

La Theologie de Saint Paul  
F. Prat  
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This volume is the second part of a comprehensive work on Paulinism, and deals with the Apostle's teaching from a systematic point of view. The first part we have not been able to examine but to judge from the references to it scattered through the present volume it contains the historical and isagogical prolegomena. Professor Prat is evidently well-prepared for discussing his large subject intelligently and throwing upon it the light of even the most recent investigation. Very little in the modern literature on Paulinism of either German and Dutch or English provenience seems to have escaped his attention. He is also well-posted exegetically, and makes free use of the resources of Protestant scholarship. Besides this his ecclesiastical position as a Catholic leads him to approach Paul's teaching from a peculiar but at the present juncture especially interesting point of view, now that the question, to what extent the respective systems of Catholicism and Protestantism have their basis and pre-formation in the New Testament teaching, seems about to acquire a new interest and actuality. Of late Professor Pypier of the University of Leiden has broadly reviewed this problem after a purely historic fashion. It is, of course, exegetically considered, a problem that has been exhaustively threshed out in the old controversies between the Romanist and Protestant theologians, but none the less, in view of the more organic and historically-conditioned understanding of the teaching of the New Testament writers supplied by the study of Biblical Theology, it would seem capable of a new formulation and a more convincing solution. As for Paul in particular, Protestantism has always claimed to be a revival of the great principles of soteriology upheld by the Apostle as over against the Romanist system which had fundamentally abandoned the Pauline position. But not many years ago Wernle in his treatise "Der Christ und die Sünde bei Paulus" gave a construction of the Pauline doctrine of justification, which, while not in any sense vindicating the Romanist doctrine as a whole, yet if well-founded, would tend to show that there was a solid basis in Paul for some of the characteristic Catholic tenets in regard to sin and salvation. We are surprised to see that in the long and fairly complete bibliography of the literature on Paulinism at the close of the present volume Wernle's treatise is not mentioned, nor is any reference made to it in the course of the discussion. On the whole the polemic element in Professor Prat's book, although quite pervasive, appears singularly detached from what might be called its "modern" quality, meaning by the latter the way in which it keeps in touch with and utilizes the modern biblico-theological investigation of Paulinism. The new type of polemic which aims higher than at an argumentation from isolated proof-texts is not overmuch in evidence here. As an example of the author's procedure we may mention how in his treatment of the divine purpose of salvation, he takes his point of departure not in the numerous Pauline deliverances concerned with the heart of the matter, but with such a peripheral, incidental text as 1 Tim. 2:1-3, obviously in order to lay the desired universalistic basis for the plan of redemption, by subsequent adjustment to which the absolute predestinarian strain of teaching found in numerous other contexts can be made innocuous. This is, altogether apart from the question of the correct exegesis of 1 Tim. 2:1-3, the direct opposite of biblico-theological procedure, insofar as the latter seeks faithfully to reproduce the structure and proportion of thought as it presented itself to the mind of the biblical writer himself. All through one is made to feel that the author's allegiance to the Catholic system has shaped too much his mode of approach and method of treatment. Too often the orthodox Romanist doctrine is used as the heuristic principle with which in mind the author asks what may in its support be gathered from Paul. The result is that in all cardinal points

