is our Advocate with the Father; the righteousness which He, the sin-bearer, merited for us, 1 John 2, 1, 2, He makes His plea. Thus our sins of weakness cannot subvert our state of righteousness before God.

NOTE.—For passages sub § 158 see THEOL. QUART., current volume, p. 128.

STATE OF EXALTATION.

Phil. 2, 9—11: *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Treating of Christ's state of humiliation (THEOL. QUART., p. 120), we have seen that divine majesty was communicated to His human nature in virtue of the personal union, but that, though He possessed it, He did not make use of it constantly and fully.

The present passage speaks of Christ's exaltation. Wherein does it consist? The text says: "*Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him.*" In the previous paragraph we were told what Christ had done; in this we are informed what God did.

God exalted Christ. *Wherefore?* Because this mind was in Christ, v. 5, because He humiliated Himself so deeply. This was so well pleasing to God that He exalted Christ. According to Scripture, God exalted Christ, and Christ exalted Himself, Hebr. 1, 3. The one dictum does not exclude the other. Here it is predicated of God. God did this—exalted Christ. That does not argue for subordination, does not say that Christ is inferior to God the Father. Whom did God exalt? The *man* Christ. Christ is true God. According to His divine nature He could not be exalted. He is “over all God.” But according to His human nature He could be and was exalted. In the state of humiliation the Savior took upon Himself the form of a servant, v. 7. In the state of exaltation this form of a servant was discarded. In the former state He did not fully and constantly use the divine majesty imparted to His human nature; now He does. Observe the adverb “highly.” He is *highly exalted*, *δπερὺψωσεν*, that says, He is exalted above *all things*. He is Lord of all, and mightily rules and reigns over all things also according to His human nature—rules, as the context manifests, mightily in the kingdom of glory, in the kingdom of grace, in the kingdom of power. He has “*a name above all names*”—none is higher, greater than His. Christ is God like unto the Father. The man Christ is the most high God. “Exaltation” signifies a change of Christ’s state, not a change of His essence. The incarnate *λόγος* was always the same, only His mode of existence was different; hence we speak of His two states, the state of humiliation and the state of exaltation.

God gave “*Him a name which is above every name,*” *sc.*, the name Jesus. And what was the purpose of His exaltation? “*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,*” etc. That clearly says, as Paul expresses it: “He is far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,” Eph. 1, 20—22. *At the name of Jesus every knee should bow*—so highly God exalted Him. Divine honor is to

be accorded to this name. At the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, that is, acknowledge Him as Lord. Jesus, the man Jesus, is thus to be honored. Three classes of creatures are mentioned that should thus accord divine honor to His name: "*things in heaven*"—angels and saints; "*things in earth*"—all mankind; "*things under the earth*"—Satan and his hellish cohorts. For a time He had become lower than the angels, Hebr. 2, 7. Voluntarily He had taken upon Himself the form of a servant—to serve, to save man. Voluntarily He had subjected Himself to the power of the Evil One. But after that cry on the cross, "It is finished!" all pain, poverty, subjection had come to an end. Now, in the state of exaltation, all creatures, whatsoever name they may have, wherever they may be, how great soever their power may be, are subjected to Him, bow and must bow their knees to Him, acknowledge Him as Lord of all. The angels in heaven do it willingly, likewise the believers on earth, and the unbelievers must do so, though unwillingly. Secretly, in their heart of hearts, they are forced to confess that He is Lord. Even the very devils in hell must acknowledge Christ's lordship, even they, albeit with gnashing of teeth, must concede that they cannot hinder His will.

Highly God exalted Christ. How highly? He has a name above every name; every knee must bow before Him; every tongue must confess Him Lord. Verily, this man Jesus is "God over all!" "Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honor, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him," Hebr. 2, 7. 8.

And this was done, says our text, "*to the glory of God the Father.*" God's decree from eternity was to save man through His Son. This decree has been carried out. "All glory be to God on high." All enemies are subdued. God's power, holiness, righteousness, wisdom, love, mercy, His truth and faithfulness, have become manifest in Christ's redemptive work.

Descent into Hell.

