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THE BIBLICAL SPIRIT OF THE RECONCILIATION
THE BIBLICAL SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION

Short Title

RECONCILIATION: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty
of Southern University, St. Louis,
Department of Biblical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

By

George C. Swanson

1957

Approved by: Marvin H. Engstrom
1957

Carl H. Hoffmann
1957

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AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF SECOND CORINTHIANS 5:17-21
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RECONCILIATION

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George O. Evenson
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Approved by: Martin H. Franzmann
Advisor

Paul H. Bretcher
Reader

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The general problem investigated in this thesis is the meaning and significance of the term reconciliation in the New Testament, with 2 Cor. 5:17-21 as the textual basis of the study. The topic was chosen by the essayist for several reasons. One of these was his desire to carry on a study that would deepen his knowledge of basic Biblical Theology. An analysis of the concept of reconciliation becomes to a large extent a study of the doctrine of the atonement, certainly one of the fundamental doctrines of Scripture.

Also, there was a realization on his part that there are held conflicting interpretations of the New Testament passages in which the term reconciliation appears, conflicting interpretations which created for him perplexing problems. Among these problems were the following:

1. The question whether 2 Cor. 5:18-19 presents an accomplished objective reconciliation or a continuing subjective reconciliation.
2. The question, "Who is reconciled, God or man?"
3. The contention by Gustaf Aulen that 2 Cor. 5:18f. supports his 'classic' idea of the atonement.
4. The question of the exact equivalent in English to the Greek word *καταλλαγή*, and the closely

related question of the translation of the text of 2 Cor. 5:17-21. It seemed to him that our translations do not quite express the exact sense of the passage. (This statement does not mean that an endeavor was made in the course of the study to twist the text to support preconceived views.

Within the limits of human frailty the endeavor has been to carry on an objective study.)

Now that this study project has been completed, it would be presumptuous to claim that it has produced the final answers to these problems, or that it has yielded an unassailable interpretation of the Biblical concept of reconciliation. But it is noted with thankfulness that the study has enabled the essayist to reach satisfying conclusions for himself as to the correct answers to the problems investigated.

This study proceeded on the basic presuppositions that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant word of God, that Scripture interprets Scripture, and that while there may be paradoxes in Scripture, there are no contradictions in it.

Basically this study is exegetical in nature. Since it is not historical in scope, historical references are incidental. It is noted that it is especially in the post-reformation centuries that controversy has raged in theological circles concerning the meaning and significance of reconciliation. A multitude of books and essays have been written on the doctrine of the atonement, with which the

concept of reconciliation is intimately related. Many of these have been consulted in the course of this study and are referred to as noted.

The choice of 2 Cor. 5:17-21 as the textual basis of the study was determined primarily by the fact that this passage contains the fullest presentation in Scripture of the concept of reconciliation. However, the parallel passages are examined carefully.

The bulk of the thesis deals with the exegetical study of 2 Cor. 5:17-21. Chapter two presents the setting of the text. Chapters three and four are a verse by verse analysis of the text. Chapter eight considers the special problem, "Who is reconciled?" Chapter nine analyzes the claim that the text supports the "classic" idea of the atonement. Chapter ten summarizes the conclusions reached by the study.

Unless otherwise indicated the definitions quoted are based on A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature by Walter Bauer, translated and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. The Greek text is that of Novum Testamentum Graece, edidit Eberhard Nestle, 1953. When not otherwise indicated, Biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, referred to as RSV. AV designates the King James Version of 1611; RV the English Revised Version of 1881; ARV the American Revised Version of 1901. No abbreviations are used in designating modern versions.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING OF THE TEXT

The human author of the second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul, is one of the most amazing persons who has walked the face of this earth. He was a Jew, yet he was born a Roman citizen in Tarsus of Cilicia. He was brought up as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, yet he was God's instrument to expose the glaring faults of Pharisaism. He was the chosen leader of the movement to wipe out Christianity, yet he became the greatest Christian theologian and missionary of all time. He was a man for whom personal considerations meant nothing, yet his personal integrity and motives were constantly assailed. Sometimes he was not understood; frequently he was misunderstood; sometimes his work endangered the selfish ambitions and schemes of others; often his message clashed with deeply engrained national and religious prejudices; but whatever the reason, he and his work and message were constantly being opposed. Yet none of these things moved him, for his only concern was to accomplish the ministry which he received of the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

One of the methods employed by his opponents was to speak derogatorily of his standing as an apostle. Since he was not one of the original twelve, his enemies affirmed that therefore he was a second-rate apostle with a second-

hand Gospel. In fact, so they claimed, they had their message from the apostles, so that their message was more reliable than his. Using this approach, they threatened for a while to bring to nought his work in Galatia. It was this situation that called forth his letter to the Galatians, with its stirring defense of his apostleship and Gospel.

The same method was being used by those who sought to undermine his work at Corinth. On his second missionary journey (Acts 18) he had labored there for over a year and a half, with considerable success attending his preaching of the Gospel. The church that was established there continued to grow, but not without difficult problems. The chief of these are discussed in his first letter to the Corinthians, written from Ephesus on his third missionary journey. The first problem mentioned is that of divisions in the church there. Some belonged to the Paul-party, some to the Apollos-party, some to the Cephas-party, and some to the Christ-party.

It would appear that it was this last-named group that especially and persistently sought to undermine the work that Paul had done. Their characteristics are stated quite explicitly in his second letter to the Corinthians, but it is not easy to determine who they were. H. D. Wendland raises the question if this group were composed of Judaizers. He answers that had they constituted it, it is very strange that Paul did not more specifically designate

them as he had done in his letter to the Galatians. He concludes that they are more likely the "Pneumatiker" described in 1 Cor. 14.¹

Whether they are to be identified with the Judaizers of Galatia or not, the men of the Christ-party have much in common with them, as is clear from the convincing portrait which Marcus Dods draws of these men on the basis of Paul's second letter. He points out that they prided themselves on their Hebrew ancestry (11:22); they had heard Christ Himself (10:7); they came to Corinth with letters of recommendation (3:1); they claimed to be apostles of Christ (11:13); they taught a gospel different from that taught by Paul (11:4).²

Paul sought to deal with this divisive and destructive party spirit by an objective discussion in his first letter. He appealed to the unity of the body of Christ, and reminded the Corinthian congregation that he, Paul, had not been crucified for them. He pointed out that Christ was the one foundation on which all true ambassadors of Christ were building. He reminded them that his message among them was Christ and Him crucified.

It would appear from the second letter that the response of Paul's opponents was a campaign of abuse. Not only did

¹Heinz-Dietrich Wendland, Die Briefe an die Korinther, Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1948), p. 12.

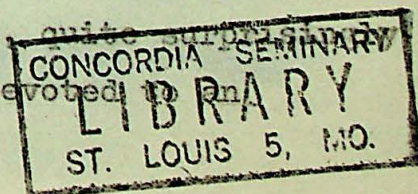
²Marcus Dods, The First Epistle to the Corinthians in The Expositor's Bible (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1889), p. 36.

they attack his apostolic authority, but also they spoke disparagingly of his life and work. They accused him of being fickle and vacillating; of tampering with God's word; of "talking big" but doing nothing; of not being able to give any proofs to substantiate his claim to be an apostle.

It was against this background that Paul wrote the letter known as his second to the Corinthians. In the nature of the case it is intensely personal. In the opening chapters he explains why he has not again visited them, and expresses his joy at certain good reports he has heard of them. Then he speaks of the glory of the calling to be ministers of the new covenant, a calling given to mortal men, a calling made more urgent by the immutable certainty that all must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, a calling whose priceless treasure is the message of reconciliation, and whose supreme honor is that it makes men ambassadors for Christ. Such a person is Paul, who pleads with the members of the church at Corinth to include him in their affections.

Chapter seven closes with the statement of his confidence in the now repentant Corinthian church. It is followed in chapters eight and nine by a moving exhortation to generous participation in the special offering that was at that time being gathered for the relief of the many poor among the Christians at Jerusalem. Then, quite

it seems, the balance of the letter is devoted to an



intensely personal defense. Some scholars have found here proof that these last chapters are not an integral part of the epistle. But Juelicher ably maintains that the epistle is a homogeneous structure, built around three main concerns. In chapters 1-7 Paul speaks words of prudence and love in response to their repentance, though also here there are intimations that there are burdens on his heart. The second concern is the matter of the collection, chapters 8-9. The third concern is the matter of the refractory minority group, led by the false apostles who have maligned Paul and still continue to do so. He is determined to root them out, for they are hindering not only his work but also that of Titus. He seems at times to be overwhelmed by wrath, so vehemently does he speak. But it should be remembered that in other epistles, too, he speaks sharp words of warning at the end, e.g., 1 Cor. 16:22, Gal. 6:12ff., Rom. 16:17ff.³

The above is a satisfying explanation of the abrupt and sharp nature of these concluding chapters. Paul's opponents were seeking to undermine his authority, influence, and message at Corinth. As long as they were tolerated there would be division in the congregation. Hence a true reconciliation in the congregation meant a break with the false teachers. Such a step on the part of the congregation

³Adolph Juelicher, Einleitung in das Neue Testament (Siebente Auflage; Tuebingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1931), pp. 100f.

would signify that it was again accepting Paul's authority, and was truly reconciled to him.

Thus this letter is the epistle of reconciliation.

It is in this setting that our text is found. That setting becomes the occasion for one of the most glorious declarations in the whole of Scripture concerning the divine plan, method and work of redemption, the content of which is summed up in the phrase, "the message of reconciliation."

The study that now follows proceeds according to certain presuppositions. One is that Paul's message in 2 Cor. 5:17-21 is in agreement with his message elsewhere; it may supplement, but does not contradict, that message. Another is that it is in agreement with the whole of Scripture. A third is that the meaning of the terms used can best be determined from Scripture itself.

These presuppositions emphasize the unity of Scripture, and the congruity of the parts to the whole. Just as the human body has many members, which are different from each other but are indispensable parts of the body, in which they form an organic whole, so is it with the parts of the Bible. The unity of Scripture was stressed by Martin Luther, one of the greatest exegetes of all time. Pelikan declares of him:

By rooting his interpretation of the New Testament in his understanding of the Old Testament, Luther thus helped to break the exegetical habits of many centuries. He read the New Testament as the early church had apparently intended it, as an addition to the Scriptures which the church already possessed in the Old

Testament. . . . He read the Old Testament as Christian Scripture, and he read the New Testament on the basis of the old.

A fundamental assumption of Luther's criticisms and of his exegetical work generally, as we have seen, is the unity of the Bible.

The significance of the above-stated principle for this study is that we shall draw from all parts of the Bible in order to better understand our selected text, which text in turn will illuminate other portions of Scripture. The Biblical record is both made up of, and adorned by, many precious jewels. One of the most magnificent of these jewels is 2 Cor. 5:17-21. To that we now turn to examine carefully its statements. A free translation follows.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come into being. Now all this is from God, who has restored us to his favor through Christ, and has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ restoring the world to his favor, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating through us: We beseech you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God. The one who did not know sin he made sin in our stead, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

⁴Jaroslav Pelikan, editor, Luther's Works (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), XXI, pp. xi and xiii. The unity of all Scripture is stressed in the book by John Bright, The Kingdom of God (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), pp. 190-98.

CHAPTER III

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: THE INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT (v. 17)

Ὅστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ
ἄρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ.

With this statement the apostle introduces his discussion of reconciliation. In it he shows what a man can be as a result of God's reconciling work in Christ. By it he indicates the importance of this work in terms of its results for the individual.

The opening word ὥστε, "so then, therefore," is a connective participle looking both ways. It looks back to the preceding discussion and relates to it what follows. Thus far in his letter Paul has explained why he had not yet made a return visit to Corinth; he has dwelt on the glory of being ministers of the new covenant, a ministry entrusted by God to frail mortals such as he, a ministry whose motivation is both the certainty of divine judgment and the constraining love of Christ who died for all. Just as once in human wisdom he had scorned Christ, so he had regarded men with a faulty judgment. And just as now he regarded Christ differently, so now he saw all men as those for whom Christ died, and in whom all have died. All distinctions and differences in men faded away in the light of this tremendous truth.

But also this "therefore" looks ahead to the explication

that follows as to how this incredible fact has come to be. The affirmation that follows immediately upon it is both a limitation and a promise. By $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\ \tau\iota\varsigma$, "if anyone," the apostle makes clear that the fact that Christ died for all and all died in Him does not mean that automatically all are saved. He does not say, "Since all were in Christ, all are now new creatures." His statement is, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature." The promise in the apodosis is restricted by the condition stated in the protasis. Around this little word "if" clusters not only a world of blessings, but also a world of tragedies and woes.

The all-important condition is that one be in Christ ($\epsilon\acute{\iota}\ \chi\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}$). This formula or one of its variants occurs 196 times in the New Testament, 164 of these being in the Pauline corpus. Hence it is a very significant phrase. It was made the subject of a special study by Adolph Deissman in his dissertation, "Die neutestamentliche Formel, 'in Christo Jesu,'" in which he submits his basic conclusion that "the $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ of the formula has throughout a local significance."¹

This conclusion is substantiated by an examination of some of the passages in which the phrase appears. All of God's blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3); redemption is in Christ (Rom. 3:24); the free gift of God is eternal life in

¹Walter Bartling, "The New Creation in Christ," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXI (June, 1950), 401.

Christ (Rom. 6:23); believers cannot be separated from the love of God in Christ (Rom. 8:39); the grace of God given in Christ (1 Cor. 1:4); in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:22); God's purpose is set forth in Christ (Eph. 1:9); in Him all things are created (Col. 1:16); in Him the fulness of God dwells (Col. 1:19); salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10).

Likewise all the believer's blessings are in Christ. In Him he is dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11); there is no condemnation for him who is in Christ (Rom. 8:1); in Christ he is sanctified (1 Cor. 1:2); in Christ he is a new creation and the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:17,21); he is justified by faith in Christ (Gal. 2:16); in Christ he is a son of God (Gal. 3:26); in Him he has redemption (Eph. 1:7); he is created in Christ for good works (Eph. 2:10); he is a partaker of the promise in Christ (Eph. 3:6); he is to live in Him (Col. 2:6); he has fulness of life in Him (Col. 2:10).

In his fine study of *ἐν Χριστῷ*, Walter Bartling concludes that

to be in Christ is to be taken up into the sphere of God's redemptive activity. For Paul the state of being in Christ is the all-inclusive presupposition of salvation. The *ἐν Χριστῷ* is the central, the focal point in the Pauline thought world. . . . Being in Christ is Paul's expression for a universal Christian experience.

.
To "be in Christ" is to be one of the new people of God of which Christ is the Head. . . .being in Christ implies a real participation of the believer in everything that Christ has suffered and done as the divine

agent of reconciliation. . . . To be in Christ is,² to be in the new creation which Christ represents.

More briefly, but similarly, Plummer concludes that the phrase means, "has become a Christian, has become a member of Christ."³

When thus by faith one is in Christ, he is (or, there is--the thought is essentially the same) καινὴ κτίσις, "a new creation." The adjective καινός means unused, or is used in the sense of something not previously present, unknown, strange, remarkable. Cremer's Lexicon states that this word

denotes what is new, inasmuch as it has not previously existed, or as, in contrast with what previously existed, it takes the place thereof. . . . it is specially fitted to characterize the blessings contained or expected in the final revelation of redemption. . . . This is true of the blessings of redemption still future, yet within the N.T. time of grace. Through the presence of the redemption given in Christ, the economy of salvation is also new. . . . The effect of salvation is termed a καινὴ κτίσις, Gal. 6:15, 2 Cor. 5:17.⁴

The substantive κτίσις means "that which has been created, creation." In no sense is the Christian's new state a result of self-effort. He is a new creature in

²Ibid., pp. 403, 409, 412.

³Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians in the International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 179.

⁴Herman Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, translated from the German of the 2nd edition by William Urwick, M. A. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1878), pp. 321ff.

Christ because of the creative activity of God's Spirit. Every Christian is an amazing phenomenon, another manifestation of divine creative activity.

The result of being in Christ is further expressed in the words *τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν*, "the old things have passed away." The adjective *ἀρχαῖος* with the pre-positive definite article is used as a substantive and means "original, ancient," and is the antithesis of *καινός*. The aorist tense of the verb indicates punctiliar action in the past. A person does not become a Christian gradually. One cannot be partly a Christian and partly a non-Christian. The moment one becomes a Christian all the results of Christ's redeeming work are his in personal possession.