the Apostle's teaching is found identical with the Catholic theology in its anti-Protestant Tridentine crystallization. So in regard to the original state of man where the "*dons surnaturels*" are introduced as being the counterweight to the natural perishableness and carnal inclination of man. It is true Paul's teaching has in it an element that might seem to fall in with this doctrine, inasmuch as the original psychical state of man is contrasted in 1 Cor. 15:45, 46 with a higher pneumatic state, which latter is thoroughly supernatural. But the difference is that to Paul the supernatural state stands at the end of the development, and therefore can, discounting the intervening reign of sin, be brought into connection with the first man only as a prospect or goal placed before him, not as a remedy to offset any inherent deficiencies of created human nature. In regard to the doctrine of concupiscence as the source of sin the author's plea is somewhat better supported, inasmuch as the Pauline conception of the *Sarx* in one of its branches actually covers the sphere of bodily sin, but here also it has to be acknowledged that the main stem of the conception has nothing to do with this, being determined not by the anthropological contrast between spirit and body, but by the religious contrast between the presence and absence of the Spirit of God, and the author, while quite correctly tracing both phases of the idea, does not attempt to deduce the one from the other. Most strikingly the detachment from the large trend of modern investigation in favor of the *parti pris* of Catholic teaching appears in the chapter on "La Foi Principe de Justification". Here the reasoning becomes almost entirely dogmatic in character, and all the weight of evidence which goes to prove the declarative sense of *δικαιω* is simply passed by in silence, the author's main reliance being the old contention that for God to declare righteous him who as a matter of fact is not righteous is impossible. Equally much is made of the objection that the Protestant idea of faith voids the act of all religious and moral significance by making it a purely receptive organ, whilst the Catholic doctrine views in it the active principle of a subjective righteousness. But in neither of these two cases is any serious effort made to demonstrate the un-Pauline character of the Protestant and the Pauline character of the Romanist position. It must be added in fairness that in connection with the sacraments the author does not appeal in support of the Romanist doctrine of the Eucharist to the recent tendency as represented by Eichhorn, Heitmüller and others, to ascribe to Paul a pronounced sacramentarian teaching. To be sure here also he relies too easily upon the old plea that in the words "this is my body" the "is" must be taken literally, an insistence upon the letter which ill agrees with the admission made on the next page that in the words accompanying the cup not merely one but two metonymies may be recognized. Less influenced by dogmatic prepossessions is the discussion of the objective soteriology, especially as regards the atoning work of Christ. Still here also the principal point insisted upon is the un-Pauline character of the idea of substitution of Christ for the sinner in the punishment of sin. The writer thinks that not "substitution" but "solidarity" truly expresses the mind of the Apostle on the subject, and furnishes the key to a correct understanding of the atonement. This seems to us making a false alternative of two ideas which admirably go together and mutually require each other. The Protestant advocates of the vicarious penal theory of the atonement certainly cannot be accused of failure to appreciate the importance of the solidarity between Christ and man as the indispensable prerequisite of imputation or substitution, just as little as the advocates of the federal theory of Adam's relation to the race overlooked this important fact. But, while insisting upon solidarity as a prerequisite to imputation, they did not on that account fall into the error of making it supersede the latter as the governing principle of the atonement, so as to rule out every idea of imputation from the sinner to Christ or vice versa. Of this error it seems to us Professor Prat does not steer clear. He appears to think that the mere solidarity of Christ with mankind as such suffices to make men participants in the effects of his death. But solidarity is either a legal conception and as such includes

imputation, or it is a physical conception implying realism, and only in the latter sense can it serve as a substitute for imputation. All the advantage, therefore, that the author thinks to secure by emphasizing the principle of solidarity is dependent on his avowal of the theory of realism, an avowal which at least explicitly he refrains from making. It is quite true that the formulas of the imputation of our sin to Christ and of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us are lacking in Paul, but the reason for this is not to be sought in the Apostle's ignorance of or aversion to the conception itself. The reason simply is that Paul prefers to put the matter on the broader basis of the identification of the Person of Christ with us. The Pauline formula is: Christ was made unto us or for us sin or righteousness. But this broader personal formula of itself includes the other more narrow and impersonal one which theologians have adopted in entire harmony with the intent of Paul. When Professor Prat further thinks that the theory of solidarity solves the problem of the effect of Christ's death in the subjective sphere, of what Paul calls our "dying with Christ", he seems to us to miss the real point in which the difficulty of this undoubtedly Pauline conception lies. The problem is not how we can share with Christ in something that he first experiences. This is fully accounted for by the principle of solidarity and real union of life. But the problem is how this death with Christ, which is in his case a death *for* sin and in our case a death *to* sin, can yet be one and the same process, with causal connection between its two stages. To this problem the insistence upon the principle of solidarity between Christ and us offers nothing in the way of solution, unless one were prepared to say that Christ's death was in every respect a death *to* sin and not *for* sin, which the author is not.

While compelled to make the above strictures on the author's method, we gladly acknowledge that in many respects his book is one of unusual merit, from which every student of Paulinism will be able to learn. Especially the notes subjoined to the various chapters are of great value excelling as they do in compactness and lucidity of statement. Such notes as A, II on the usage of the term "Gospel" in Paul and F, I on "L'évolution sémantique du mot στοιχειον" are models of their kind. In general the style of the book furnishes a most happy example of the adaptation of the Gallic type of mind to the lucid treatment of abstruse theological problems.