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THE SECOND ARTICLE.

(Continued.)

THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

Gal. 3, 13: *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

The Law is good and holy. It promises eternal life on condition that it be kept perfectly: "This do, and thou shalt live." This condition, however, no man can fulfill. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Hence the Law pronounces its curse upon us: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which

are written in the book of the Law to do them," v. 10. We are "*under the curse of the Law.*" In ourselves there is no way of escaping this terrible curse. What we could not do Christ did for us: *He has redeemed us from this curse.* How? By "*being made a curse for us.*" Observe well the words: "*for us;*" they express the doctrine of substitution emphatically. The curse to be pronounced upon us was pronounced upon Him. He became a curse "*for us,*" *in our stead.* He took the sinner's place, "*was made under the Law,*" and satisfied its every demand. Where is the curse of the Law? Taken from us and placed upon Him. A blessed truth, full of consolation, is contained in these words: "*Christ—for us.*" He hung *on a tree*; that is indubitable proof that He was accursed—for us, because it is written: "*Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*" "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him," Is. 53.¹)

1) Luther's famous classic on Gal. 3, 13, is worthy of prayerful meditation. Among other things he says that Christ, in our stead, is no longer "an innocent and sinless person, the Son of God born of the virgin, but a sinner, who has and bears the sin of Paul, the blasphemer and persecutor, and of Peter, the denier of his Master, and of David, the adulterer and murderer; in a word, He bears and has all the sins of all men in His body. Not that He has committed these sins, but that, being committed by us, He assumed them and transferred them to His own body, in order to render satisfaction for them with His own blood. The general law of Moses, therefore, lays hold of Him, although innocent in His own person, because it finds Him among sinners and robbers, just as a magistrate holds and punishes as guilty one whom he finds among robbers, even though he had never committed anything wrong or worthy of death. Christ, however, was not only found among sinners, but even of His own accord and by the will of the Father wished to be the associate of sinners by assuming the flesh and blood of those who, as sinners and robbers, were sunk into all sins. When the Law, therefore, found Him among robbers, it condemned and killed Him as a robber.—But some one may say, 'It is blasphemous to call the Son of God a sinner and a curse.' I answer, 'If you want to deny this, deny also that He suffered, was crucified, and died.' It is no less absurd to say that the Son of God was crucified than that He was a sinner. But if it is not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between thieves, it is not absurd to say the other. Certainly there is something in the words of Paul, '*Christ became a curse for us.*' '*He made Him to be sin for us, in order that we might be made the right-*

1 Pet. 1, 18. 19: *Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

Peter here addresses especially the Gentile Christians. He reminds them of their former state in which they led "*a vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers.*" Their "*conversation,*" *i. e.*, their manner of life, was "*vain,*" empty, purposeless; it was a walk after the flesh, Eph. 2, 1. 2. 17. To the Ephesians Paul writes that they should no longer walk, as the other Gentiles do, in the *vanity* of their mind, Eph. 4, 17. This vain mode of life had been "*received by tradition from their fathers.*" The parents of such men, having themselves no true knowledge of God, could impart none to the children. Sinners can rear sinners only; what is born of the flesh is flesh. This life in the lusts of the flesh held dominion over them; they were enslaved to sin. From this dominion they could not free themselves. Christ *redeemed* them therefrom. *Redeem* means to buy back, to repurchase. A price had to be paid to release them from this terrible bondage. What was it? "*Silver and gold,*" which men deem so precious, and with which the value of all earthly things is measured, are but "*corruptible things.*" The ransom was infinitely more precious. On Calvary the "*blood of Christ*" was shed for our sins. Christ's blood was the only ransom that could buy us back from the power, the dominion, the slavery of sin. "*Precious*" this blood is because of the Person of Him who shed it, Christ—God! Not the quantity, but the quality of this

ousness of God in Him. So John the Baptist calls Him the Lamb of God, bearing the sins of the world, John 1, 29. He Himself is innocent, because He is the Lamb of God without spot or blemish; but since He bears the sins of the world, His innocence is weighed down by the sins and guilt of the whole world. Whatever sins I and you have done have become the sins of Christ, as though He Himself had committed them. Is. 53, 6: "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." These words we ought not to extenuate, but give them their proper force."