Thayer defines "the old things" as an individual's previous moral condition.⁵ Surely this is included. Involved is the evil heart described by Christ in Mark 7:21-23; the mind at enmity with God, Rom. 8:7; the fleshly conduct described in Gal. 5:19-21; and the walk in sin, Eph. 2:2f. But more is included: the wrath of God on the disobedient, John 3:36; the righteous judgment of God, Rom. 2:5-9; the wages of sin, which is death, Rom. 6:23; eternal separation from the presence of God, 2 Thess. 1:9. These things too are passed away when one is in Christ.

These things which have passed away for the believer

⁵Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 76.

are the eternal consequences of his heritage from Adam, who is the head, the representative of sinful humanity. In Adam all die (1 Cor. 15:22); not of their choice all have borne the image of the first man Adam (1 Cor. 15:45,49); through him sin entered the world and death through sin (Rom. 5:12); his trespass brought condemnation for all men (Rom. 5:18).

The believer has a new heritage in Christ, the Head, the Representative, of redeemed humanity. In Him shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:22); in Him, the last Adam who is a life-giving spirit, we can bear the image of the heavenly (reading *φορέσωμεν* with Aleph, A, C, D) (1 Cor. 15:45,49); His one act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men (Rom. 5:18; cf. 2 Cor. 5:19).

God sees all men as being either "in Adam" or "in Christ," under wrath or in life (John 3:36). All by birth are "in Adam." In this they have no choice. Neither do they have any choice in the creation of the new humanity in Christ, for that is all God's work. But they can refuse to accept their place in this new humanity. That choice they can--and many do--make.

Yet there is more. God's blessings in Christ go beyond the passing away of the old. The contemplation of these blessings causes the apostle to exclaim *ἰδοὺ*, "lo, behold, see." Behold what? *Γέγονεν καινά*, "there have come into being new things." The rendering of the Authorized Version, "all things are become new," suggests

that also the old things which have passed away have become new, which certainly is not true. (The textus receptus has the words $\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$, "all things"; but the fact that they are absent from codices Aleph, A, and B, as well as the majority of Western witnesses, makes it very evident that they are a later interpolation.) The American Revised Version is more misleading, "they are become new," as though it is particularly the old things that have become new.

Lenski correctly observes:

They could not possibly have become new; they had to be cast entirely away; other things had to take their place, things that were newly created.

Thayer expresses the same thought in his comment: "All things are new, previously non-existent, begin to be far different from what they were before, 2 Cor. 5:17."⁷ Clearly in this instance the Revised Standard Version rendering is preferable: "the new has come."

Yet the RSV rendering, "the old has passed away, behold, the new has come," is open to misunderstanding too. The term "the old" is attracted to the noun "creation" as its antecedent. But it is not the old creation that has passed away. The fact that the verbs $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\lambda\theta\epsilon\nu$ and $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omicron\nu\epsilon\nu$ are in the singular does not necessitate the singular in the English translation. It is usual in the Greek that a neuter

⁶R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 1040.

⁷Thayer, op. cit., p. 318.

plural nominative takes a verb in the singular.⁸ Hence my suggested rendering, "the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come into being," is proper. It has the further advantage of being less ambiguous in meaning.

What is this "new" that has come? The answer is richly given in the *καινός* passages. Believers live not under the old covenant, but under the new covenant in Christ's blood (1 Cor. 11:25), unto the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28), mediated by Christ (Heb. 9:15), and proclaimed by His ministers (2 Cor. 3:6). They collectively are one new man in Christ (Eph. 2:15); individually they are to put on the new man which is God's creation in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph. 4:24). They are to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), manifesting themselves to the world as disciples of Christ by their practice of love, the new commandment (John 13:34; 1 John 2:8). Their growth in grace does not take place by a new creation, but rather by the renewing (*ἀνακαινώσει*) of their minds (Rom. 12:2). Their expectation is the new heavens and the new earth (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1) in which is the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2). He who enters therein will have a new name (Rev. 2:17; 3:12). He and all the redeemed will sing the new song

⁸H. P. V. Nunn, A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek (Cambridge: University Press, 1924), p. 37.

(Rev. 5:9; 14:3). Indeed, then will be fulfilled God's promise, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

THE SOURCE OF THE DIVINE WORK OF RECONCILIATION (IV)

Τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ κτισταίοντος
 τὰ πάντα ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ χειρὸς τοῦ κτίζοντος
 ἀπὸ τῆς διακονίας τῆς κτιστικῆς

In the preceding verses the apostle has indicated the marvellous fact that it is possible for human beings to be new creatures in Christ. That which makes possible this blessedness is God's work of reconciliation. It is this divine work which we shall now study in some detail as the basis of the presentation in verses eighteen and nineteen. A natural division is indicated by the phrases with which these verses close. Hence in this chapter our concern will be the ministry of reconciliation, and especially its divine source. Our findings are grouped under a number of headings.

The source of reconciliation is divine, for it is of God. τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, "now all things are from God." Even a simple phrase like this is not easy to translate so fully and correctly bring out its meaning. The ἐκ "and all things" suggests another thought, not necessarily related to the preceding. The ἀπὸ "but all things" suggests a contrasting thought. Both suggestions are misleading. The new statement is not a contrast to the preceding, and it is most intimately related to the preceding. The adjectival particle ἐκ cannot here be adequately

CHAPTER IV

THE SOURCE OF THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION (v. 18)

Τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ καταλλάξαν-
τος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος
ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς

In the preceding verse the apostle has indicated the marvellous fact that it is possible for human beings to be new creatures in Christ. That which makes possible this blessedness is God's work of reconciliation. It is this divine work which we shall now study in some detail on the basis of the presentation in verses eighteen and nineteen. A natural division is indicated by the phrases with which these verses close. Hence in this chapter our concern will be the ministry of reconciliation, and especially its divine source. Our findings are grouped under a number of headings.

The source of reconciliation is divine, for it is of God: Τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, "now all things are from God." Even a simple phrase like this is not easy to translate to fully and correctly bring out its meaning. The AV "and all things" suggests another thought, not necessarily related to the preceding. The ARV "but all things" suggests a contrasting thought. Both suggestions are misleading. The new statement is not a contrast to the preceding, and it is most intimately related to the preceding. The conjunctive particle δὲ cannot here be adequately

represented by either "and" or "but." It is clear that $\tau\acute{\alpha} \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$ refers to what the apostle has just affirmed. Hence $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ has the force of, "now I want to make it clear to you," or "now you must remember." The RSV endeavors to express the meaning by the simple phrase, "all this." This also recognizes the force of the definite article $\tau\acute{\alpha} \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$, which the AV and the ARV ignore.

From what follows it is evident that when he speaks of all these things which are of God (the passing of the old, the creation of the new), the apostle is thinking of them as resulting from reconciliation. It is incredible to natural man that reconciliation is God's work. His reason tells him that since he is the sinner he must set matters right. If he has offended God, he must by his religious acts appease God. The religiosity of the Athenians (Acts 17) is typical, not unique. Pieper rightly observes that paganism is not atheism, but the endeavour of man to appease God by his own works.¹ Hallesby points out that the common idea in heathen religions is that atonement is man's concern. They thereby recognize that sin involves guilt before God, and that atonement is required to regain his favor. He comments that this fact makes it all the more remarkable that there are those who bear the name Christian who hold that no atonement is required for man's sin against

¹Franz Pieper, The Reconciliation of Man with God, in What is Christianity (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935), p. 58.

God.²

Such people do not know the God of whom Paul is speaking. Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to include anything like a thorough survey of Paul's theology, reference is made to three significant passages, of which the first is 1 Cor. 8:6, "For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist." Surely this statement is transparently clear. The second passage is Rom. 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men." The wrath of God, the reaction of His holy love against sin, is one of Paul's major themes (Rom. 2:5,8; 3:5; 5:9; 9:22; Eph. 2:3; 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:10). It was the reality of this dread fact that made the Gospel such incredibly good news to him (Rom. 5:8).

It is one of the fatal defects of modernistic theology that it has minimized the truth of the wrath of God against sin. Vincent Taylor has some sharp words about the results of this procedure:

A generation of superficial theology has left many people with a sentimental belief in a good-natured and almost complacent God, a Buddha endowed with supplementary Christian attributes. Fellowship with God is conceived as a very simple and natural relationship which can be enterprised and taken in hand whenever we please and without onerous conditions. God has revealed His love in His Son: it is for us to respond

²O. Hallesby, Den Kristelige Troslaier (Kristiania [now Oslo]: Lutherstiftelsens Forlag, 1921), p. 349.

to His gesture and to enjoy His friendship. So anxious have we been to exclude legal ideas from our thoughts of God that we have compromised the ethical foundations of our theology; We have created God in our own image and likeness.³

It is the solemn fact of God's wrath against sin that makes the message of reconciliation meaningful. The Christian is thankful that he has a God who so hated sin that He did something decisive for man's salvation from it. It is in Christ that this is revealed and thereby the true glory of God manifested. Such is declared in the third passage we here quote, 2 Cor. 4:6: "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Paul's theology was Christocentric. This fact is brought out also by the text before us.

The divine agent of reconciliation is Christ. (The words *διὰ Χριστοῦ* do not follow "all this is from God" in the Greek, but for the sake of convenience the order given by the RSV is followed). What God has done is *διὰ*, "through," Christ as the means or instrument. We have already seen that God reveals Himself through Christ. The relationship between the Father and Christ is beautifully expressed in 1 Cor. 8:6, the first part of which has already been quoted: "For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all

³Vincent Taylor, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Study in New Testament Theology (London: Macmillan and Co., 1952), p. 67.

things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." According to this Christ is the agent of creation (affirmed also in John 1:3, Col. 1:16 and Heb. 1:2). According to Acts 17:31 He is the agent to express on judgment day the wrath of God against sin.

As we have seen, our immediate text describes Christ as the agent of reconciliation. The same emphasis is found in Col. 1:20, where it is stated that through Him (*δι' αὐτοῦ*) God was pleased to reconcile all things to Himself. God's work of reconciliation is inseparable from Christ. He was not merely the helpless victim who endured the judgment of God on sin. He was active in planning the reconciliation. He was active in accomplishing it. Apart from what He did and suffered and accomplished there is no reconciliation. What men do and suffer and accomplish has nothing to do with God being reconciled to the world. It is all in Christ. (What He did to accomplish reconciliation will be discussed in connection with the exposition of verse 21.)

The divine activity is to reconcile. That which God has done is stated in the words *τοῦ καταλλάξαι αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ*, as usually translated, "who reconciled us to himself." This is a proper translation, yet, as will be shown, there is a better translation.

(It is surprising to note that some translations⁴ render the plural pronoun ἡμᾶς by the singular "me." This is a purely subjective procedure, without any warrant in variant readings.)

The word καταλλάσσω is one of the key concepts of our text, and for that matter of the whole of Scripture. It is one of several compounds of the word ἀλλάσσω, "to change, to transform, to exchange." This word appears in a number of compound forms in the New Testament.

Διαλλάσσω is used by Christ in Matt. 5:24, of reconciliation between two people. Συναλλάσσω is used by Stephen in Acts 7:26 of reconciliation between two people.

Ἀπαλλάσσω, "to remove, release," is found in Luke 12:58, Acts 19:12, and Heb. 2:15. The compound μεταλλάσσω "to exchange," is used by Paul in Rom. 1:25,26. The compound καταλλάσσω, καταλλαγή, "to change from enmity to friendship, to reconcile," appears ten times in the New Testament, all in epistles of Paul: five times in 2 Cor. 5:18-20, three times in Rom. 5:10-11, once in Rom. 11:15, and once in 1 Cor. 7:11. The double compound ἀποκαλλάσσω, which is understood to have an intensified meaning, appears once in Eph. 2:16 and twice in

⁴Edgar J. Goodspeed, The New Testament, An American Translation (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1923), p. 345; Charles B. Williams, The New Testament, a Translation in the Language of the People (Chicago: Moody Press, 1950), p. 399.

Col. 1:20-22. It is noteworthy that *καταλλάσσω* and its double compound are used only by Paul, and that, except for 1 Cor. 7:11, they refer always to reconciliation between God and man.

The distinction between *καταλλαγή* and other salvation terms may be expressed as follows:

Σωτηρία, "salvation," is the comprehensive, all inclusive term for spiritual well-being, beginning now but realized fully in eternity. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (*σωτηρίαν*)" (Rom. 1:16).

Ἀπολύτρωσις, "redemption," views the work of salvation especially as deliverance from the powers of evil: sin, death, and the devil. See the fuller discussion of this term in chapter seven.

Ἰλασμός is related to salvation as that which turns aside the wrath of God from the sinner. This term also will be discussed more fully in chapter seven.

Δικαίωσις is related to salvation as the righteous standing that the believer has before God in Christ. Again reference is made to the fuller discussion in chapter seven.

Καταλλαγή views salvation as the restoration of man to God's favor, the removal of the state of enmity between God and man. The detailed discussion follows immediately.

The significance of *καταλλαγή* must be determined primarily from its various uses in the New Testament, hence these are examined at this time. The importance of our

inquiry can be clearly seen against the background of the assertion by Vincent Taylor:

Of current interpretations the one most widely held is probably the view that reconciliation depends upon man's humble acceptance of the revelation of God made in Christ . . . ; it shades down to the opinion that reconciliation is due to a change of mind when the sinner sees the crucified Attention is concentrated upon the psychology of man's response to that which, happily, he has observed, rather than upon a work of God Christ which is wrought on his behalf.⁵

How do these human opinions square with Scripture?

First let us inquire into the situation that requires reconciliation. Always it is because of an estrangement, a separation that has taken place. 1 Cor. 7:11 refers to a woman separated from her husband. Rom. 11:15 implies that the Gentiles were separated from God. Eph. 2:1,3,12 speak of people who were dead in sins, by nature children of wrath, and without God in the world. Col. 1:20-22 describes people who were estranged and hostile in mind. 2 Cor. 5:18-21 speaks of the trespasses and sin of men.

Rom. 5:6-11 gives the fullest answer. It too speaks of men as sinners. It warns of the wrath of God, but in the same breath it speaks of men being reconciled to God by the death of His Son. In this connection appears the clause, "for if while we were enemies" (*ἐχθροὶ*). Often this is taken to refer solely to man's attitude towards God. Certainly Scripture declares the hostility of the

⁵Taylor, op. cit., pp. 107f.

carnal mind against God (Rom. 8:7). But one of the great problems confronting the preacher of the Gospel is how to make men aware that actually they are hostile to God. Theirs is not a conscious enmity. That which makes this enmity so serious is that it is the enmity of God's wrath against all ungodliness (Rom. 1:18). Even Vincent Taylor, who strongly emphasizes the subjective reconciliation, affirms:

We must conclude that in Rom. 5:10 *ἐχθρός* describes, not only the hostile attitude of men, but also their character in the eyes of God. He sees⁶ them as enemies; and yet He reconciles them to Himself.

A. Schlatter concurs:

As Paul saw in the death of Christ the death prepared for him he recognized that he has God against him. The God who condemns to death treats man as His adversary whom He withstands.⁷

Hence the situation that requires a work of reconciliation is the sinful state of man. Man as a sinner is not what God requires him to be. Man as a sinner cannot have fellowship with the holy God. He is not a spectator of God's wrath against sin, but an object of it (Eph. 5:6).

Secondly, let us observe who acts in this situation. The natural procedure is that it is the offending party that seeks the pardon of the offended party. But in the New Testament usage of the word it is just the reverse.

⁶Ibid., p. 75.

⁷Quoted by Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), p. 197.

In them it is God, the offended party, who procures and provides the reconciliation. Paul Feine points out that men receive the reconciliation, Rom. 5:11, were reconciled with God, Rom. 5:10 and similarly Col. 1:22, when with codex Vaticanus and latin text witnesses ἀποκατηλλάγητε (were you reconciled) is read. It is God who reconciles the world to himself, 2 Cor. 5:18,19. He finds that the reconciliation is for the apostle God's work to man through-out; man receives it passively.⁸ Herman Cremer declares:

Rom. 5:11 . . . is decidedly opposed to the supposition that either a change of feeling on the part of man, brought about by the divine redemption, is referred to, or an alteration in his relation to God to be accomplished by man himself. . . . It is God who forms the relation between Himself and humanity anew; the part of humanity is to accept this reinstatement.⁹

Leon Morris examines the question in detail and concludes:

Moreover, as Handley Moule says, καταλλάγη and its cognates "habitually point to the winning rather the pardon of an offended king, than the consent of the rebel to yield to his kindness." Similarly Crawford, long ago pointed out that καταλλάσσω and διαλλάσσω are used in the biblical writings "to signify the removal of enmity, not from the offending, but from the offended party"; and again he says "when one party is said 'to be reconciled to another' or 'to reconcile himself to another,' the latter, and not

⁸Paul Feine, Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1922), p. 235.