1 Pet. 3, 18. 19: *Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*

1. Who descended into hell? "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit . . . went.*" Christ went. This person, who is at once true man and true God, went; the whole person, with body and soul, went. It is the same person that afterwards, as the subsequent context shows, ascended into heaven. So it is wrong to say, as some do, that this descent took place while Christ's body lay in the grave, and that He performed this work according to His soul only. Let us observe the text closely: "*For Christ*" — that is, the God-man, the whole person, "*being put to death in the flesh*" — Christ died according to His human nature, "*but*" — He did not remain in death — "*but quickened by the Spirit,*" *i. e.*, made alive by virtue of His divine nature, as He said, speaking of His death: "Break this temple," meaning His body, "*and in three days I will raise it up.*" So Christ, who suffered and died for us, was quickened, vivified, made alive; body and soul were reunited. This same Christ, now in a glorified state, went.

2. According to what nature did He go? According to His human nature, for as God He is omnipresent and cannot be said to go anywhere. On account of the personal union of the natures in Christ, this going to a certain place, which is a property of the one nature only, is predicated of the whole person. So Christ, the God-man, went to this place designated "*prison.*"

3. Now what are we to understand by this term? Light is shed upon the nature of this place by the text itself. It reads: Christ "*went and preached to the spirits in prison.*" What spirits? To the spirits "*which sometime were disobedient.*" Disobedient to what? To the Word of God. The Gospel had been preached to them, but they turned a deaf ear to it, just as so many do to-day. "*In the days of Noah*" people

were "*disobedient*," they *believed not*. These people perished in the Flood. And these disobedient people, dying in unbelief, are now in *prison*. Whither do unbelieving people go? To hell. This prison is hell. "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Prison" is the abode of the damned—hell. According to all the teachings of Scriptures there are but two places hereafter, heaven and hell. To designate this latter place—hell—the New Testament employs three words: Hell, Hades, Prison. All three denote the same place—hell. This place is called "hell" on account of the *fiery* tortures there to be endured. The same place is called "Hades"—"the realm of the dead"—in reference to the *eternal* death. Once in Hades, death is everlasting. Hades is hell, aye, "Hades" is a direct synonym for "hell" in the New Testament, all the vain mouthings of the modern theologians to the contrary notwithstanding. It does not take great acumen of mind to see this. Luke 16, 23. 24 speaks of the rich man in hell. Our King James's Version correctly and plainly renders the text thus: "And in *hell* he (the rich man) lift up his eyes." The Revised Version says: "And in *Hades* he lift up his eyes." Hades, the modern theologians would have us believe, is a sort of quiet anteroom to heaven, a waiting-room, and, withal, a pretty comfortable place. All this is mere twaddle. Judge for yourselves! Take the text of the Revised Version: "And in *Hades* he lift up his eyes, *being in torments*." So Hades is a place of torments, of excruciating pain. Hades is hell. We read on: "And seest Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Abraham and Lazarus were in heaven; the rich man *afar off* in that other place—hell. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me!" The rich man, being in Hades, was in a place where no mercy is shown. Hades is hell. Proceed with the text: "And send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue." Hades is a place of such a nature that, being granted one drop of water to alleviate the terrible torments there endured for the hundredth part of a second, this is looked upon as great mercy. Hades is hell. The

rich man continues: "For I am tormented in this flame." Hades is a place where the inmates are tormented in the *flame* — in fire. Hades is hell. — The translation of the King James's Version is true; so is Luther's: "Als er in der *Hoelle* und in der Qual war."

The third word the New Testament employs to describe "hell" is the one in our text — *prison*. Prison this place of torment is called to indicate its *purpose*. Hell is a prison from which there is no escape. Matt. 5, 26 our Lord Himself speaks of this prison, saying of such as enter it: "Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." When will that be? Never. — Thus "hell," "Hades," "prison," all denote one and the same place, "that place which is prepared for the devil and his angels," that place of which, in reference to the unbelievers, it is said: "Their worm shall not die, neither their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh." To this place Christ went.

4. When did He go? That question is easily answered by consulting the text. V. 18 speaks of Christ's suffering, death, and quickening; v. 19, of *His descent into hell*; v. 21, of His resurrection; v. 22, of His ascent into heaven and His sitting at the right hand of God; chap. 4, 5, of His return to judgment. Thus the time is clearly marked. It was after His quickening and before His resurrection. In that interval, perhaps in a moment of time, the now glorified Christ appeared in the nether world.