blood imparts to it its infinite worth. The *"lamb without blemish and without spot,"* the innocent Christ, takes the place of the guilty, becomes our substitute, sheds His blood as a sacrifice, and thus atones for sin. Christians know that they were bought with a price, but they are apt to forget it, hence they must be reminded again and again: Know that ye are redeemed! He who believes that he is free from the dominion of sin, rules over sin. Know that ye are redeemed! this is the most powerful incentive for Christians to follow after sanctification. They are under obligation to do so: Christ redeemed them; they have the power to do so: Christ redeemed them.

Hebr. 2, 14. 15: *Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

"Flesh and blood," man as he is by nature, is in the power of *"him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,"* hence he is also *in fear of death*, of temporal death, because back of it eternal death awaits him. To break this power and to deliver us from this fear of death, Christ took part of flesh and blood, became man like unto us, sin excepted. Being man, He could die and through His death sin was expiated, the devil's power over us was destroyed, the sting of death—sin—lost its poison, its killing power. Now we Christians need not fear temporal death, because it is but the entrance to eternal life.

2 Tim. 1, 10: *Christ hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light.*

Death abolished! An astounding declaration, incomprehensible for human reason, a blessed truth which faith only can grasp! Death *abolished*, *καταργήσαντος*, death annulled, death deprived of its power to terrify, on the one hand; on the other, *"life and immortality,"* i. e., immortal life, brought to light through the Gospel. This Christ, our Savior, has accomplished by His work of redemption. Temporal death, the king

of terrors, is changed into a welcome messenger from above. For the Christians, who believe the Gospel, temporal death is no longer a transition from spiritual death to eternal death, but from spiritual life to eternal life and immortality.

Gen. 3, 15: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.*

Adam and Eve transgressed the commandment of God, Gen. 2, 17. Thus sin entered into the world and death by sin. "By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," Rom. 5, 18. The victory seemingly was Satan's; all mankind was to be forever in his kingdom — lost — damned. God interposes. He announces to fallen man the Protevangel, Gen. 3, 15, promising a Redeemer. In the presence of our first parents He said to the serpent, or rather to the devil concealed in the serpent: "*I will put enmity between thee,*" the devil, "*and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.*" A fierce warfare is to rage between the devil and the woman's seed, ending in a glorious victory for the latter and thus for fallen man. That was indeed Gospel, "good tidings," for Adam and Eve and — for us.

Who is "*the seed of the woman*" that is to bring about this victory? None else but Christ. St. Paul authoritatively settles this question Gal. 3, 16. — Our English text reads: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," and then proceeds: "*It shall bruise thy head,*" etc. The antecedent of "it" is obvious; it is "seed." "Seed" being of the neuter gender in English, the translators chose the neuter pronoun "it;" since, however, "her seed" is Christ, it is also patent who is meant by "it," viz., "her seed" = Christ. But though no mistake can be made by the thoughtful reader as to its meaning, the "it" is an inaccurate translation. The Hebrew word is הוּא, which is a personal pronoun of the masculine gender, and should have been rendered: "He." It may be of interest to note that whilst even the Revised Ver-

sion still retains the "it," the American Standard Version correctly translates: "*He shall bruise thy head.*"

A pardonable digression. — In the interest of Mariolatry papacy has changed this pronoun "He," meaning Christ, into "she," meaning Mary. Says the THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY, vol. IV, p. 418: "Contrary to all rules of grammar and logic, and what is even worse, contrary to the analogy of faith and to all the teachings of Holy Writ, the Catholic Bible has rendered *ספ* with *she*, and the teachers of the church of Antichrist have referred this prophecy to Mary, the mother of Christ, and claim that Mary is the one that bruises the serpent's head. Of course, this forgery and blasphemous perversion of God's own Word is calculated to support their Mariolatry and to render this idolatry the more acceptable to the senses of an ignorant and pomp-loving multitude. Many popish churches and cathedrals have been decorated with pictures and paintings representing Mary as the one that treads upon, and crushes, the head of the serpent."