⁹Herman Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, translated from the German of the 2nd edition by William Urwick, M. A. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1878), pp. 91f.

the former, according to the Hellenistic idiom, is the party whose friendship and favor are conciliated."¹⁰

Thirdly, we consider the means whereby this reconciliation is accomplished. Is it by a change in the attitude of man toward God? Eph. 2:16 states that the purpose of Christ's death was that He "might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end." According to Col. 1:20-22 Christ has accomplished reconciliation by the blood of His cross, and in His body of flesh by His death. According to Rom. 5:9-10 reconciliation is effected by the blood and by the death of Christ. In 2 Cor. 5:18 *καταλλάξεντος* is an aorist participle. As such it does not in itself express the time of the action.¹¹ Its significance is that it "is used of an action conceived as a simple event."¹² Except in 2 Cor. 5:19, which will be considered in the next chapter, every verbal form of *καταλλάσσω* is aorist: in Rom. 5:10 *κατηλλάγημεν, καταλλάμεντες*; in Eph. 2:16 *ἀποκαταλλάξεν*; in Col. 1:20 and 22 *ἀποκαταλλάξει, ἀποκατήλλαξεν*. But the context leaves absolutely no doubt as to the time of the action.

¹⁰Morris, op. cit., pp. 209f.

¹¹Ernest DeWitt Burton, Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek (3rd edition, 1898; reprint, 1955; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark), p. 59.

¹²Ibid., p. 62.

Unmistakably and unequivocally the act of reconciliation is linked to the cross, the blood, the death of Christ. Alan Richardson rightly concludes:

To reconcile is the distinctive activity of God himself, and the world of men is the object of reconciliation. . . . Reconciliation is . . . an act rather than a process by which men are delivered from a condition of estrangement and restored to fellowship with God; the act is accomplished by God through the power of the sacrificial death of Christ.¹³

Fourthly, let us observe the extent of reconciliation and the consequent proof that reconciliation is not accomplished by a change of mind in man. Rom. 5:10 seems to have Christians especially in view. Eph. 2:16 in its context clearly specifies Jews and Gentiles. 2 Cor. 5:19 says the world (*κόσμος*) is reconciled. Col. 1:20 extends the reconciliation to include all things, whether on earth or in heaven. Commentators are perplexed by this statement. Yet whatever it means, surely it indicates the inclusiveness of the reconciling work of Christ. Since the effect of God's reconciling action is universal in scope and none of these passages indicate a changed attitude on the part of the objects of reconciliation, it is clear that reconciliation is God's work, and that it has reference primarily to a new attitude on God's part.

Our examination of the uses of *καταλλάσσω* makes more meaningful the summary of its meaning stated by Cremer:

¹³Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 185.

καταλλάσσειν denotes the N. T. divine and saving act of ἀπολύτρωσις, insofar as God Himself, by His taking upon Himself and providing an atonement, establishes that relationship of peace with mankind which the demands of His justice had hitherto prevented. . . . It practically includes, though not in and for itself, the scripture ἰλάσκεσθαι, to atone, to expiate; and it signifies the reconciliation brought about by expiation. . . . While ἰλάσκεσθαι aims at the averting of God's wrath, καταλλάσσειν implies that God has laid aside or withdrawn wrath. . . . καταλλάσσειν denotes the removal of the demands of God's justice; ἰλάσκεσθαι, that satisfaction of them whereby their removal is attained.¹⁴

When at the beginning of this chapter the simple definition of καταλλάσσω as meaning "to reconcile" was given, it was stated that there is a more meaningful translation. Our text states that God has reconciled the world to Himself. But half of mankind has not heard the Gospel, and of the half that has heard the majority are indifferent, and some are openly hostile to it. How then is the world reconciled to God? Because it is the enmity of God that has come to an end. Therefore the apostle declares in Rom. 5:11 that "we have received our reconciliation." Alford states that the meaning of "were reconciled" in Rom. 5:10 is "were received into favor with God";¹⁵ Thayer gives it as, "to be restored to the favor of God, to recover God's favor."¹⁶

¹⁴Cremer, op. cit., pp. 92f.

¹⁵Henry Alford, The Greek Testament (5th edition; London: Rivingtons, 1865), II, 359.

¹⁶Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 353.

James Denney brings out the same truth in his commentary on Second Corinthians. He points out that the modern view is:

Man is alienated from God by sin, fear, and unbelief, and God reconciles him to Himself when He prevails with him to lay aside these evil dispositions, and trust Him as his Father and his Friend.

He answers:

Reconciliation in the New Testament sense is not something which we accomplish when we lay aside our enmity to God; it is something which God accomplished when in the death of Christ He put away everything that on His side meant estrangement, so that He might come and preach peace. . . . The serious thing which makes the Gospel necessary, and the putting away of which constitutes the Gospel, is God's condemnation of the world and its sin; it is God's wrath, "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:16-18). The putting away of this is "reconciliation": the preaching of this reconciliation is the preaching of the Gospel.¹⁷

Against the background of these observations there is much merit in the suggestion by F. Forster in his fine little study that a correct rendering of 2 Cor. 5:18-19 would be:

All things are of God, who hath restored us to His grace by Jesus Christ and hath given us the ministry of restoration to grace, to wit, that God was in Christ, restoring the world to His grace, not imputing their trespasses unto them . . . and hath committed unto us the word of restoration to grace (perhaps the word of pardon).¹⁸

There is consistency in thus eliminating both the verb "to

¹⁷James Denney, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians in The Expositor's Bible (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894), pp. 211f.

¹⁸F. Forster, "'Reconcile' 2 Cor. 5:18-20," in Concordia Theological Monthly, XXI (April, 1950), p. 298.

reconcile" and the noun "reconciliation." But it is not necessary to so exclude the noun. If it is kept, then the more precise rendering of the verb becomes a definition in the context of the force of the noun. Hence an adequate translation would be: "Now all this is from God, who has restored us to his favor through Christ, and has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ restoring the world to his favor, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and committing to us the message of reconciliation."

The divine commission is a ministry entrusted to men. The word *ἑαυτῷ* "to himself" will be considered more carefully in chapter eight. Hence our study of this verse concludes with the clause *καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς*, "and committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation." *Δόντος* is a second aorist participle active of *δίδωμι*, "to give, bestow, grant, supply, deliver, commit." It is exactly parallel to *καταλλάξαντος*, which has been shown to indubitably designate a past action. Hence *δόντος* does not refer to what God will give or is giving, but to what He did give or commit to us (*ἡμῖν*), namely Paul and the church at Corinth as representatives of the Church.

That which God committed to us is an office or a ministry (*τὴν διακονίαν*). Repeatedly Paul employs the word *διάκονος* to describe the work to which he had been called by God. It was the consuming passion of his

life to accomplish the *διακονίαν* given him by the Lord, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). Of this Gospel he was made a *διάκονος*, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:7-8).

Here this office is defined as the ministry of reconciliation (*τῆς καταλλαγῆς*). The noun appears again in the following verse, and is found also in Rom. 5:11 and 11:15. The authority and the glory of this ministry is announced by the terms describing those to whom this ministry has been entrusted, namely ambassadors of Christ (5:20), and fellow-workers with God (6:1). The content of their message is stated in the following verses. They are to proclaim a finished act of reconciliation offered to men, and to beseech men to accept it that thus it may become personally effective in their lives. Of this the following chapters will speak in more detail.

CHAPTER V

THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION (v. 19)

ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς.

Problems and difficulties often arise in the exegesis of passages of Scripture. Sometimes the problem is that of translation, the difficulty of making the English express the same concepts as those found in the Greek. Sometimes the problem is that of interpretation, first of the original, then of the translation. Quite often the two problems are inter-related, the translation determining what the interpretation shall be, or the interpretation determining what the translation shall be.

The verse we are now examining is an example of these problems. There is not agreement as to the nature of its syntax. As we shall see, the positions that are held by translators have considerable bearing on the interpretations that follow. Our study of the verse is organized in terms of these problems.

A. Relation of Verse to Preceding

The first problem is that of the relation of this verse to the preceding, as expressed in the words ὡς ὅτι. Ordinarily "ὡς prefixed to a Participle of Cause implies that the

action denoted by the participle is supposed . . . to be the cause of the action of the principal word."¹ In keeping with this rule the Norwegian translation of 1907 reads here fordi, "because."

Yet it is to be noted that the preceding verbs are themselves participles. Also it is to be noted that verse 19 is very similar in content to verse 18 (though with a different emphasis). Hence to translate "because" gives about the same sense as, "He went to town because he went to town."

However, it need not be so translated. Robertson declares: "There is, however, no doubt of the use of $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ in the declarative sense 'that'. . . . Paul has $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\eta'$ support for his use of it in 2 Cor. 5:19."² In agreement with this the AV and ARV translate, "to wit, that," and the RSV, "that is." Thus verse 19 is set in apposition to verse 18 as a further explanation of it, and particularly of the phrase, "the ministry of reconciliation." The closing phrase of this verse, "the message of reconciliation," is warrant for finding here a statement of the content of that message. Apart from what is declared in this verse

¹Ernest DeWitt Burton, Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek (3rd edition, 1898; reprint, 1955; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark), p. 170, sec. 440.

²A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), p. 1033.

there is no real message of reconciliation.

B. Number of Clauses in Verse

The second problem for the translator and interpreter is the number of clauses, that is, of separate statements. The AV indicates four by the punctuation, "God was in Christ, reconciling . . .", whereas the ARV and RSV omit the comma, thus indicating three clauses. This is in accordance with Nestle's Greek Testament. However, this fact is not in itself conclusive evidence against the AV rendering, as the marks of punctuation in the Greek text are supplied by the editors.

Grammatically the problem is whether ἦν is a simple preterite, or is joined with καταλλάσσω as a periphrastic imperfect. The translators of the AV held to the former, as did Luther, Calvin, Beza and Bengel.³ Among recent scholars who hold to this view is R. C. H. Lenski. He adduces a number of reasons for holding that ἦν καταλλάσσω is not a periphrastic imperfect: (1) Then μὴ λογιζόμενος must be such too; (2) ἦν has its own modifier; (3) καταλλάσσω has its own object; (4) ἦν is separated from the participle by both "in Christ" and "the world."⁴

³ Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 183.

⁴ R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), pp. 1043-1048.

But these objections do not stand up under scrutiny. In the first place, *μη λογιζόμενος* is not connected to the preceding by *καί*, so its construction is different. In the second place, there are many examples of periphrastic imperfects in which *ἦν* is modified, e.g., Mark 1:13 and Luke 21:37. In Mark 4:38 both *ἦν* and the participle have each a modifier. The answer to the third objection is the fact that the participle in Luke 2:33 has an indirect object, and that in Luke 23:8 a direct object. As to the fourth objection it is noted that in most of the occurrences of the periphrastic imperfect in the New Testament *ἦν* is separated from the participle by several words, e.g., in Matt. 8:30 seven words intervene, and in Mark 5:11 eight words intervene.

Hence there is no valid grammatical reason for not regarding this as a periphrastic imperfect. It is so regarded by Alford, Bernard (*Expositor's Greek Testament*), Meyer and Olshausen in their commentaries. This conclusion is in keeping with the fact that the stress is not upon the Incarnation, but upon what God did through Christ. Vincent asserts: "The emphasis is on the fact that God was reconciling, not on the fact that God was in Christ."⁵ Meyer's conclusion is similar:

⁵Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), III, 321.

The ἦν καταλλάσσω should go together . . . , and is more emphatic than the simple imperfect. Paul wishes, namely, to affirm of God, not simply what He did . . . , but in what activity He was; in the person and work of Christ . . . God was in world-reconciling activity.

C. Meaning of Respective Clauses

The third problem, or group of problems, is concerned with the meaning of the respective clauses. The first clause is ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ, "namely, that God was in Christ the world reconciling to himself."⁷ Θεός is made emphatic by its position; the ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ of verse 18 is once more underscored. Is it of any significance that whereas in verse 18 the noun had the definite article, here it appears with the article? Abbott-Smith's Lexicon in its definition of θεός adds: "anarthrous . . . when the nature and character rather than the person of God is meant."⁸ But how can this distinction possibly apply here? Robertson flatly declares:

⁶H. A. W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), p. 536.

⁷According to the conclusion reached in the preceding chapter, the meaning of this clause is: God was in Christ restoring the world to his favor. But our discussion will be facilitated by the use of the usual terminology.

⁸G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (3rd edition; reprinted 1954; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1954), p. 205.

The word *θεός*, like a proper name, is freely used with and without the article. But it is "beyond comparison the most frequently in the Epistles without the article." [sic]

The phrase *ἐν Χριστῷ*, "in Christ," is exactly the same as in verse 17. However, the meaning here is hardly the same as there, where it indicates the state of being of a Christian in intimate spiritual union with Christ. The believer is in Christ by faith, hence he is not in Christ in the same way that the persons of the Godhead are in each other. Further, the believer lays hold of Christ's power, but can not be said that he works in Christ; it is Christ who works in him. But God works in Christ.

As stated before, the emphasis is not on the fact that God was in Christ, but rather on the fact that He was in Christ reconciling. "In Christ" states and defines the sphere of God's reconciling activity. God's act of reconciliation did not take place in the world (the historical event on earth is not in view here); it took place in Christ. Christ became a curse for us, and died for us. All that was required to restore mankind to God's favor took place in Christ. The real significance of this phrase *ἐν Χριστῷ* is the Vicarious Satisfaction by Christ our Substitute. In this sense God was in Christ reconciling, for "it pleased Jehovah to bruise him" (Is. 53:10 ARV).

⁹Robertson, op. cit., p. 795.

The conclusion was stated earlier that ἦν καταλλάσσω is a periphrastic imperfect. Lenski, as noted before, argues strenuously against so regarding it. He stresses the two present, durative participles, followed by the aorist participles, as modifiers of the main clause, "God was in Christ." His understanding of this verse is indicated by his free rendering: "engaged in reconciling the world to himself, (doing this by) not reckoning to them their trespasses, also (by) having placed in our charge the word of this reconciliation."¹⁰

There are many things to criticize in such a rendering. It does violence to the text, translating not the text but rather the exegete's opinions. Also it disregards the rule of grammar that participles are timeless. Robertson declares that, "As the aorist participle is timeless and punctiliar, so the present participle is timeless and durative."¹¹ Again he states,

The present participle, like the present infinitive, is timeless and durative. The time comes from the principal verb. . . . But usually the present participle is merely descriptive.¹²

Therefore, even though καταλλάσσω is not taken with ἦν as a periphrastic imperfect, the time comes from ἦν and so has to be read, "was reconciling."

¹⁰Lenski, *op. cit.*, p. 1045.

¹¹Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 1115.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 891.

Further, it makes the non-reckoning of trespasses the means of reconciliation. As we have seen, Rom. 5, Eph. 2, and Col. 1 make the death, the blood, the cross of Christ the means. Finally, it makes the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to men a means of accomplishing the reconciliation, and hence denies that Christ completed the reconciliation. The Gospel does not say, "Repent and believe so that God will become gracious to you." It says, "Repent and believe because God is gracious to you."

But why the wording, "was reconciling"? Why not just "reconciled" as in verse 18? Evidently the reference is to the earthly life of Christ. The reconciliation was not completed in a moment of time. It includes His perfect life (Heb. 10:5-7), the shedding of His blood (1 Pet. 1:18,19), and His innocent sufferings and death (Is. 53). It is sealed by His resurrection (Rom. 1:4; 4:25). All of Christ's ministry enters into the accomplishment of the reconciliation. As a result of it, the reconciliation is a completed fact.

God's reconciling activity embraces, has as its object *κόσμον*, "the world," which frequently appears anarthrous in the New Testament, since it is a name for an object of which only one exists. Cremer's Lexicon states that the word *κόσμος* is used in four senses in the New Testament, as follows:

1. . . . the ordered sum-total of what God has created.

2. The abode of man, that order of things within which humanity moves, of which man is the centre.
3. Mankind within that order of things, humanity as it manifests itself in and through such an order.
4. That order of things which is alienated from God, and acting in opposition to Him and to His revelation.¹³

There are many instances of the usage of the word *κόσμος* in the last two senses stated above. Christ is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29); God so loved the world (John 3:16); God will judge the world (Rom. 3:6); the whole world stands guilty (Rom. 3:19); by one man sin entered into the world (Rom. 5:12); the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19).

