

Die Bedeutung des lebendigen Christus für die Rechtfertigung nach Paulus

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The aim of this treatise is somewhat more specializing than the title indicates. The author undertakes to show that, according to St. Paul's teaching, not any single phase or detached transaction of the Saviour's life, but the living Christ Himself, is the basis of the divine act of justification. His polemic is directed against what he calls the "dinglich" or "sächlich" conception of the basis of this act. E.g., not the death of Christ in itself, as an impersonal event, historically viewed, but His death as an episode in the continuity of Christ's life and as having produced its lasting effect on this life, is that to which the justifying power belongs. If by some recent writers the distinction between the dying and the living Christ has been emphasized with the implied claim that a faith centered on the Lord of glory would be more wholesome than the traditional faith which confines its interest to the cross, such an intent is entirely foreign to the author's mind. Schäder does full justice to Paul's doctrine of the vicarious, expiatory death of Christ. The apostle, in his view, ascribes no saving power to the exalted Lord, except such as directly results from His atoning work in the flesh. But in the act of justification this work exerts its power through the medium of the now living Christ. The grounds on which this interpretation of the apostle's teaching is based by the author are, on the one hand, those more general Pauline statements which connect justification with the personal, living Saviour; on the other hand, such specific passages as 1 Corinthians 15:17; Romans 4:25; 8:33, 34; 10:4, which ascribe to the event of the resurrection a fundamental significance for justification. In regard to the former of these two arguments, it may be questioned whether the apostle's formula that the believer is saved or justified *ἐν Χριστῷ* is in every instance used by him with conscious reference to the risen Lord. In some cases a reflection upon this would seem to be foreign to the context, while in others the formula may with equal right be interpreted of the Person and activity of Christ in His state of humiliation. In point of fact, Schäder himself in several places defines the Christ on whom justification depends as being both the historical and suprahistorical Christ, so that not the Person of the exalted Lord only, but the Person of Christ without restriction, as the unifying principle of all His states and acts, becomes the ground on which we are justified. No one will deny that the thesis thus formulated is a substantially correct statement of Pauline doctrine. There can be no doubt that Paul represents the glorified Lord as the object of saving, justifying faith. Nor can there be any doubt that the apostle ascribes to the Christ in glory a share through his intercessory activity in bringing about the sinner's justification. Undoubtedly also he derives the transcendent value of the saving acts of Christ from their personal inherence in the Son of God. Still further, what faith objectively appropriates is, according to Paul, the fullness of all that the living Christ represents in His state of exaltation. These things were not unknown before; it would be easy to gather testimony on all the points mentioned from dogmatic literature, both ancient and modern. Still, from the historical review which opens Schäder's treatise, it appears that the biblico-theological treatment of Paulinism has hitherto failed to appreciate them in their full significance. The explanation is easy to give. Dogmatics is accustomed to place itself in the center of the Pauline sphere of thought and to reason from there to the circumference, and, however great its exegetical inadequacies may have been, it has usually, owing to the congeniality of its own viewpoint to that of the apostle, succeeded in more faithfully reproducing his teaching than was possible to the followers of the purely historical and inductive methods who lacked this qualification. Though, therefore, there may be nothing new in Schäder's conclusions, yet it was a far from superfluous labor to establish the point in question

on a solid exegetical basis, and for having done this the author deserves our thanks. We are not sure, however, that the distinction between the personal and the “*dinglich*” or “*sächlich*” conception of Christ’s work in reference to justification admits of being carried through with that degree of absoluteness here applied to it. After all, the personal identification of Christ with the sinner and of the sinner with Christ involves the transfer of states and relations of merit and demerit, and these latter it is impossible to define in any other than in “*dinglich*” or “*sächlich*” terms. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to deny the validity of the idea of imputation in Paul’s system, and it would be doing the author injustice to interpret his statements, the two conceptions which he places in such sharp antithesis will be found in reality to be inseparable and mutually supplementary. Though it must be conceded that the explicit formulas of the imputation of the believer’s sin to Christ and of Christ’s righteousness to the believer are not found in Paul, yet we do find what is practically equivalent to these, and that the apostle should have purposely avoided the “*dinglich*” or “*sächlich*” manner of speaking we do not believe.

