

Paul's Doctrine of Redemption
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The main burden of this book is that to Paul redemption is a “cosmical” process. “Cosmical” is meant as synonymous with “eschatological”, and “dynamic”. The first two terms are intended to relate it to the world-ruling spirits, whose sway comes to an end in the world-crisis that separates between this age and the age to come, which crisis is inaugurated by the appearance and work of Christ. “Dynamic” is intended to distinguish the author’s interpretation of the death of Christ from the sacrificial one, both in its objective form of an atoning vicarious death, and in its subjective form as a source of ethical influence. Undoubtedly there is to Paul’s doctrine of salvation a side which ascribes to the superhuman spirits a certain role in the process. It may also be admitted that this element in the Apostle’s teaching has not in the current interpretation received sufficient attention. But to make of it the groundwork of the whole Pauline soteriology, as the author attempts to do, is, in our view, unwarranted, and must lead to a thoroughly false perspective of the Apostle’s thought. Already in the emphasis which is placed upon the personal, spiritual existence of Sin and Death (as distinct from mere rhetorical personification), the author goes too far. Whatever approach is made to a personal conception of these powers can be accounted for by the close connection of sin and death as cosmical factors with Satan and the evil spirits generally. In the author’s hands this hypostasizing of sin and death leads to a relative exoneration of man from the responsibility for sin: “Since the fall men have been handicapped by the fact that Sin secured an advantage over them for which they are not entirely responsible” (p. 31). The un-Pauline character of this inference lies on the surface, and, since it seems a legitimate inference from the general position taken, we may well hesitate to ascribe the latter to Paul. In setting over against each other the propitiatory, atoning and the dynamic views of Christ’s death, the author operates with a false alternative. It is in Paul not a question of one or the other, but a question of both. Thus that the resurrection is made prominent by Paul as a saving factor can never be made to prove that the atoning death had not the emphasis to Paul’s mind traditionally ascribed to it. As a matter of fact the resurrection has its dynamic not only side by side with the effect of the death, but even in virtue of the latter. The whole exegetical discussion of the relevant passages is very partial to the dynamic and barely neutral to the forensic statements. The mere fact that Paul in every statement does not explicitly add the forensic rationale of the death of Christ, but contents himself with a general affirmation of its efficiency is unduly taken advantage of in favor of the other view. And where the author is compelled to face the forensic line of thought, he endeavors to belittle its significance by charging it to the Jewish associations of the Apostle’s earlier way of thinking or to the controversial exigencies of his argument in individual instances. Dogmatic prepossessions are also brought to bear as e.g. on p. 100: “This thought (viz., that the nature of God is such . . . that he cannot forgive sins if punishment is not inflicted on someone), . . . does violence to our notions of God, and ascribes to him a moral standard far below what Jesus required of men.” In Gal. 3:13, the attempt is made to impugn Paul’s logic in representing Christ as having become a curse for us, by observing that the curse in his case is a particular curse, that of malefactors hanged, and therefore not adapted to bring to an end the operations of the entire law. As we understand Paul, he does not consider the hanging upon the tree as the ratio essendi of Christ’s curse, but only as the ratio cognoscendi. The equally pointed statement 2 Cor. 5:21 receives no separate consideration at all. Very implausible further is the paraphrase given of the classical passage Rom. 3:25ff. The sacrificial, vicarious element is eliminated here by giving to *δικαιοσύνη* θεοῦ the benevolent sense after the

manner of Ritschl, and it is actually proposed to understand *ἱλαστήριον* as something serving the propitiation of man instead of God. The benevolent interpretation of *δικαιοσύνη* breaks down on the fact that its opposite in verse 25 is *ἀνοχῆ*, which postulates for the former a strictly punitive meaning. We cannot help feeling in this case and with reference to the argument throughout that with less prepossession for the one side and with a little more exegetical good will towards the other side, the author would have succeeded in giving a far better balanced reproduction of the Pauline doctrine.