This world, then, that is reconciled, that is, restored to God's favor, is the totality of mankind. This does not mean that all are saved. Salvation is provided for all, for the world of humanity is restored to God's favor. This exposes the Calvinistic doctrine of the limited atonement as a doctrine based on reason, not on Scripture, and therefore false. Christ atoned for the sins of the whole world. This is the objective reconciliation, a reconciliation which is one hundred percent complete.¹⁴

¹³Herman Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, translated from the German of the 2nd edition by William Urwick, M. A. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1878), pp. 366f.

¹⁴For a thorough and detailed discussion of the problems involved in the exegesis of 2 Cor. 5:19 see the series of articles by Theodore Engelder on "Objective Justification" in Concordia Theological Monthly, IV (1933), pp. 507-17, 564-77, 664-75.

The word *ἑαυτῶ* will be considered in chapter eight.

The second clause of this verse is *μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν*. At this point we are concerned not with its relation to the other clauses of the verse, but solely with its content. Concerning the negative particle *μὴ* it should be remembered that

μὴ is regularly used to negative ^eParticiples and not confined, as it is in Classical Greek, to participles equivalent to conditional clauses etc. The use of *μὴ* with a participle in the N. T. is not therefore to be taken as a sign that the participle is used in a conditional sense.¹⁵

Λογιζόμενος is the present participle of *λογίζομαι*.

Its meaning in this passage is defined thus: "to reckon anything to a person, to put to his account, either in his favor or as what he must be answerable for."¹⁶ It properly is a word of numerical calculation, and so metaphorically means to reckon, to take into account. In the positive sense it appears repeatedly in Romans 4, e.g.: "it was reckoned to him for righteousness (v. 3); "his faith was reckoned for righteousness" (v. 5); "God reckons righteousness apart from works" (v. 6). It thus indicates not a person's actual character but the way he is regarded by God, his standing before God. Hence it is an important term in the concept of justification by faith (to be discussed in

¹⁵H. P. V. Nunn, A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek (Cambridge: University Press, 1924), p. 126.

¹⁶Cremer, op. cit., p. 398.

chapter seven).

The subject of *λογιζόμενος* is *θεός*. Its indirect object is *αὐτοῖς*, "to them." The antecedent of "them" is "the world," regarded as the sum total of the individuals who constitute it. Hence it is the world of men to whom God does not reckon their trespasses. The word *παραπτώματα* appears a number of times in the New Testament. If we do not forgive men their trespasses, God will not forgive our trespasses (Matt. 6:14,15); Christ was delivered up for our trespasses (Rom. 4:25); one trespass brought condemnation; the law came in to increase the trespass (Rom. 5:16,20); the law was added because of trespasses (Gal. 3:19); the forgiveness of our trespasses (Eph. 1:7); dead in trespasses (Eph. 2:1). Cremer's Lexicon gives the following definition:

παραπτώμα denotes sin as a missing of and violation of right. . . . It may therefore be regarded as synonymous with *παραβάσις*, which designates sin as the transgression of a known rule of life, and as involving guilt. . . . reference is specially made to the subjective passivity and suffering of him who misses or falls short of the enjoined command; and the word has come to be used both of great and serious guilt . . . , and generally of all sin, even though unknown and unintentional.¹⁷

It should be carefully noted that this clause says nothing about any change in men. They are sinners, guilty sinners. What the clause affirms is that God looks upon men in a new light as a result of Christ's redeeming work.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 498f.

As the lamb of God He has taken away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Through one act of righteousness the free gift has come unto all men to justification of life (Rom. 5:18 ARV). In truth our minds cannot quite comprehend the amazing truth. But it is true as M. H. Franzmann declares:

In Christ God is so disposed toward men that the fact that they have provoked Him to wrath is as if it had never been; ¹⁸ it is as if God and man had never been at variance.

Since men are in fact sinners, not to reckon to them their trespasses is synonymous with forgiving their trespasses. In what sense this is to be understood depends on the conclusions as to the relation of the clauses of this verse to each other.

The third clause of this verse is *καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς*. The *καί* relates it immediately to the preceding clause, despite the fact that *θέμενος* is a second aorist middle participle of *τίθημι*, "having put, placed, laid." The aorist participle in itself indicates punctiliar action; it is the context that makes clear that this act took place in the past. Again the subject is *θεός*. God's act was entirely one of His sovereign will. He asked no advice; no one had a claim upon Him. But it was His good pleasure to entrust to men the message of reconciliation. Specifically He placed

¹⁸Martin H. Franzmann, "Reconciliation and Justification," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXI (January, 1950), p. 90.

it ἐν ἡμῖν , literally "among us, in our midst." This "us" is parallel to "us" in the preceding verse, and means Christians. It contrasts with "the world" there and "them" in this verse, in which terms all mankind is in view.

This commission was given just prior to Christ's ascension, when He charged His disciples to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19), and to be His witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). This is the definite past act to which the aorist participle points back.

To the Christian Church God has committed τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς, "the message of reconciliation." The term λόγος signifies that by which the inward thought is expressed, a word embodying a conception or idea, hence speech, discourse, message. The word is used in its profoundest sense in John 1:1,14 of Christ in His eternal existence and incarnation. Again it is used of Him in Rev. 19:13 to describe Him as He returns in glory. In 1 Cor. 1:18 the Gospel is summed up as "the word of the cross." Hence "the word of reconciliation" is the message that makes known Christ and His cross. Because Paul was a messenger of reconciliation, he determined to know nothing save Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). He knew that men could believe on Him only as they heard of Him (Rom. 10:14). Hence the consuming passion of his life was to testify the Gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

It is significant that the Chester Beatty papyrus P⁴⁶,

which dates from the third century and therefore is considerably older than the great uncial codices, reads not τὸν λόγον but τὸ εὐαγγέλιον . This exactly describes the message of reconciliation: good news. It is good news that God has restored us to His favor, and that for Christ's sake He has forgiven us all our sins. This is the treasure entrusted to us in the Means of Grace. This is why the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes (Rom. 1:16).

D. Meaning of Verse as a Whole

The final problem in the exegesis of this verse is the relation of the clauses to each other, and the meaning of the verse as a whole. Earlier we came to the conclusion that the words grouped with "was . . . reconciling" constituted one clause. But what of the second and third clauses? Commentators differ widely in their interpretations, which can broadly be grouped into three views. The first view is that these clauses state how the reconciliation is brought about. Another view is that they state how the subjective reconciliation is brought about. A third view is that they are results of, and confirmations of, the objective reconciliation.

The book by Vincent Taylor, Forgiveness and Reconciliation, is in its entirety an exposition of the first view. In it Taylor repeatedly digs into Scripture, and therefore

his exposition is a vast improvement on the psychological nonsense which The Interpreter's Bible offers as the exposition of 2 Cor. 5:17-21. Yet he never quite grasps the fact that the Gospel is the good news of Christ's completed work of salvation for all men. He affirms:

Forgiveness . . . is a stage antecedent to reconciliation; it is that which makes reconciliation possible. . . . in the New Testament forgiveness is the cancelling or removal of barriers to reconciliation. . . . To affirm that Christ died that we might be forgiven, is unscriptural, if we are thinking of the remission of sins.¹⁹

He rightly declares: "The Gospel is the announcement of His saving work in Christ, in His life, His cross, His resurrection, and His continued ministry on high." But just before making this fine affirmation he states:

The Gospel is the good news that the barriers to fellowship with God are set aside when we loathe our sins and long to be delivered from them. It is the declaration that, in response to our faith in Christ, God is ready to receive us, to clothe us with the garment of His righteousness, and to²⁰ give us the possibility of communion with Himself.

It is tragic that Taylor does not comprehend that the barriers to fellowship were on God's side done away with when Christ died on the cross. He has not grasped the truth of 2 Cor. 5:18-19 that in Christ God has restored the world to His favor.

The second view is held by Lenski, already quoted. He

¹⁹Vincent Taylor, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Study in New Testament Theology (London: Macmillan and Co., 1952), pp. 3-27 passim.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 227, 225f.

staunchly and fervently holds that Christ atoned for the sins of the whole world, that when He died the world was objectively reconciled to God. But he finds this verse to be particularly a description of subjective reconciliation. He explicitly denies that when Christ died, or at the time of His resurrection, God forgave all sins to the whole world. Forgiveness takes place only when a person repents and believes. In order to bring sinners to repentance and faith God has given us the message of reconciliation. When men respond to this in faith, He forgives their sins. Thus He is engaged in reconciling the world to Himself.²¹

The strong point in this presentation is that it guards against the subtle and soul-destroying error that because in Christ God reconciled the world to Himself, therefore no response is required on our part. John 3:16 and 1 Tim. 4:10 answer that. But this question is not in view here. The point here is not that all can be subjectively reconciled to God. The point is that the whole world is objectively reconciled to God, is restored to His favor. God does not become favorable to men after forgiving their sins; God forgives men their sins because He is favorable to them.

Else why did Christ die, but to make it possible for God to forgive sins? How could the holy God forgive sins

²¹Lenski, op. cit., pp. 1043-48.

and still be righteous? This is the problem that is raised and answered in Rom. 3:24-26:

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus. (ARV)

God forgives because of the shed blood of Christ. His forgiveness does not complete the reconciliation. He forgives because the reconciliation is complete on His part. From this standpoint Oscar Cullmann is fully justified in affirming:

For according to the New Testament and the New Testament confessions, the forgiveness of sins was accomplished once for all by Christ on the Cross, before it is offered to men in baptism.²²

Likewise God has committed the message of reconciliation to men because He is reconciled. Meyer sums up the relationship very beautifully:

The former [μὴ λ. . .] is the altered judicial relationship into which God has entered and in which He stands to the sins of men; the latter [καὶ θ. . .] is the measure adopted by God, by means of which the former is made known to men. From both it is evident that God in Christ reconciled the world with Himself; otherwise He would neither have left the sins of men without imputation, nor have imparted to the apostolic teachers the word of reconciliation that they might preach it.²³

²²Oscar Cullmann, The Earliest Christian Confessions, translated by J. K. S. Reid (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), p. 53.

²³Meyer, op. cit., p. 537.

The question remains as to the present participle *λογιζόμενος*. The answer is found in such passages as Eph. 1:7, 1 John 1:7, and Jas. 5:15. Redemption is effective to man as the forgiveness of sins. Pardon for all was written out when Christ died and rose again (Rom. 4:25). That pardon is constantly being applied to those who accept it, whether as they enter into, or continue in, the state of grace. The comment of Lange is apropos:

Not imputing men's trespasses to them is equivalent to the bestowal of forgiveness upon men, and implies that God was applying the benefits of salvation by Christ to individuals (*αὐτοῖς*). This is set forth by means of a present participle because the act was continuously to be repeated.

This then is the message of reconciliation: As a result of what Christ did on the cross God is gracious to all men. For Christ's sake He has written out the pardon for all men. That men may know the good news He has committed to believers this message and the ministry of proclaiming it. It is important that they fulfill this ministry to the end that all men may hear the good news. It is urgent that those who hear accept the offered pardon. That they do so is the burden of the next verse of our study.

²⁴John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, translated and edited by Philip Schaff, 1867 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), II Corinthians, p. 97.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLEA OF THE MESSENGER OF RECONCILIATION (v. 20)

ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ
θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα
ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ.

An official Catholic work, in a frank statement of Catholic doctrine on personal redemption, includes an astounding misstatement concerning Lutheran doctrine, a statement which is nothing less than a slander. The statement follows:

The privilege of participating in the merits of Christ's vicarious atonement does not relieve us of the duty of personally atoning for our sins. That Christ has rendered adequate satisfaction for the sins of the whole race, does not mean that each individual human being is eo ipso subjectively redeemed. This is the teaching of 'orthodox' Lutheranism,¹ not of the Catholic Church. We Catholics believe that the individual sinner must feel sorry for his sins, confess them, and render satisfaction for them, though of course, no satisfaction can be of any avail except it is based on the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.²

Let the basic Lutheran confessional writing answer:

Also they teach, that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins.

¹Underlining in this sentence mine.

²Joseph Pöhle, Soteriology: A Dogmatic Treatise on the Redemption, adapted and edited by Arthur Preuss (6th revised edition; St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1933), V, 40-41.

This faith God imputes for righteousness in his sight.
Rom. 3 and 4.³

We do hold, as was stressed in the preceding chapter, that God has objectively reconciled the world, all men, to Himself. But emphatically we do not teach that therefore each person is subjectively redeemed. So emphatically do we teach otherwise that even some of our fine exegetes try to make 2 Cor. 5:19 speak primarily of subjective reconciliation (see example in preceding chapter). The Scriptural and Lutheran view of the importance of subjective reconciliation is well expressed in the following statement by Lenski:

This work [of subjective reconciliation] began when Christ died, when "God was in Christ," when he wrought the objective reconciliation "through Christ" (v. 18). That objective reconciliation includes the whole world. But it must be brought to the world, to be made a personal possession by faith, a personal, individual reconciliation by means of the ministry of the reconciliation and the word of reconciliation.⁴

It is this question of the personal appropriation that is stressed in verse 20. Verse 18 spoke of the ministry of reconciliation given to us and verse 19 of the message of reconciliation entrusted to us. This verse deals with the plea made by the messengers who have this ministry and

³Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 45.

⁴R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 1045.

message of reconciliation. *Οὕν*, "therefore," they plead with men, "Be reconciled to God," that is, take to yourself what God in Christ has done for you. They plead so with men because the fact that Christ has rendered adequate satisfaction for the sins of the whole race does not mean that each individual human being is eo ipso subjectively redeemed.

The importance of the plea is indicated by the description of those who serve as messengers of reconciliation: *ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὕν πρεσβεύομεν*, "for, on behalf of, Christ therefore we are ambassadors." "For Christ" is emphatic. In no sense is the messenger to be serving his own interests. He is not working for or on behalf of himself. He is called to serve on behalf of Christ, to represent Him to others.⁵

Πρεσβεύομεν is present indicative active, and thus states a present fact, "we are ambassadors." As a verb it appears only once more in the New Testament, namely in Eph. 6:20. The meaning of the term ambassador is essentially the same today as it was 2000 years ago. Hence very properly we can draw from the political world to give added

⁵The word *ὑπὲρ* will be examined more thoroughly in the next chapter. There it will be shown that indubitably a proper meaning of the word is, "in place of," in a substitutionary sense. Is that the sense here? The present writer suggests that this distinction be drawn: Christ kept the Law, suffered, died, was buried, and rose again as our substitute; we serve Him as His representative.

force to the picture of the messengers of reconciliation being ambassadors for Christ. Alfred Plummer points out that an ambassador has received a commission; he is the agent of the power for which he is acting; he is the representative of his country. Also, he has a definite message to deliver, and a definite policy to carry out. Further, a good ambassador will be alert for opportunities to advance the interests of his country.⁶

All this applies to the ambassador for Christ. He remembers that he represents Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. What courage should be his in his exalted position---courage, not haughtiness, for he represents Him who was meek and lowly. Because of the ministry he has received by the mercy of God, he does not lose heart (2 Cor. 4:1,16). He recognizes that he has this treasure in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7ff.). He makes it his aim to be always well-pleasing to Christ, to whom he shall some day give an account (2 Cor. 5:1-10). He is impelled to utmost devotion in the proclamation of the message of reconciliation to men who must appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:11ff.). He tolerates nothing in his own life that could be a hindrance to the acceptance by others of the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 6:1-10).

⁶Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 185.

The ambassadors of Christ are further described in the next phrase *ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν*, which the RSV translates, "God making his appeal through us," omitting the *ὡς*, "as though." Plummer objects to the translation "as though" because it suggests that what is stated is not actually so, but only appears such.⁷ In my previous reading of this passage in the older versions this term "as though" has not had for me the force that Plummer suggests. Perhaps in my mind has been supplied, "which He really is." Certainly Paul is affirming that God is pleading through the messenger of reconciliation. Perhaps that is the significance of the *ὡς* here. It is the human messenger who is speaking, but he speaks as a voice for God. When he pleads, it is as though God is pleading. He does this *δι' ἡμῶν*, "through us," as His instruments. Robertson comments on this passage, "Here God speaks through Christ's legate."⁸

God's activity is stated in *παρακολοῦντος*, a present indicative active participle of *παρακαλέω*, "to call on, beseech, entreat." It is a word that appears frequently in the New Testament. Paul introduces the hortatory section of his letter to the Romans with *παρακαλῶ*,

⁷Ibid., p. 185.

⁸A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper and Bros. Publishers, 1931), IV, 233.

"I beseech"; the same word introduces the hortatory section of Ephesians; it is used to express his appeal to Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2). It is truly a Gospel word. The Law commands and threatens; the Gospel entreats and comforts.