The second argument for Schäder’s position is derived from the observation that Paul gives great prominence to the resurrection as the ground of justification, in fact coordinates it with or even places it before the crucifixion in this respect. What is said under this head we consider the best and most illuminating discussion of the interesting problem involved we have seen anywhere. Perhaps the most widely spread view is that of Weiss, who interprets the words in Romans 4:25, *ἠγέρθη δια την δικαιοσιν ημων* in a final sense “for the purpose that we might be justified,” i.e., in order that by the resurrection we might be assured that Christ’s death was not a death for His own sin, and thus receiving confidence in His mediatorial character might be led to the exercise of justifying faith. Schäder convincingly shows that the parallel clause *ος παρεδοθη δια τα παραπτωματα ημων* necessitates a different rendering. As Christ was delivered *in result of our sins*, so He was raised *in result of our justification* (*δια* = “on account of” in both clauses). The justification spoken of is the collective justification of all, which took place in the Person of Christ and was the logical *prius* of His resurrection. Because sinners were identified with Him in His death, the completion of this death was equivalent to His and their exemption from the penalty of sin in God’s judgment, and it was owing to this exemption that the process of death could be suspended and the representative of sinful humanity return to life. And the same thought is shown to recur in the other passages. Here again the author has reached a conclusion long since anticipated by dogmatics, though it remains his merit to have once for all demonstrated its correctness by a purely exegetical method. Nor is the value of this service impaired by the fact that Schäder believes Paul to have included in this collective justification the whole of the human race, whereas we would interpret the statements in question as applying to the body of the elect only, a difference of view dependent, of course, on the general position taken as to the extent of the atonement in Paul’s system and on the Pauline doctrine of election.

The treatise contains much instructive material only remotely connected with its main theme. No one interested in the Pauline soteriology will fail to profit by the wealth of acute observations on the whole range of this subject scattered through its pages. If for no other reason than for the cogency with which he argues the central significance of the idea of substitution in the apostle’s doctrine of atonement, the author has placed all biblical students under lasting obligation. Of the points incidentally, but for that reason none the less thoroughly, discussed, we may note two or three as the most important. The sense of *εχθρος* in Romans 5:10; 8:7; 11:28; Colossians 1:21 is made out to

be the active one, "hating or opposing God." This involves that Paul nowhere explicitly speaks of a hostile attitude on the part of God toward the sinner, and leads to the conclusion that the Pauline idea of *καταλλαγή* cannot be defined as a laying aside of such hostility. Waiving the question of the correctness of the exegesis of the above passages, we would observe, that by force of antithesis the conception of *εἰρήνη* as the result of justification implies the assumption of a previous relation of mutual enmity between God and the sinner. Against the exclusively eschatological sense ascribed by Ritschl to the term *οργή* the author irrefutably shows from the context that in Romans 1:18; 3:5; 4:15; 9:22; Ephesians 2:3 a present manifestation of wrath is referred to. Against Weiss and others it is shown that the ideas of sacrifice and expiation occupy a prominent place in St. Paul's interpretation of the death of Christ, since, wherever Paul mentions the *αἷμα* in such connections, he associates with it the notion not merely of a violent death, but of a specifically sacrificial death. Against Ritschl again the reference of the *ἡμας* in Galatians 3:13 to Gentiles as well as to Jews as the object of the *ἐξηγοράσεν* is ably demonstrated. Equally conclusive is the treatment of the difficult passage Romans 8:1-3, of which the forensic meaning is admirably vindicated against modern subjectivizing interpretations. The point on which we find ourselves least able to agree with Schäder is the definition of the divine *δικαιοσύνη* as primarily soteriological and only in a secondary sense distributive. Here the author follows Cremer's well-known approach to Ritschl's view. His contention is largely based on the necessity of explaining Paul in accordance with the Old Testament teaching on the divine righteousness. But even in the Old Testament the idea of righteousness is not exclusively soteriological. For the distributive conception occurs in several passages, and we have no right to reduce the two meanings to a sort of artificial unity by saying that the one aspect is subservient to the other. Even granting that the soteriological sense is the more prominent one in the Old Testament, it does not follow from this that within the Pauline system the emphasis must be distributed in precisely the same manner. The exegesis by which Schäder attempts to prove Paul in harmony with the soteriological conception is strained and could hardly fail to be so in a passage which speaks as plainly as Romans 2:6-11.