5. What was His purpose in going there? The text answers: "*to preach*." Despite this plain, unmistakable assertion, there are such as teach that Christ descended to hell to suffer the torments of hell for us. This is absolutely false. It does not only do violence to this text, but it is contrary to the words of our Savior uttered on the cross: "It is finished." — Nor was His purpose in going there to release the Old Testament saints from prison (*limbus patrum*), as the papists aver. He went there *to preach*.

6. What did He preach? There are such as say that He preached the Gospel in order to give those who had no opportunity to hear the Gospel in this life another chance to hear of, and accept, the merits of Christ and thus be saved. This is absolutely false again, for the text plainly says Christ preached to such as were "sometime disobedient," who would not believe. This thought, that the Gospel was preached in hell, is furthermore expanded, and the possibility of conversion after death for all is taught by most modern theologians. This dogma, which is but the doctrine of purgatory of the Catholics, furbished and polished up somewhat, has no foundation in Scripture, as even some noted leaders who promulgate it honestly concede; but the thought is fascinating to them, and thus they teach "commandments," or rather figments, "of men as doctrines of God." It is a soul-destroying doctrine, which fosters carnal security. It is a religion of the flesh. People are led to think: "Well and good, it matters not how I live or die here on earth, after death I'll have another chance, and I'll be sure to embrace it." Oh, how much these seducers of souls will have to answer for on that Great Day, for it is written: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but thereafter"—what? a millennium? a state of second probation? a possibility of conversion? No, a thousand times no!—"but thereafter the judgment." There is no conversion after death. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." And what does the text of the rich man and Lazarus teach? "The rich man died and was buried." And the very next thing? "And in hell he lift up his eyes," etc., Luke 16, 19. No conversion after death! "He that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God," John 3, 18 ff.—All Scripture is against this false tenet, and they that hold it get no consolation from our text. For nowhere does it say here that Christ preached the Gospel. It simply says: Christ *preached*. The word in the original is a word of neutral meaning, which, translated, means *to preach, to proclaim, to publish*

as a herald. This is conceded by all conversant with the matter. How, then, do we know what Christ did preach? The context must give us a key to that. And the context is plain, forceful, cogent, so that any one open to conviction, any one who investigates it with an unbiased mind, without preconceived opinions, cannot be left in doubt as to its meaning. Christ preached the Law, the damning Law; He told them in effect: "You are justly damned." Let us see that! "*Christ preached to the spirits in prison which sometime were disobedient when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing.*" What does the text say? 1. These people were *disobedient*. The Gospel had been preached to them during their lifetime. They despised it. "He that believeth not shall be damned." This Christ preached to them. "You have despised me, spurned my Gospel message; your lot is just." 2. God was *long-suffering once*. But now His long-suffering had come to an end; *once*—during their lifetime; now—no more. 3. God *waited*. He had waited 120 years! God had given them a long time to repent; He had done all to save them. 4. God had sent them the preacher of righteousness, Noah, to warn them of the impending doom if they should not repent. 5. The building of the ark itself was an object sermon. They despised Noah, and ridiculed the building of the ark. Thus we see the *guilt, the damning guilt*, of these people is stressed. And the correlative of guilt is punishment. 6. If the modern theologians were in the right, who maintain that the Gospel was here preached by Christ, we should at least expect to hear of a mitigating circumstance, an excuse for the disobedience of the spirits in prison. But no, nothing of the kind. *Their guilt is emphasized, and guilt demands punishment*. Whosoever despises the grace of God must be punished. The doctrine taught here is: *Unbelief is a cause of damnation*. So, then, it was not the Gospel that Christ preached, but the Law, the judgment.

The exact words of this sermon are not given, but the import of it was: "You have despised me, whom you now see to

be the victor over death, and hell, and sin; you are justly damned." Thus "Christ, having been quickened in His grave, exhibited Himself to hell as its conqueror, and triumphed over all His infernal enemies." He has, as we read in Col. 2, 15, "spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

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(To be continued.)