The messenger's plea is *δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ. Δεόμεθα* is a deponent verb, regarded as the indicative middle of *δέω*, in which voice it means "to want for oneself," hence "to beg, request, beseech, pray." It indicates the earnestness of the messenger, as though he were bound up in his appeal. Again it is a truly Gospel word, for those who are ambassadors of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the almighty One whose kingdom shall have no end, do not issue ultimatums to the citizens of the kingdom of darkness. They beseech; they entreat.

They beseech *ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ*, "for, on behalf of," Christ. They preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord (2 Cor. 4:50); when they make mention of themselves it is "as your servants (lit., slaves) for Jesus' sake." They do not stand on their dignity as ambassadors, but as helpers of Christ they beseech.

They beseech because of what is involved. "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11 ARV), exclaims the apostle. The context makes clear that he has in mind his own accountability to Christ for the faithful accomplishment of the ministry he has received.

He had a message of hope for guilty sinners, for whom it is a fearful thing to face the holy God as a guilty sinner (Heb. 10:31). To him it was desperately urgent that men heed the message of salvation, so urgent that he admonished people night and day with tears (Acts 20:31).

The epistle to the Romans reveals that Paul had a clear grasp of the reality of God's wrath against sin, and of the parallel reality of the sinfulness of men, which sinfulness is made clear by the Law. These facts he elucidated clearly before unfolding the Gospel. Until man faces the fact of the *ὀργή Θεοῦ* he will not appreciate the *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*. Christ expressed this truth in the words, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Matt. 9:12). Therefore the messenger of reconciliation remembers the Law as a servant of the Gospel. Watson has this to say about the use of the Law according to Martin Luther:

Sinful men must be made aware of their disease before they will seek its cure, they must acknowledge their sin before they can receive forgiveness, they must despair of themselves before they can truly believe and hope in God. The Gospel, therefore, bids us not only to believe, but first to repent. It comes to us as Cacangelium, bad and unwelcome news, before it is heard as Evangelium, or good news. Luther always most strongly insists that the good news of the Gospel is by no means to be preached to men who do not acknowledge their sin. Such persons must be hammered by the Law until their pride and stubbornness of heart is crushed; only then can it be right to preach to them forgiveness and grace.

⁹Philip Watson, Let God Be God, An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther (London: The Epworth Press, 1947), pp. 156f.

The plea of the messenger of reconciliation is *καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ*, "be reconciled to God." The verb is second aorist passive imperative of *καταλλάσσω*, and is used with the dative of association. It means, get reconciled to God, and do it now.¹⁰ There never is a more convenient season. Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). The Spirit's plea is, "Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 4:7). Get reconciled to God, and do it now.

But how shall men be reconciled to God? Is it in the way pictured by Shailer Matthews? He asserts:

The Christian religion has always seen in the life of Jesus the revelation of what is meant by "being at one with God." But the establishment of such a relationship on the part of maladjusted men does not need to be expressed in terms of forgiveness or pardon or justification. It can also be expressed in the language of biology and sociology. As one who was actually saved from the backward pull of outgrown goods, both social and physiological, because of a perfect relationship with the personality-evolving forces of the universe, Jesus becomes an exponent or revelation of the method of right relations with the personality-producing forces of the universe. He becomes a savior because he was himself saved.¹¹

Such an explanation has no meaning for those who accept the New Testament as the inspired word of God.

Or shall man be reconciled to God in Ritschl's way? Emil Brunner boils down the latter's highly complex presentation into a few sentences. He concludes that for Ritschl

¹⁰Robertson, *op. cit.*, IV, 233.

¹¹Shailer Matthews, *The Atonement and the Social Process* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), p. 203.

reconciliation with God is

a purely subjective process, based indeed upon the intellectual conviction that the wrong idea of God as Judge has been removed, and its place has been filled by the right idea that God is "Love."

. . . When the individual is controlled by the right idea of God--that God is "Love"--instead of the previous false idea that God is a Judge--then he is "reconciled" to God.¹²

Brunner himself calls attention to the obvious fact that Ritschl's doctrine is not in accord with Scripture. It is not amiss to add that this entire thesis is an answer to his erroneous conclusions.

Or shall men be reconciled to God in the Roman Catholic way? Part of an earlier quotation is repeated:

The privilege of participating in the merits of Christ's vicarious atonement does not relieve us of the duty of personally atoning for our sins We Catholics believe that the individual sinner must feel sorry for his sin, confess them, and render satisfaction for them.¹³

The best answer to this is the verse emphasized by Luther, namely, Rom. 3:28, "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (ARV).

How then shall men be reconciled to God? The answer lies in the verb and in the context.

καταλλάγητε is the second aorist passive imperative: "be once for all reconciled." It is not a middle: "become reconciled." God is the agent who is named as the agent no less than twice in vv. 18,19. This is subjective reconciliation. No man can produce it in

¹²Emil Brunner, The Mediator, translated by Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947), p. 62.

¹³Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 40.

himself even to the least fraction. God must do so by his word of reconciliation.¹⁴

The subject of a passive verb is acted upon, is the recipient of the action of another. So men "receive the reconciliation" (Rom. 5:11); it is those who receive Christ that are given the right to become children of God (John 1:12); "by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Man believes, to be sure, but he does so in response to God's word, for, "Faith comes from what is heard" (Rom. 10:17).

Hence to be reconciled to God means to accept the accomplished reconciliation spoken of in verses 18 and 19. It means to give up any attempt of one's own to reconcile God or to supplement His reconciling work. It means to rest upon God's promises that whoever believes in Christ shall not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). It means to believe the promise that to him who trusts Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness (Rom. 4:5).

Very specifically, this means to accept the promise of forgiveness of sins, for redemption comes to us as the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7). This is brought out clearly in verse 19. The Godward aspect of reconciliation is: God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (ἑαυτῷ);¹⁵

¹⁴Lenski, op. cit., pp. 1050f.

¹⁵See further discussion in chapter eight.

the manward side of reconciliation is: not imputing their trespasses to them (αὐτοῖς). God is reconciled; He has pardoned. A man is reconciled to God when by faith he accepts the offered pardon. At the heart of the new covenant is the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 8:12; 10:16-18; cf. Jer. 31:31ff.). The condemning sin is unbelief, the refusal to accept God's pardon for sins (John 16:8,9).

One of the tragic weaknesses of much modern theological thought is the tendency to minimize the forgiveness of sins, a tendency found even in men who have a high regard for Scripture. In the preceding chapter was quoted the assertion by Vincent Taylor that: "To affirm that Christ died that we might be forgiven, is unscriptural, if we are thinking of the remission of sins."¹⁶ Note the low regard of G. B. Stevens for the forgiveness of sins:

If sin is a moral state, a character, what can save from it but a change of life, and what means and measures are adapted to that end except those which help us into a new character? How can plans, schemes, balances, or even forgiveness¹⁷ serve really to save us to our true life and destiny as sons of God except so far as they bring us into harmony with him and into loyalty to his truth? Salvation is not primarily a legal status, but a moral relation to God. Salvation from sin is therefore recovery to right relations to God, to the life of love, obedience, and sonship. This is

¹⁶Vincent Taylor, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Study in New Testament Theology (London: Macmillan Co., 1952), p. 27.

¹⁷Underlining here mine.

the work for which Christ came, lived, labored, suffered, and died.¹⁸

Much of what Stevens states is fine. What he fails to see is that the forgiveness of sins is at the heart of the new covenant of salvation. Not a new character, but God's forgiveness, saves from sin. A clear answer to Steven's contention is found in Rom. 3-5, especially in the light of the fact that λογίζομαι¹⁹ means "to reckon, to regard, to impute," and that δικαιοῶ²⁰ means not to make righteous, but "to declare righteous."

¹⁸George Barker Stevens, The Christian Doctrine of Salvation (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1905), pp. 320f.

¹⁹See preceding chapter for fuller discussion.

²⁰See next chapter for fuller discussion.

CHAPTER VII

THE DIVINE METHOD OF RECONCILIATION (v. 21)

Τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γεν-
ώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

Is this part of the ambassador's plea, or is it part of the apostle's presentation? No one can say for certain which it is. But fortunately it makes no difference, for in either case it describes the divine method of reconciliation. Previously it has been stated that in and through Christ God was reconciling. This verse states specifically how God was reconciling the world to Himself. It is one of the basic passages of Scripture for the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement. It presents Christ as our substitute, in whom God saw and dealt with the sin of the world, and in whom God sees men as righteous. In its exegesis there are many problems, which will be dealt with each in its turn.

The AV translation of τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν is ambiguous, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." It is not we who knew no sin. This affirmation is declared of Christ, and is parallel to such passages as Heb. 4:15 and 7:26, 1 Pet. 2:22, and 1 John 3:5.

Grammatically the *μὴ* poses a problem. One lexicon states that it is a "subjective negative particle, used

where the negation depends on a condition or hypothesis, expressed or understood, distinct from $\acute{\omicron}\nu$, which denies absolutely."¹ Is it hypothetical that Christ knew no sin? Plummer suggests that the subjective force of the $\mu\eta$ refers to God's view: "Him who in God's sight came to no knowledge of sin."² Hence it would mean that not only did He appear sinless, but such He actually was. This conclusion is strengthened by the force of $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$ (of which $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu\tau\alpha$ is a second aorist active participle). Cremer declares that the word

frequently denotes a personal relation between the person knowing and the object known, equivalent to, to be influenced by our knowledge of an object, to suffer oneself to be determined thereby; for anything is known only so far as it is of importance to the person knowing, and has an influence on him, and thus a personal relationship is established between the knowing subject and the object known.

He lists 2 Cor. 5:21 with a number of other passages, and concludes: "In all these passages we have the denial not merely of a close and special, but of any relation whatever to the object."³ Hence this phrase states in the strongest way possible the sinlessness of Christ.

The word $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$ appears twice in this verse.

¹G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (3rd edition, 1937; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1954), p. 289.

²Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 187.

³Herman Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, translated from the German of the 2nd edition by William Urwick, M.A. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878), p. 211.

Meaning literally to miss the mark, it is used in the New Testament always in the ethical sense of guilt, sin, fault, failure. It is by far the word most commonly used in speaking of sin. Cremer finds that the word stresses sin generically. He continues:

Without the article, *ἁμαρτία*, . . . according to a common custom of classical writers, is used where the reference is to the conception itself (embodied in the individual manifestations), and not to the collective sum of manifestations; so in 2 Cor. 5:21

The translation of *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* is sharply disputed. The AV renders "for us"; the ARV "on our behalf"; the RSV "for the sake of." The word *ὑπέε* appears three times in these last two verses. The AV renders respectively "for," "in our stead," "for." Thus it gives the second *ὑπέε* an unmistakable substitutionary force, but leaves the first and the third to the judgment of the individual interpreter. The ARV consistently renders in every instance, "on behalf of." If this phrase has the same meaning throughout, then it either denotes too much the first time, or not enough the third time.

The RSV translates respectively, "for," "on behalf of," "for our sake." So according to the RSV Christ was made sin for our sake, which clearly means "for our benefit." This is true as far as it goes. Yet by specifying that Christ was made sin "for our benefit" it denies what this

⁴Ibid., pp. 100f.

verse specifically affirms, namely that Christ was made sin in our stead, in our place, that is, as our substitute.

This last affirmation is not popular in liberal theological circles. Vincent Taylor is so bold as to assert, "It has long been agreed that Christ was not punished in man's stead."⁵ Fifty years ago Stevens wrote

so far as my observation has extended, it leads me to say that among thoughtful laymen, quite as much as in theological circles, the notions of substitution, expiation, vicarious penalty, and the like, are unacceptable and obsolescent.

Despite these sweeping assertions, the fact stands that here *ὑπέε ἡμῶν* means "in our place." *ὑπέε* very definitely means "in place of" in many passages in Scripture: "it is expedient for you that one man should die in the place of (*ὑπέε*) the people, and not that the whole nation should perish" (John 11:50); "we are convinced that one has died in the place of (*ὑπέε*) all, therefore all have died" (2 Cor. 5:14).

It is not claimed that *ὑπέε* means only "in place of, instead of." But the fact is that this is one of its meanings. Robertson stresses the importance of the context for the meaning.

It is sometimes said that *ἀντί* means literally "instead" and *ὑπέε* "in behalf of." But Winer sees more clearly when he says: "In most cases one who acts

⁵Vincent Taylor, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Study in New Testament Theology (London: Macmillan and Co., 1952), p. 211.

⁶George Barker Stevens, The Christian Doctrine of Salvation (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1905), p. 375.

in behalf of another takes his place." Whether he does or not depends on the nature of the action, not on *ἀντί* or *ὑπέε* Paul's combination in 1 Tim. 2:6 is worth noting, *ἀντίλυτεον ὑπέε πάντων* , where the notion of substitution is manifest. There are a few other passages where *ὑπέε* has the resultant notion of "instead" and only violence to the context can get rid of it. One of these is Gal. 3:13 It is not a point here as to whether one agrees with Paul's theology or not, but what is his meaning. In this passage *ὑπέε* has the resultant meaning of "instead."⁷

The passage referred to in the quotation, Gal. 3:13, reads thus: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, 'Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree.'" As this verse is so very similar in content to 2 Cor. 5:21 it rightly demands more careful examination. The verb *ἐξηγόεασεν* is the aorist of *ἐξαγοεάζω*, an intensified form of *ἀγοεάζω*, which has as its basic meaning "to buy," as in Matt. 13:44, 46. It is applied to the purchasing act of Christ (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 14:3f.), the price being His blood (Rev. 5:9). The intensified form is translated "redeem" (Gal. 3:13; 4:5).

The curse (*κατάρας*) from which Christ has redeemed us is defined in verse 10 of this same chapter in Galatians, that verse directing us to the exposition in Deut. 27 and 28 of the curses coming upon those who do not keep the law. Summarily the curse of the law is stated in Ezek. 18:4

⁷A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), pp. 630f.

and Rom. 6:23 to be death, with its eternal consequences in view. By contrast, the blessing of the Gospel is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is due to the fact that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law when He became a curse for us. That happened, Paul declares by quoting Deut. 21:23, when Christ was exposed to ignominy on the cross.

Liberal theologians do strange things with this verse. Burton says that the "curse of the law" in Gal. 3:10 is not the judgment of God. He goes on to say that therefore the deliverance from it is not a judicial act in the sense of release from penalty,

but a release from a false conception of God's attitude, viz., from the belief that God actually deals with men on a legalistic basis.

He goes on to dismiss the reference to Deut. 21:23 with the comment: "Between this passage and the fact of which the apostle is speaking there seems to be only a superficial connection."⁹

A fitting answer is given by Ridderbos. He calls attention to Deut. 21:23 and comments:

After His death, too, Christ hung on the cross as a condemned and executed criminal. Thus He bore the

⁸Ernest DeWitt Burton, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 168.

⁹Ibid., p. 173.

same shame as every executed criminal, and was publicly exhibited as an accursed of God. From all this it should be apparent how little justice modern theological thought does to Paul's presentation of these matters, when, for example, it talks of a God who does not deal with people on a "basis of legalism" and of a Christ who has set people free from the "fiction" of a curse of God. The reference to Deut. 21 is intended precisely to point out the reality of the curse and, in connection with it, to set forth Christ's redemption as a satisfaction of the justice of God.¹⁰

The "old-fashioned" term that sums up the teaching of Gal. 3:13 is that Christ was our penal substitute. The term "penal substitute" is not popular in many theological circles today. But the concept is clearly expressed in Scripture. Peter declares that Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3:18). Paul clearly teaches it here by affirming that Christ became a curse for us. This means that He took upon Himself the guilt and punishment of our sins. That He took our penalty upon Himself means that He was our penal substitute.