Returning to the matter in hand, we note first that the passage speaks of the conqueror of Satan as being an individual person — "*He*" = Christ. We further observe the expression "*her seed*," the seed of the woman; Christ, the Redeemer, is to be true man. But the peculiarity of the expression consists in this, that it speaks of "*the seed of the woman.*" Here is an intimation, as in Is. 7, 14, of the Messiah's miraculous conception and birth. Christ is the one made of a woman, born of the Virgin Mary, having no human father, but conceived by the Holy Ghost, Luke 1, 35. — We learn still more of the person of this mighty Victor. God says of Him: *He shall bruise, crush, thy* — the serpent's — *head.* Since the serpent's, *i. e.*, the devil's, head is to be *crushed*, the victory will be a complete victory; the devil will be overcome, Luke 11, 22. But to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Hebr. 2, 15, is a *divine* work. It is Scriptural to argue from the work to the person who performs the work. He that can crush the devil's head cannot be mere man; he must, at the

same time, be true God. — How clear the prophecy of Christ's humanity and divinity! How clear, too, the prophecy of Christ's signal victory over Satan! Through the Messiah's work Satan's victory shall be undone; the human race shall again be freed from his hellish power. True, Satan will wage a furious warfare. Satan "*shall bruise His heel.*" In this mortal combat Christ receives a wound; the victory is dearly bought. Says Paul: "Ye are bought with a price." But whilst the crushing of the *head* of the serpent is fatal, the crushing of the *heel* of the Victor is not. When reading the clause: "*Thou shalt bruise His heel,*" we are especially reminded of Christ's Great Passion. He was indeed, as Isaiah says, a man of sorrows. Judas, the disciple, betrays Him; Peter, the disciple, denies Him; His own people cry: "Crucify, crucify Him!" Pilate and Caiaphas condemn the Innocent One. He is nailed to the cross. After all, the devil seems to be the victor. But no — all this is merely the bruising of Christ's heel. On the cross He cries out: "It is finished!" By His death He carried out the deadly combat to a glorious victory. (Cf. Hebr. 2, 14. 15.) — "The great dragon was cast down, the *old serpent*, he that is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world," Rev. 12, 9. — *Summary.* Gen. 3, 15 is the first Gospel message. It speaks of Christ's Person and His office. It says Christ is true man and true God. It prophesies His sufferings and His complete victory over Satan.

1 John 3, 8: *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

St. John says: "He that committeth sin" willingly, consciously, "is of the devil," is minded like the devil, the devil's sentiment is in him; "for the devil sinneth from the beginning," it was he that made the beginning of sin, he was the first sinner; now, whosoever wantonly sins follows in his footsteps, is governed by him. But Christians, purchased and won from the power of the devil, are to contemplate the purpose of Christ's coming into the world, and then they will not do the devil's bidding. "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested,*

that He might destroy the works of the devil." Christ destroyed the works of the devil, *i. e.*, sin, and now Christians should sin, wantonly sin, sin intentionally and with aforethought? Nevermore! Why, then they would build up what Christ has destroyed! They would build the devil's kingdom, and building this kingdom, they would but prove that they are in the devil's employ, that they had fallen from grace, that they had received God's grace in vain! It is a contradiction in itself to say, I am a Christian, and still to "commit sin" willingly. "He that committeth sin" is not of Christ, but "of the devil."—Christians, by God's grace, have the power to resist Satan's temptations, 1 Pet. 5, 9.

2 Cor. 5, 21: *He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*

God is merciful; He is also just. He could not show mercy at the expense of His justice. Sin separated between us and our God. Sin is guilt, our guilt. Guilt demands penalty. This obstacle, penalty of guilt, God removed. How? Christ "*knew no sin;*" He was holy, righteous, sinless. Him God made to be sin "*for us,*" ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, in our stead. The Holy One took the place of the sinners, the unholy. "*For us*"—that plainly, forcibly, unmistakably expresses the doctrine of substitution. This the apostle here teaches. The translation of the American Standard Version: "on our behalf," is weak and colorless.—"*For us*" Christ was "*made to be sin.*" That does not mean that Christ in His nature was now a sinner, or that He committed sin in thought, word, or deed; just as little does it mean this as the correlative clause: "*that we may be made the righteousness of God in Him,*" says that our sinful nature were annihilated and replaced by a divine righteous nature. As strongly as possible the assertion is made: "*He knew no sin.*" The innocent Christ "*was made to be sin,*" not by a physical act, but by a judicial act of God. He was made to be sin by imputation. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," Is. 53, 6. In the eyes of God