By becoming a curse for us (*ὕπερ ἡμῶν*) Christ was our penal substitute. The word *ὕπερ* can mean nothing less here. It is argued that it means "for the benefit of." Certainly this is included in the meaning but it is not the full meaning. Christ procured for us the benefit of

¹⁰Herman N. Ridderbos, The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia, translated from the Dutch by Henry Zylstra, in The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), pp. 127f.

being set free from the curse of the law by taking our curse upon Himself; and that is nothing less than substitutionary. Also it is argued that ὑπέε here means "as representative of." Certainly Christ was our representative; but He was more than that. An accused person can be represented in court by his lawyer. But the lawyer as his representative is not incarcerated or executed in his place. Were he to suffer the penalty imposed on his client, and the latter to go free, then he would be the latter's substitute. It was in this sense that Christ became a curse for us (ὑπέε ἡμῶν), in our place, as our substitute. Morris draws a very clear conclusion:

If I should have been under a curse, but instead Christ was made a curse, so that now I am free, redeemed from the curse, then His action is of a substitutionary kind as H. Wheeler Robinson recognizes when he finds in this passage "one of the clearest indications that St. Paul conceived the death of Christ as both substitutionary and penal." There may be more to it than substitution, but we cannot dismiss the substitutionary aspect without doing violence to the words.¹¹

That Luther held to the view that Christ was our penal substitute is clear from his exposition of Gal. 3:13, in which he declares:

all the prophets did foresee in spirit, that Christ should become the greatest transgressor . . . that ever was or could be in the world. For he being made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person and without sin . . . , but a sinner . . . which hath and beareth all the sins of

¹¹ Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 55f.

all men in his body: not that he himself committed them, but for that he received them, being committed or done by us, and laid them upon his own body, that he might make satisfaction for them with his own blood.¹²

One of the prophets of whom Luther speaks is Isaiah. What strange things have been done to Is. 53 by commentators in an endeavor to make it say less than it does. But Mozely is bold to say that "Whatever be the force of the substitutionary offering of the Servant, it is impossible to expel the idea of substitution from the passage."¹³ Just as emphatically he declares that the concept of substitution is embedded in St. Paul's writings.¹⁴

The affirmation of Gal. 3:13 that Christ became a curse for us is exactly parallel to the declaration of 2 Cor. 5:21 that He was made sin for us. It is probable that it is the words that follow *ὅτι ἐε ἡμῶν* that cause some to seek to remove the substitutionary idea here--
ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, "sin he made." The subject of the verb is God. God made Christ sin! The Arndt-Gingrich Lexicon gives three possible meanings of the statement:

¹²Philip Watson, editor, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, based on lectures delivered by Martin Luther at the University of Wittenberg in the year 1531 and first published in 1535, revised and completed translation based on the "Middleton" edition of the English version of 1575 (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1953), pp. 242f.

¹³J. K. Mozley, The Doctrine of the Atonement (London: Duckworth, 1915; reprinted 1947), p. 27.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 73.

(1) made subject to death; (2) made a sin-offering; (3) Jesus is viewed as representative and bearer of the world's sin.¹⁵ The first and second (Augustine held to this) are included in the third, but fall short of the full force of the meaning of the phrase. Lenski gives an excellent explanation:

God did not make him "a sinner." . . . The idea of God making anyone a sinner, to say nothing of his own Son, is unthinkable. God did something else entirely; he laid on him the iniquity of us all . . . God made Christ sin *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* by charging all that is "sin" in us against him, by letting him bear all this burden with all its guilt, and penalty "in our stead" in order to deliver us.¹⁶

Inseparably tied in with the concept of penal substitution are the concepts of sacrifice and propitiation. The epistle to the Hebrews stresses Christ's once-for-all sacrifice of Himself as the efficient means of our redemption. The term *ἱλασμός* appears in various forms in Rom. 3:25, Heb. 2:17, and 1 John 2:2 and 4:10. It is regrettable that the RSV has translated the word in all four passages "expiation," "expiate." Expiation has to do with the removal of sin or guilt, while propitiation has to do with the removal of God's displeasure. Actually as Morris points out, the expiation of sin is of no value unless as a result

¹⁵William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 43 under .

¹⁶R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), pp. 1052f.

God's displeasure against the sinner is removed.¹⁷

But the RSV rendering gives the impression that God's displeasure against sin is not directly concerned. And that impression is false. According to Rom. 3:24-26 Christ is set forth as the ἱλαστήριον because of God's righteousness and to enable Him to be righteous when He forgives sins. Commenting on this passage Sanday and Headlam declare:

It is impossible to get rid from this passage of the double idea (1) of a sacrifice; (2) of a sacrifice which is propitiatory. . . the fundamental idea which underlies the word [ἱλαστήριον] must be that of propitiation. And further, when we ask, Who is propitiated? the answer can only be "God." Nor is it possible to separate this propitiation from the Death of the Son.¹⁸

God cannot pardon sin without just cause. As Simpson has said, by a baseless pardon God "would have passed judgment not on the prisoner at the bar, but on Himself." The moral constitution of the universe cannot be set aside for the offender's sake. But on the basis of the death of Christ, in which justice and mercy are harmoniously conjoined, God can be righteous at the same time that He forgives sins.¹⁹ Such too is Schrenk's conclusion:

¹⁷Morris, op. cit., pp. 184f.

¹⁸W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 91.

¹⁹Edmund K. Simpson, "The Doctrine of Reconciliation," Evangelical Quarterly, VIII (October, 1936), pp. 360-66.

When Paul sees God's act in the Cross, he is convinced, with the absolute certainty of faith, that this is the final and effectual revelation of justice and mercy in one Forgiveness as a genuine act of judgment, maintaining God's justice is a form of redemption which knows no compromise with evil.²⁰

In Heb. 2:17-18 it is as a high priest in the things concerning God that Christ serves εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεισθαι, "to make propitiation" for the sins of the people. In 1 John 2:1-2 it is in connection with His position as our advocate, obviously before God that Christ is the ἰλασμός. In 1 John 4:10 God sends Christ to be the ἰλασμόν for our sins, a statement which is parallel to Rom. 3:24-26.

There is no question but that the Church Fathers frequently speak of Christ propitiating the Father and putting an end to God's wrath against men.²¹ Frequently the Lutheran Confessions so speak, as we shall see in the next chapter. It is only in the past 200 years that a consistent endeavor has been made to remove this concept from Scripture. The argument is that since God is love, He cannot be angry with men; in fact, the fact that He gave Christ to redeem us proves that He was not angry with us. An excellent answer is given by James Denney;

It is quite true that we have not to propitiate an angry God: the very fact upon which the Gospel proceeds

²⁰Gottfried Quell and Gottlob Schrenk [editor of N. T. portion] in Kittel's Bible Key Words, Book IV, "Righteousness," translated by J. R. Coates (New York: Harper and Bros., Publishers, 1951), p. 44.

²¹Mozely, op. cit., pp. 101-125.

is that we cannot do any such thing. But it is not true that no propitiation is needed. As truly as guilt is a real thing, as truly as God's condemnation of sin is a real thing, a propitiation is needed. And it is here, I think, that those who make the objection referred to part company, not only with St. Paul, but with all the Apostles. God is love, they say, and therefore He does not require a propitiation. God is love, say the Apostles, and therefore He provides a propitiation.²²

That it was because of His love that God made the propitiation is affirmed repeatedly in Scripture. John declares of God, "He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10 ARV). Paul affirms of Christ; "He loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). To him the proof that God is for us, and that nothing can separate us from His love in Christ, is that He did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all (Rom. 8:31-32,39). To Christ the cross was the cup which the Father had given Him to drink (John 18:11). He came to do the Father's will (Heb. 10:7); He came to lay down His life for the sheep (John 10:15-18); He came to give His life a ransom (Mark 10:45).

The ransom concept stated by Christ in the passage just referred to is prominent in Scripture, the word *λύτεον* and its cognates (especially *ἀπολύτρωσις*) appearing much more frequently than *ἰλασμός* and *καταλλαγή*. Trench affirms that to one or the other of these

²²James Denney, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians in The Expositor's Bible (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894), p. 221.

words "almost every word and phrase directly bearing on this work of our salvation through Christ may be more or less nearly referred." He offers as the reason why Paul invariably uses ἀπολύτρωσις the explanation by Chrysostom that by this ἀπό the Apostle would express the completeness of our redemption in Christ Jesus, a redemption which no later bondage should follow. He states that the fundamental idea of the word is recall of captives from captivity through the payment of a ransom for them.²³

What is this ransom? It is Christ's life (Matt. 20:28), Himself (1 Tim. 2:6; Tit. 2:14), His blood (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18f.), His death (Heb. 9:15). It is this price (τιμὴ) with which we are bought (ἡγοράσθητε) (1 Cor. 6:20). Christ became a curse for us to redeem (ἐξηγόρασεν) us (Gal. 3:13). Because of the ἀπολύτρωσις which is in Christ men are justified as a gift by His grace (Rom. 3:24).

Likewise with this group of words is associated the idea of substitution. Christ came to give His life a ransom for (ἀντί) many (Mark 10:45). There is no question about the substitutionary force of ἀντί. Apart from this fact is the ransom concept itself. Morris puts it very bluntly:

²³Richard Chenevix Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (9th edition, 1880; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 290.

From the very nature of the imagery being used this involves a substitutionary idea; instead of our death there is His, instead of our slavery there is His blood, and all our verbal juggling cannot remove this from the New Testament.

Our recent discussion has been concerned with the interpretation of the statement that Christ was made sin for us. When was He made sin for us? Ἐποίησεν is aorist, hence indicates punctiliar action. In one sense the redeeming work of Christ encompasses the whole of time. But Scripture singles out as the decisive event the death of Christ. He is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the earth (Rev. 13:8 AV; cf. Acts 2:23); He became incarnate that He might die (Heb. 2:14); we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. 5:8); Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3); it is by virtue of His once-for-all sacrifice of Himself that He appears in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:11-28); the heavenly hosts adore Him because He was slain and by His blood ransomed men for God (Rev. 5:9); He returns as the One who was pierced (Rev. 1:7). It was in the hours of His crucifixion and death that He was made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). It was on the cross that He was forsaken of God (Matt. 27:46).

Why was Christ made sin for us? Our text answers, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ, "that we might become the righteousness of God in him."
 ἵνα as a final conjunction states purpose or end. The

²⁴ Morris, op. cit., p. 49.

purpose for which Christ was made sin for us is that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Indeed this is the most amazing exchange of positions that could possibly take place. God regards Christ as the only sinner, the one in whom is seen the sin of the whole world, and in Him views men as perfectly righteous.

Γενώμεθα is second aorist subjunctive (following (va) and plainly means "might become." The aorist tense points us back to the events set forth in verses 18 and 19. God's view of men is altered because of Christ's redeeming work. Not only has He taken away the sin of the world and redeemed men from the curse of the law of sin and death, but also in Him is provided the righteousness of God for all men (Rom. 8:1-3).

What is this righteousness of God? Our answer involves a study of δικαιοσύνη and its related words. It has been noted before that there are many concepts in our text whose full significance cannot be adequately expressed in this thesis because of the limitations of space. Especially so is this true of this word group. Included in it is the doctrine of justification by faith, which since the days of Luther has been regarded by evangelical Protestantism as one of the key concepts of Scripture, yes, the principle that integrates Scripture and makes it a unified whole. For the reason stated above our study here is limited to the meaning of the term.

The adjective *δίκαιος* stems from the noun *δίκη*, "custom, right, a judicial hearing and its result."²⁵ In early Greek writers it is used of persons who are observant of *δίκη*, thus righteous in performing duties to gods and men. The New Testament deepens the significance of the word to mean righteous of the person or thing corresponding to the Divine standard of right. God is righteous (Rom. 3:26); Christ is righteous (1 John 2:1); Joseph was a righteous man (Matt. 1:19); the commandment is righteous (Rom. 7:12); that children should obey their parents is right (Eph. 6:1).

The verb *δικαίω* means to show to be righteous, or to declare, pronounce righteous. When human beings are spoken of in the New Testament as being justified invariably the sense is to declare, to pronounce, righteous. The Pharisees justified themselves (Luke 16:15), that is, regarded themselves as righteous. The publican went down to his house justified (Luke 18:14): that is, he was so regarded by God. God justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5). A man is justified not by works but by faith (Gal. 2:16). To be justified by faith means that God regards man as righteous for Christ's sake. The related noun *δικαίωσις* means the act of pronouncing righteous (Rom. 4:25; 5:18).

The noun *δικαιοσύνη* signifies the character of

²⁵Abbott-Smith, op. cit., p. 117.

ὁ δίκαιος; in the broad sense, righteousness, conformity to the Divine will in purpose, thought and action. Men are to seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33), which is an essential characteristic of His kingdom (Rom. 14:17); those who do so are blessed (Matt. 5:6). Men are to present their members to God as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:13). Paul was concerned that he have not his own righteousness but that which is of God (Phil. 3:9).

It is this phrase, "the righteousness of God" (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) that we find in the verse that is our present study. It occurs also in Rom. 1:17, several times in Rom. 3, and in Rom. 10:3. Schrenk discusses the term in much detail. His conclusion is:

The full formula, "righteousness of God," is used by Paul in his most solemn and striking utterances on the subject of salvation; elsewhere he speaks simply of righteousness. In the former, there can be no doubt that θεοῦ is to be understood as a subjective Genitive. God's righteousness is exclusively his own, and man is brought into it and given a place within it. The righteousness of God is judgment and mercy in one; it belongs to him, and he manifests it in what he does when he imparts it in absolving the sinner; but it also inaugurates a new life of duty in the service of the King; its perfect demonstration is at the Last Judgment.²⁶

It is well-known that the turning point spiritually in Luther's life came when he discovered that the righteousness of God meant His righteousness with which He clothes

²⁶Quell and Schrenk, op. cit., pp. 42f.

the believer. This is an imputed righteousness, that which God reckons to the one who by faith is in Christ. This righteousness is ours by faith (Phil. 3:9), which lays hold of Christ, who has been made righteousness for us (1 Cor. 1:30). Therefore the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, can declare, "This faith is imputed for righteousness in his sight." Vine finely states:

This righteousness is unattainable by obedience to any law, or by any merit of man's own, or any other condition than that of faith in Christ. . . . The man who trusts in Christ becomes "the righteousness of God in Him," 2 Cor. 5:21, i.e., becomes in Christ all that God requires a man to be, all that he could never be in himself.²⁷

The concluding words of our text are *ἐν αὐτῷ*. We become the righteousness of God *ἐν αὐτῷ*, "in him," that is, *ἐν Χριστῷ*. In this phrase is comprehended the basic message of our text. *Ἐν Χριστῷ* men are new creatures, verse 17. *Ἐν Χριστῷ* God reconciled the world to Himself, verse 19. *Ἐν αὐτῷ* men become the righteousness of God, verse 21. Indeed there was reason for Paul to desire to be found in him (Phil. 3:9).

²⁷W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (London: Oliphants Ltd., 1944), III, 298f.

CHAPTER VIII

WHO IS RECONCILED?

In chapter five of this study it was pointed out in the introductory remarks that translation and interpretation are closely related. It is possible that the translation of a given passage may so color the meaning that improper interpretations are drawn from it. A clear example of this is our present study, 2 Cor. 5:17-21. According to our English translations, God reconciled the world to Himself. So to the question, "Who is reconciled?" the obvious answer is, "The world is reconciled." And yet it seems apparent that the force of the text is rather that God is reconciled. We firmly believe in the perspicuity of Scripture, according to which this discrepancy is only apparent and not real. In this chapter we shall deal specifically with the answer to the question: Who is reconciled? The answer will be sought in a re-examination of the text from the stand-point of this question, against the historical background. Throughout the thesis, especially in chapter four, the answer has been incidentally given. In this re-examination there may be therefore some repetition of previous statements. Yet an endeavor will be made to keep the discussion and conclusions fresh.

A. The Historical Background

The answer that has been given until recent centuries is that God is reconciled. Generally the Church Fathers so regarded the atonement. The conclusion of Theodore Dierks on the basis of a careful study of the Fathers of the first century following the age of the apostles is that they speak of God being reconciled to man.¹ Mozley quotes statements to that effect from Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, Chrysostom, John of Damascus, Hilary, Augustine, Leo, and Gregory.² Gustaf Aulen, who claims to follow the Church Fathers in his "classic" idea of the Atonement, declares that "God is at once the Reconciler and the Reconciled. His enmity is taken away in the very act in which He reconciles the world unto Himself."³

That it was God who is reconciled was the position of such leading Churchmen of the Middle Ages as Anselm and Aquinas,⁴ and in the main by the Council of Trent.⁵

¹Theodore Dierks, Reconciliation and Justification (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), pp. 13, 163.

²J. K. Mozley, The Doctrine of the Atonement (London: Duckworth, 1915; reprinted 1947), pp. 100-25 passim.

³Gustaf Aulen, Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement, authorised translation by A. G. Hebert, American edition (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 35.

⁴Mozley, op. cit., pp. 131, 136.

⁵Ibid., p. 138.

Earlier Abelard, however, had viewed Christ's death as an exhibition of love to kindle a corresponding love in men's hearts.⁶

The question is not specifically discussed as a separate matter in the Lutheran confessional writings. Yet in them there are frequent references to reconciliation, and almost without exception the statement is that God is reconciled. Typical samples of statements which appear repeatedly are: The Augsburg Confession; "that he [Christ] might reconcile the Father unto us";⁷ and, "we are received into favor for Christ's sake, who alone has been set forth the Mediator and Propitiation, 1 Tim. 2:5, in order that the Father may be reconciled through him";⁸ The Apology; "for Christ's sake God is reconciled and propitious";⁹ The Large

⁶Ibid., p. 132.

⁷Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 45. The German and Latin texts read respectively "und Gottes Zorn versöhnte," "ut reconciliaret nobis Patrem," p. 44.

⁸Ibid., p. 55. The German and Latin texts read respectively "dasz uns um Christus' willen die Sünden vergeben werden, welcher allein der Mitler ist, den Vater zu versöhnen, 1 Tim. 2:5," "quod propter Christum recipiamur in gratiam, qui solus positus est mediator et propiatorium, per quem reconcilietur Pater," p. 54.

⁹Ibid., p. 133. The German and Latin texts read respectively "Christus für ihn gegeben ist . . . und macht uns vor Gott fromm and gerecht," "et Deum placatum et propitium esse propter Christum," p. 132.

Catechism; "Jesus Christ . . . brought us again into the favor and grace of the Father."¹⁰ There is no question but that this has consistently been the interpretation of evangelical Protestantism.

Likewise it is true that other voices have been heard championing views similar to those expressed by Abelard (see above). The most prominent advocate of this view in the sixteenth century was Faustus Socinius. The most influential advocate of this view, as far as modern theology is concerned, was Albrecht Ritschl of the last century. Early in this century P. T. Forsyth declared: "We have outgrown the idea that God has to be reconciled."¹¹ J. B. Lightfoot affirmed: "It is man who is reconciled to God, rather than God to man."¹² Even A. T. Robertson comments on 2 Cor.

5:18:

It is hard to discuss this great theme without apparent contradiction. . . . The point made by Paul here is that God needs no reconciliation, but is engaged in the great business of reconciling us to himself. . . . God has made possible through Christ our reconciliation to him, but in each case it has to be

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 685. The German and Latin texts read respectively "Jesus Christus . . . hat uns . . . wiederbracht [zurückgebracht] in des Vaters Huld und Gnade," "Iesus Christus . . . irati Patris favorem et gratiam placata indignatione conciliavit," p. 684.

¹¹ Quoted by George Cadwalader Foley, Anselm's Theory of the Atonement (New York: Longman's Green and Co., 1909), p. 309.

¹² Quoted by Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 181.

made effective by the attitude of each individual.¹³

Even Lenski bluntly asserts: "It is never said that we reconcile God: never that Christ reconciled God."¹⁴

How are these conclusions reached? Ritschl does so by reason. He declares:

Moreover, a plain contradiction is involved in the way in which Luther derives reconciliation from the love of God, but at the same time derives from the wrath of God the satisfaction which Christ has to work out through the vicarious endurance of punishment. . . . For it is impossible to conceive sinners, at the same time and in the same respect, as objects both of God's love and God's wrath.¹⁵

Further, Ritschl places a distorted emphasis on God's love, to the near exclusion of His holiness and wrath. He declares that there is no other conception to be taken into account than the truth that God has revealed Himself to the Christian community as love. "This is especially true of the conception of the Divine holiness, which, in its Old Testament sense, is for various reasons not valid in Christianity, while its use in the New Testament is obscure."¹⁶

¹³A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1931), IV, 232.

¹⁴R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 1047.

¹⁵Albrecht Ritschl, The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, English translation edited by H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macauley (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1900), pp. 263f.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 273f.

According to this view, there is no need to propitiate God. The suffering and death of Christ are intended primarily to move men to repentance. Portions of Scripture such as the parable of the Prodigal Son and that of the Unmerciful Servant (the master forgave his servant's debt when the latter confessed his insolvency), prove that all that God requires is repentance, for in neither was there any propitiating act to bring about reconciliation. However, the proponents of this view find a real difficulty in the affirmation of Scripture that the world is reconciled, since admittedly the majority of the human race are not repentant. Vincent Taylor attempts to solve the difficulty by asserting:

Christ Himself is the bearer of our penitence because of His self-offering for the sin of the world. The objection that vicarious penitence is a fiction rests upon an imperfect psychology and a small knowledge of life.

He goes on to admit that this view goes beyond the statements of Scripture and the confessions of the Church.¹⁷

Conservative scholars like Robertson and Lenski find themselves compelled to hold the conclusions they state out of loyalty to the literal statements of Scripture, as they understand them. According to their understanding of Scripture, God reconciles men or the world. God is the reconciler, and we are reconciled when we accept God's

¹⁷Vincent Taylor, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Study in New Testament Theology (London: Macmillan and Co., 1952), p. 197.

righteousness by faith in Christ.¹⁸

To a lesser or a greater degree the views that hold that man is reconciled stress the subjective changes in man as constituting the reconciliation. If it is man that is to be reconciled, then it is his repentance and faith that constitute the means of reconciliation. Then there is no accomplished fact of reconciliation in the past. Then the death of Christ on the cross is primarily a dramatic demonstration of the hatred of God against sin and of His love for sinners, which demonstration when viewed by the sinner moves him to repent of his sins and to amend his ways.

B. The Scriptural Evidence Re-examined

Our re-examination of the evidence from Scripture begins with the Old Testament. Even those who reject its authority and validity for Christianity acknowledge that it teaches that God is holy, and can be approached only by sacrifice. But this latter concept, some assert, is a heathenish accretion. What they forget, Mozley answers, is that

it is just this fact that the ways and means of reconciliation are appointed by God, who of His own accord approaches the sinner, which sharply distinguishes the biblical from the heathen conception of sacrifice.¹⁹

Really it is no proof whatsoever to assert that the idea

¹⁸Lenski, op. cit., p. 1055.

¹⁹Mozley, op. cit., p. 11.

of propitiating God by sacrifice is heathenish. The same charge has been levelled against the New Testament teaching about the atoning work of Christ. The same charge is directed against the doctrine of eternal damnation. The result is that by the time that everything "heathenish" and "superstitious" is removed from the Bible, everybody is finally going to get to "heaven." The next step is to get rid of the naive idea of a heaven beyond this life. The final step is to get rid of the idea of a transcendent God who is outside of, and superior to, this world. Man makes gods after his own likeness, and then wonders why his gods cannot help him. Isaiah aptly described such people in the words, "He feeds on ashes; a deluded mind has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, 'Is there not a lie in my right hand?'" (Is. 44:20).

What man needs is to recognize the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy (Is. 57:15). He is the Almighty, who speaks and it is done (Ps. 33:9). He is the Holy One who hates sin and the sinner in his sin (Ps. 11:5). God in His wrath did send the flood of water upon the earth to punish a race given over to sin. God in His wrath did overwhelm Sodom and Gomorrah. God in His wrath did give His people into the hands of their enemies when they chose the ways of sin. The Old Testament closes with a word about the great and terrible day of the Lord.

One does not read very far in the pages of the New Testament before he meets the phrase, "the wrath to come"

(Matt. 3:7). Christ our Savior spoke plainly and frequently about the reality and horror of hell. Paul spoke of the day of wrath when God's righteous judgments will be revealed (Rom. 2:5). The letter to the Hebrews affirms that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (10:31). The book of Revelation speaks of the wrath of the Lamb (6:16), of the great winepress of the wrath of God (14:19), and of the cup of the fury of His wrath (16:19).

These are terrible and terrifying statements. In the light of them it is impossible to argue that God need not be reconciled. To be sure, there is a mystery here that is beyond man's comprehension. But what good would God be if He could be comprehended by mortal minds? Such a god would not be worth having.

This God of whom Scripture speaks hates sin. "He does not permissively accept it as if it were the most natural thing in the world. His holy love is expressed as 'wrath' against the sinner."²⁰ Therefore He has to be reconciled to sinners. It most certainly is not a case of Him waiting for men to be reconciled to Him. The wonder is that God makes the provision whereby He is reconciled. He is love, and therefore provides the means of propitiation. In the Old Testament He appoints sacrifices as the means whereby sinners can approach Him. When we turn to the New

²⁰William J. Wolff, No Cross, No Crown: A Study of the Atonement (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1957), p. 195.

Testament we find that in the epistle to the Hebrews the death of Christ is viewed as the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system, which is therefore done away with. By His bloody sacrifice He makes propitiation for the sins of the people. Now He is appearing before the face of God for us (Heb. 9:24). This statement is closely parallel to 1 John 2:2, where He is described as our advocate with the Father, and as the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10 states expressly that the Father sent the Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Olshausen rightly observes that

if reconciliation were an act taking place in man only, we could speak of no "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18); for then to preach reconciliation would not be to announce an act of God, but only an act of men Even if, therefore, in the New Testament, the expression, "God is reconciled," does not occur . . . , because he appears throughout it as the Author and Founder of this reconciliation, yet there is contained in the very idea of sacrifice and expiation (as the Old Testament plainly shows) a necessary reference to an altered relation of God himself. Every sacrifice is intended to expiate the guilt of men, and propitiate the anger of God; consequently the sacrifice of sacrifices, in which alone all the rest have their truth, must effect that which the others only foreshadow.²¹

Our review of Paul's views is limited at this point to the passages in which he speaks of reconciliation. In Rom. 11:15 the reconciliation of the world is the new attitude that God has towards the Gentiles because of the rejection of the Jews. In Rom. 5:10 it is declared that we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; nothing is said

²¹Herman Olshausen, Biblical Commentary on the New Testament, translated by A. C. Kendrick (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman and Co., 1857), III, 544.

about a changed attitude on our part. In Rom. 5:11 it is stated that we have received the reconciliation; it is a gift bestowed upon us.²² In Eph. 2:11-16 it is affirmed that on the cross Christ brought the hostility to an end; but nothing is said about any change in the attitude of men, very few of whom at that time knew of the crucifixion. Has the history of mankind since shown that universally men have laid aside their hostility to God? In Col. 1:20-22 it is affirmed that God reconciled everything on earth or in heaven by the blood of Christ's cross, in His body of flesh by His death. But most people were unaware of what Christ had done for them when Paul wrote these words. The same is true of what he wrote in 2 Cor. 5:18-19. And even though the world is reconciled, still the plea to men is, "Be reconciled to God." If there is anything that is clear, it is that the mind of the world is not reconciled to God. In the God-world relationship it is God who is reconciled to the world.

But what shall we say in answer to the previously mentioned claim that Luke 15:11ff. and Matt. 18:23ff. "prove" that God does not need to be reconciled? The answer is that both are parables, neither of which is concerned about the reason why God is willing to forgive repentant sinners. In both parables Jesus is describing what God is doing in and through Himself--it is the Jesus bound for the cross who

²²See chapter vi.

tells them. To use them to prove that nothing was required to reconcile God is similar to making Luther's advice to Philip of Hesse the substance of his theology. God graciously receives the penitent sinner because He is reconciled by Christ's redeeming work.

There is a further answer to the problem in our basic text. It is found in the little word *ἑαυτῷ*, which will be now discussed in fulfilment of pledges made in preceding chapters. *ἑαυτῷ* is a reflexive pronoun, signifying that the action of the verb returns to the subject. In every use in the New Testament of *ἑαυτῷ* (dative) in connection with a noun in the accusative case, the principle holds good: the action of the subject, as stated in the verb, upon the object, is indicated by *ἑαυτῷ* to return to the subject. These are as follows (quoted from the ARV):

Luke 19:12, "A nobleman . . . went . . . to receive for himself (*ἑαυτῷ*) a kingdom"; John 19:17, "bearing for himself (*ἑαυτῷ*) the cross"; Eph. 5:27, "that he might present the church to himself (*ἑαυτῷ*)"; Tit. 2:14, "that he might purify unto himself (*ἑαυτῷ*) a people"; Heb. 5:4, "no one takes unto himself (*ἑαυτῷ*) the honor." In the "reconciliation" passages when God is not specifically named as the subject of the verb, then He is named as the indirect object of the reconciliation (Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:16). But when He is named as the subject of the verb, then the reflexive pronoun *ἑαυτῷ* is used (2 Cor. 5:18,19; Col. 1:20).

God's reconciling action concerns the world, has the world in view, but comes back to Himself. God is reconciled. In the previously quoted words of Luther in his Large Catechism, "Jesus Christ . . . brought us back again into the favor and grace of the Father."

Leon Morris, in a very fine examination of the meaning of the reconciliation terminology of the New Testament, points out that in the Septuagint the word *διαλλάσσω* is used in 1 Sam. 29:4 where the Philistines say of David, "wherewith will this man be reconciled to his master?," the point being that David is spoken of as being reconciled, though the enmity to be removed is not his but Saul's, and that in Second Maccabees both *καταλλάσσω* and *καταλλαγή* are used of God being reconciled to men. He declares that Rabbinic literature speaks similarly. He points out that in the New Testament the reconciliation was wrought on the cross before there was anything in man's heart to correspond. The really important part of reconciliation is in the action of God, and not in the sinner's response. Man's response is to what God has done for him.²³ He comments as to the meaning of the term reconciliation:

We are not helped here by the fact that the English terms for reconciliation, etc., do not seem to denote exactly the same things as their Greek counterparts.

²³Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 186-210 passim.

If, in English, we speak of God and man being reconciled, we necessarily think of a reconciliation in which right relationships now exist on both sides, and perhaps the same is true with regard to the Greek terms when reconciliation is thought of as being fully consummated. But it is possible to use the Greek terms to denote the fact that God has dealt with the obstacle to fellowship, and that He now proffers reconciliation to man. Thus Paul can speak of man "receiving the reconciliation," which implies that reconciliation is a boon given by God.²⁴

Of many other witnesses whose conclusions could be reproduced here, only a few are called forward. R. W. Dale affirms that "the reconciliation is primarily, not the removal of our hostility to God, but the cessation of God's hostility to us."²⁵ Paul E. Kretzmann declares:

It is impossible to understand the verb in the active sense: "We laid aside our enmity against God," or: "We were gained to the point that we laid aside our enmity against God." Such an understanding would militate both against the context and against linguistic usage. The subjective side of the act of regeneration and conversion, the laying aside of enmity and hostility, as it effected by the gracious power of God in bringing us to faith, is here not touched upon No, we are here evidently dealing with a change in the attitude of God toward us, in His objective relation toward us. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:19. God has brought about a relationship, by and in which He is reconciled to us, through a change by which He has been turned in our favor.²⁶

Weiss speaks similarly:

From this it is already evident that the reconciliation cannot consist in this, that man gives up his hostile

²⁴Ibid., pp. 200f.

²⁵R. W. Dale, The Atonement (London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1894), p. 263.

²⁶Paul E. Kretzmann, For Us! The Mystery of the Vicarious Atonement (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeograph Co., 1943), p. 26.

disposition towards God God gives up His enmity to men, which is, as it were, forced upon Him by the sin which rouses His wrath; it is He alone that changes His hostile disposition into a gracious one, after He has treated the sinless One as a sinner in behalf of sinners.²⁷

Mozley specifically refers to our text and affirms

it is as impossible to remove from the texture of St. Paul's thought the idea of God being reconciled as to restrict the hostility which exists before reconciliation to man's opposition to God. If St. Paul thinks of God as giving up His wrath against men, then, for him, God is reconciled to man, though in view of the fact that the initiative is with God throughout he may avoid the phrase. In the passage where at first sight it might appear as though there could be no question of God being reconciled (2 Cor. 5:18-20), a more careful study shows the reverse to be the case. Reconciliation is defined as non-imputation of trespasses; this is God's gift to the world; but this is something which, at first, affects only the relationship of God to the world. It is on the basis of this that the appeal to be reconciled to God can be made to men.²⁸

C. Conclusions

The declaration, "God is reconciled," is in accordance with the analogy of faith. It recognizes the holiness of God, and the intensity of His opposition to sin. It affirms the greatness of His love for sinful man, such love that He would restore him to His favor at the cost of the death of His Son. It declares the incomparable dignity of God, who is the offended One because of man's sin. It proclaims

²⁷ Bernhard Weiss, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, translated from the 3rd revised edition by Rev. David Eaton, M. A. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1882), p. 429 fn. 14.

²⁸ Mozley, op. cit., pp. 79f.

a finished redemption to which man adds nothing, but which is offered to him as a free gift. It announces a salvation for all. It affords a sure foundation for the Gospel invitation, "Be reconciled to God."

To recapitulate, the doctrine that God is reconciled is taught by the Old Testament, is taught by the New Testament, was taught by the Church until recent times, is required as a logical conclusion from the statement that the world is reconciled, is required if the Gospel is to be proclaimed as a finished work of redemption, and is clearly contained in the Greek text.