Christ is the sinner, the malefactor. God punished our sin in Christ. Thus His justice is satisfied. What was God's purpose in imputing our sin to Christ? "*That we may be made the righteousness of God in Him.*" Our sin has been liquidated by our substitute, Christ, satisfaction is rendered, the penalty is paid, righteousness is merited. Since He has taken our place, His righteousness is our righteousness. Our sin was imputed to Him; His righteousness is imputed to us. That, oftentimes, is very hard for us to believe. We see our sins, know the Law and our shortcomings. But the point is not, What do we think and judge concerning ourselves? but, What does God think of us? God looks upon us in Christ, who is our righteousness.

Is. 53, 4. 5. *Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.*

The Ethiopian eunuch, homeward bound from Jerusalem, where he had worshiped, sitting in his chariot, is reading the Prophet Isaiah. By direction of an angel, Philip goes that way, meets the eunuch, and is asked the question, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?" Now the passage of the Scripture which he was reading was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter," etc. (Is. 53, 7 ff.) "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus," Acts 8, 26 ff. Incontrovertibly Is. 53 speaks of Jesus. Isaiah lived about 760 before Christ, but his description of the suffering Messiah is as vivid as though he had stood below the cross at Calvary.

The verses before us treat of the cause of Christ's suffering. — "*Surely!*" The statement to follow is absolutely true, beyond the shadow of a doubt. "*Surely He hath borne our griefs,*" or sicknesses. Observe the stress here, and in the following clauses, upon the pronouns: "*He*" — "*our.*" He was

not suffering for Himself, but for us. This the contrast between "*He*" — "*our*;" "*we*" — "*Him*" loudly proclaims. The doctrine of substitution and atonement cannot be more strongly expressed than it is done here, a fact which cannot be emphasized too strongly in our days. Sad to say these precious doctrines — substitution, atonement — are hushed up more and more in denominations outside the Lutheran Church, and in their place a shallow morality is taught. — "*He*" — "*our*" = the Messiah, takes our place, suffers for us. Vicarious suffering — this is the burden of the prophecy. Christ is the Righteous, the Holy One, and He suffers! So He does not suffer for His own, but for sins of others. They are *our* griefs, *our* sorrows; *we* have sinned. *Our* griefs, *our* sorrows rest as a heavy burden upon *Him*. Taken from us, they are imputed to Him. Says Peter: Christ "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," 1 Pet. 2, 24. What the prophet says is truth, divine truth. Mark the emphatic assertion: "*Surely* He hath borne our griefs." And willingly, voluntarily, He became our substitute; voluntarily He took the vast burden of our sin upon Himself. The prophet says: "*He* hath borne our griefs." It was His doing, His act; His suffering and death was not a fate He could not have escaped.

To return to the main thought: Our sins were the cause of His suffering; but what did people in general assume to be the cause? "*Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*" He is a criminal, His crimes have found Him out; God has given this malefactor over to inexorable justice — so men thought then, so now. Blind reason cannot understand the cause of Christ's suffering. What, says the prophet, the Holy Ghost, was the cause? "*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.*" Transgression, iniquity, is sin; is rebellion against the majestic God, and deserves punishment, damnation. The vials of God's wrath should have been poured upon our guilty heads, but He took our — the criminals' — place, and so they were emptied upon Him. And why did He make this vicarious sacrifice?

To redeem us. "*The chastisement of our peace*"—so that we might have peace—"was upon Him." Sin separated between us and our God. This enmity Christ abolished. "Christ is our peace," Eph. 2, 14. How? By bearing the *chastisement*, the punishment, such as God inflicts for sin. Thus our transgressions and iniquities have been atoned for; the penalty is paid. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again," Rom. 8, 34.

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(To be continued.)