Our study also has shown the need for a translation that will discourage some of the common misconceptions that are nurtured by the present recognized versions. Basic doctrines are involved in these misconceptions. Therefore it is right to be critical of the current translations, and to advocate that proposed earlier in this theses:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come into being. Now all this is from God, who has restored us to his favor through Christ, and has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ restoring the world to his favor, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ as though God were entreating through us: We beseech you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God. The one who did not know sin he made sin in our stead, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

CHAPTER IX

DOES 2 COR. 5:18-19 EXPRESS THE CLASSIC IDEA OF THE ATONEMENT?

It was mentioned in chapter one that one of the questions to be considered in this study of 2 Cor. 5:17-21 is the contention of Gustaf Aulen that this passage supports his classic idea of the atonement. He asserts in his controversial book Christus Victor that

The classic idea of the Atonement has never found more pregnant expression than in the great passage, 2 Cor. 5:18f.: "All things are of God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation."¹

Before examining this assertion by Aulen it is necessary to understand what he means by the classic idea of the atonement. That he may speak for himself his own definition is reproduced here.

Its central theme is the idea of the Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory; Christ--Christus Victor-- fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the "tyrants" under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself. . . . it describes a work of salvation, a drama of salvation; but this salvation is at the same time an atonement in the full sense of the word, for it is a work wherein God reconciles the

¹Gustaf Aulen, Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement, authorised translation by A. G. Hebert, American edition (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 73 (89). In this and succeeding references to Christus Victor, the number in parentheses refers to the edition of 1945.

world to Himself, and is at the same time reconciled. The background of the idea is dualistic; God is pictured as in Christ carrying through a victorious conflict against powers of evil which are hostile to His will. This constitutes Atonement, because the drama is a cosmic drama, and the victory over the hostile powers brings to pass a new relation, a relation of reconciliation, between God and the world; and, still more, because in a measure the hostile powers are regarded as in the service of the Will of God the Judge of all, and the executants of His judgment. Seen from this side, the triumph over the opposing powers is regarded as a reconciling of God Himself; He is reconciled by the very act in which He reconciles the world to Himself.²

To bring the problem into sharp focus, according to Aulen's "classic" idea of the atonement, Christ died to defeat Satan and thus to secure for man deliverance from the powers of evil. The conclusion that was reached in our study of 2 Cor. 5:17-21 was that Christ died to make satisfaction for man's sin to the demands of God's holiness, and thus to secure for man forgiveness and eternal life. Two such radically different interpretations of the meaning of the death of Christ involve far-reaching consequences. Has our study missed the point of the text? Or is Aulen in error? That he is in error is the contention of this chapter. In it we will first review the methodology he employs, and then examine his contention that 2 Cor. 5:18f. stresses not Satisfaction but Victory as the method of reconciliation.

²Ibid., pp. 4f. (20f.).

A. Aulen's Methodology

The procedure that Aulen has followed in Christus Victor is indicated by the sub-title, "An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement." He surveys and states conclusion concerning the atonement as it was viewed by the Church Fathers, the New Testament (especially Paul), Anselm, Luther, Protestant Orthodoxy, and liberal theology. He finds three main ideas of the atonement: the "classic," which he asserts is taught by the Church Fathers, the New Testament, and Luther; the "Latin," which he asserts is taught by Anselm and Protestant Orthodoxy; the "subjective," which he asserts is taught by the various representatives of liberal theology.

The third view will be disregarded in the review made in this chapter, as our main concern here is to determine the accuracy of Aulen's claim that 2 Cor. 5:18f. teaches reconciliation by Victory rather than by Satisfaction. Inescapably involved is the claim that orthodox Lutheran doctrine is much different from that of Luther³ and that of the New Testament.

It is important to know not only what conclusions a research scholar has reached, but also how he has reached them. It is significant that Aulen's methodology in this book is characterized by several grave faults.

³Ibid., pp. ix, 122 (138).

In the first place, his book abounds in sweeping assertions, statements which make bold claims without adequate proof. As an example it is noted that he asserts that the classic idea of the atonement dominates the whole of Greek patristic theology from Irenaeus to John of Damascus, and that likewise it is the dominant view of the Western Fathers.⁴ My study of "Against Heresies" by Irenaeus, whose writings Aulen views as basic in the classic idea of the atonement leaves me at a loss to understand how the latter can so interpret him. Writing before Christus Victor appeared, A. A. Hodge, Alfred Cave, and George Foley deny that the Church Fathers taught primarily the classic idea.⁵ Writing after its appearance, and taking cognizance of it, Theodore Dierks⁶ and William J. Wolf flatly deny Aulen's claim. The latter declares:

Aulen's Christus Victor theme is only one of perhaps four chief themes that relate salvation and atonement to each other in this period. . . . It is obvious that no one concept can be singled out as "the classic

⁴Ibid., pp. 37, 39 (53, 55).

⁵Archibald Alexander Hodge, The Atonement, c.1867 (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1953), pp. 273-82. Alfred Cave, The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1890), p. 332. George Cadwalader Foley, Anselm's Theory of the Atonement (New York: Longman's Green and Co., 1909), pp. 15ff.

⁶Theodore Dierks, Reconciliation and Justification (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), pp. 153f.; cf. 44f.

idea." Aulen misleads us when he implies that it had a definite content, with widespread agreement as to its nature.⁷

Since the foundation of Aulen's classic theory is the assumption that it dominated the patristic period,⁸ the fact that the assumption does not hold casts doubt on the further conclusions he reaches.

A second example of the use of sweeping assertions is seen also in his discussion of Luther. He asserts:

Luther stands out in the history of Christian doctrine as the man who expressed the classic idea of the Atonement with greater power than any before him. From the side-line of the Latin theory he bends right back to the main line, making a direct connection with the teaching of the New Testament and the Fathers. This is his claim to be regarded as in the true sense of the word, catholic. But he is a solitary figure. The doctrine of Lutheranism became a very different thing from that of Luther.⁹

Aulen admits that generally Luther has been regarded until recently as an exponent of the orthodox doctrine of the atonement, but asserts that now we are discovering that this is not true. Hence it is significant that such recent writers as Sidney Cave, Philip Watson, and Edgar Carlson, men who in the main concur with Aulen's view of the atonement, agree that it is not correct to hold that Luther

⁷William J. Wolf, No Cross, No Crown: A Study of the Atonement (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), pp. 94, 102.

⁸Aulen, op. cit., pp. 6, 61 (22, 77).

⁹Ibid., pp. 121f. (138).

taught only the classic idea of the atonement.¹⁰ Gordon Rupp goes much further by quoting with approval the statement of Zeeden:

The orthodox view of Luther in the seventeenth century did remain in an unbroken tradition of faith, with the age of the Reformation. . . . with all its one-sidedness, it comes fundamentally closer to the real Luther than all the modern "Luther Renaissance" with its many-sided source criticism.¹¹

An example of Aulen's method is his extensive quotation from Luther's exposition of Gal. 3:13.¹² In making the quotation he omits the portions that speak of Christ as our substitute. Repeatedly in his study of the Church Fathers and of Luther (and also of the Bible as we shall see) he arbitrarily selects such portions as will bolster his preconceived conclusions. Such a procedure is no credit to a research scholar. Let the words of John Calvin rebuke him:

It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.¹³

¹⁰Sidney Cave, The Doctrine of the Work of Christ (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1937), pp. 179-84. Philip Watson, Let God Be God (London: The Epworth Press, 1947), pp. 124f. Edgar Carlson, The Reinterpretation of Luther (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1948), pp. 178-80.

¹¹Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), p. 16.

¹²Aulen, op. cit., pp. 105ff. (121ff.).

¹³Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1950), p. 32.

A second characteristic of Aulen's methodology is to misrepresent the views with which he does not agree. For example, he criticizes Anselm's doctrine in Cur Deus homo? because it is legalistic, and because the sacrifice of Christ is an offering made by His human nature.¹⁴ He asserts:

Thus the implication of the Latin theory, that the work of God in the Atonement is interrupted by an offering made to God from man's side, is radically opposed to that which is the very centre of Luther's thought--namely, that there is no way by which man may go to God other than the way which God Himself has made in becoming man.¹⁵

But John McIntyre declares that

for St. Anselm the Atonement was an outflowing of Divine Grace, unmerited by man and granted as God's greatest gift to him in Jesus Christ. . . . it is sola gratia that is St. Anselm's theme, and only the most unsympathetic and superficial reflection upon his argument could yield any other conclusion.¹⁶

It is absurd to charge that Anselm viewed Christ's sacrifice as being made by His human nature only. He speaks clearly of Christ as the God-man, in whom his divinity and his humanity are united in one person. It is strange that Aulen should speak so highly of the Church Fathers, and then condemn Anselm for teaching the doctrine which was clearly formulated by the first ecumenical councils, namely the unity of the person of Christ.

¹⁴Aulen, op. cit., p. 117 (133); supra, chapter v.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 121 (137).

¹⁶John McIntyre, St. Anselm and His Critics (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1954), pp. 203, 199.



Likewise, Aulen misrepresents the orthodox Lutheran doctrine of the atonement. According to him, it regards Christ's sacrifice as a human work, offered as a compensation which is the logical compromise between condemnation and free forgiveness.¹⁷ When Lutheran theologians speak of the satisfaction made by both natures of Christ, this is, according to Aulen, only a theological refinement.¹⁸ Over against these assertions of Aulen we place a statement (one of a great many similar statements) from the Formula of Concord, part one, chapter three.

1. . . . we unanimously believe, teach, and confess that Christ is our righteousness neither according to the divine nature alone nor according to the human nature alone, but that it is the entire Christ according to both natures, in his obedience alone, which as God and man he rendered the Father even unto death, and thereby merited for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19).
2. Accordingly we believe, teach, and confess that our righteousness before God is, that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any work, merit, or worthiness of ours preceding, present, or following, that he presents and imputes to us the righteousness of Christ's obedience, on account of which righteousness we are received into grace by God, and regarded as righteous.¹⁹

A third characteristic of Aulen's methodology is his peculiar exegesis of Scripture. He sets the Old Testament

¹⁷Aulen, op. cit., pp. 130f. (146f.).

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 131f. (147f.).

¹⁹Triglott Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 795.

in sharp contrast with the New. He dismisses passages such as Mark 10:45, Eph. 1:7, and 1 Pet. 1:18 with the remark that they are variations of the idea of Christ's conflict and victory. He claims that Hebrews teaches the classic idea of the atonement because of 2:14 ("that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"), and the fact that it presents Christ's sacrifice as God's act of sacrifice. It should be noted, however, that 2:14 is only a passing reference, and does not express the dominant theme of Hebrews. The theme which is emphatically set forth and developed in the letter is that stated in 2:17: "Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (ARV).

Our further comments on Aulen's method of exegesis are limited to his discussion in Christus Victor of Paul's idea of the atonement. We note in the first place that he follows the presentation of W. Wrede, who "makes a determined attempt to envisage Paul's teaching as a whole." He builds on the foundation, "if Wrede is right."²⁰ But on what kind of foundation did Wrede build? He regarded the whole narrative of the last days of Christ at Jerusalem as unreliable,

²⁰Aulen, op. cit., p. 66 (82).

"from beginning to end a creation of the dogmatic idea": in other words, from Wrede's point of view there can be no confidence as to what really happened during the last days of the life of Jesus, nor any satisfactory explanation of His death.²¹

According to Anders Nygren, Wrede asserted of Paul, "He stands much farther from Jesus than Jesus Himself stands from the noblest types of Jewish piety."²² A man who denies the accuracy of the Gospel accounts of Christ's passion, and who so separates Jesus and Paul, cannot rightly interpret the atoning work of Christ.

A second remarkable feature of Aulen's discussion of Paul's teaching on the atonement is that he scarcely mentions, and that only in passing, justification by faith. The same silence is found in his discussion of Luther. Yet he asserts explicitly that Paul and Luther regard atonement and salvation as one and the same thing.²³ What kind of an exegesis is this that omits justification by faith from the discussion of the doctrine of atonement and salvation in Paul and Luther? Why this silence? Is it because justification so clearly explains salvation as based on Christ's satisfaction of the demands of God's holy law, whereby God can reckon men as righteous and

²¹J. K. Mozley, The Doctrine of the Atonement (London: Duckworth, c.1915, reprinted 1947), p. 39.

²²Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, translated by Philip S. Watson (London: Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, 1953), p. 106.

²³Aulen, op. cit., pp. 71, 119 (87, 135).

still be righteous Himself?

Aulen makes it plain that one of the superior features of the classic idea of the atonement is that in it God transcends, breaks through, breaks in pieces the order of justice and merit.²⁴ Therefore Rom. 3:24ff. gives him trouble. He admits that it is a crucial passage, but argues that it does not support the Latin doctrine of the Atonement because it lacks

the idea that the Divine justice was to receive adequate satisfaction for man's default, through the payment made by Christ on man's behalf. According to that doctrine the offering is made to God from man's side, from below; in Paul ^{it} is the Divine Love itself that makes the redemption.²⁵

In a footnote he quotes Wrede as saying that the passage contains nothing inconsistent with the fundamental Pauline thought, that "it is God's own Love itself that, the enmity being ended, brings to pass atonement and peace." The point of that quotation is that something else has brought to an end the enmity between God and sinners, and that Christ's redeeming work follows upon that to bring to pass atonement and peace. But how can Rom. 3:24ff. be read as meaning anything else than that it was Christ's redeeming work that effected the reconciliation?

We conclude this review of Aulen's view of Paul by a quotation from Vincent Taylor, referring to the theories

²⁴Ibid., pp. 71, 79, 113 (88, 96, 129).

²⁵Ibid., p. 72 (88f.).

of G. Aulen and S. Cave:

Each of these theories represent only a part of St. Paul's teaching, . . . one which is not integrated with his main contentions, with the result that their adoption, as the basis of a modern theory, entails the neglect of the greater and more important part of his theology.²⁶

And we conclude this section of Aulen's methodology by two statements from Ramm, the first a quotation from John Calvin, the second his own:

It is an audacity akin to sacrilege to use the Scripture at our own pleasure, and to play with them as with a tennis ball, which many before have done.

The task of the interpreter is to determine the meaning of the Bible, not to verify his prejudices.²⁷

B. Aulen's Interpretation of 2 Cor. 5:18f.

Our discussion of Aulen's methodology in Christus Victor leads to the conclusion that his affirmations cannot be accepted at face value, but must be very carefully examined. We proceed now to scrutinize his sweeping assertion that, "The classic idea of the Atonement has never found more pregnant expression than in the great passage, 2 Cor. 5:18f." He refers earlier to the passage in more detail, thus:

It is important, above all, at this point to see clearly that this work of salvation and deliverance is at the same time a work of atonement, of

²⁶Vincent Taylor, The Atonement in New Testament Teaching (London: The Epworth Press, reprinted 1950), pp. 100f.

²⁷Ramm, op. cit., pp. 33. 85.

reconciliation between God and the world. It is altogether misleading to say that the triumph of Christ over the powers of evil, whereby He delivers man, is a work of salvation but not of atonement; for the two ideas cannot possibly be thus separated. It is precisely the work of salvation wherein Christ breaks the power of evil that constitutes the atonement between God and the world; for it is by it that He removes the enmity, takes away the judgment which rested on the human race, and reconciles the world to Himself, not²⁸ imputing to them their trespasses (2 Cor. 5:18).

The decisive phrase in this statement is: "It is precisely the work of salvation wherein Christ breaks the power of evil that constitutes the atonement between God and the world." It is decisive, because it faces us with the crucial question, "Why did Christ die?" Lutheran doctrine and Aulen agree that Christ died to redeem man. But why did man need to be redeemed? The former declares, "Because he was a guilty sinner who has to face a holy God." Aulen answers, "Because he was an unfortunate victim of the powers of evil." The former affirms that atonement, redemption, reconciliation consists in this that Christ died as man's substitute to make satisfaction to a holy God for man's sins. Aulen answers that atonement, redemption, reconciliation consists in this that Christ died to defeat Satan and the other powers of evil. The former holds that there is no triumph over the powers of evil apart from Christ's satisfaction for man's sin, but that that triumph follows upon His atoning work. Aulen answers

²⁸Aulen, op. cit., p. 71 (87).

that no satisfaction for sin is needed, but that the triumph over the powers of evil is the atonement: "It is precisely the work of salvation wherein Christ breaks the power of evil that constitutes the atonement between God and the world."

Does it? Not according to Scripture. An integral part of the passage beginning with 2 Cor. 5:18 is verse 21. In neither reference to the passage--nor for that matter in the entire book--does Aulen mention this verse. But this verse is Scripture's statement as to how God accomplished--that is, what constitutes--the work of atonement and reconciliation. Here is the statement: "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (ARV). Nothing is said here about Christ's triumph over the powers of evil. What is said is that He as our substitute took our sins upon Himself, that God might be able to reckon us righteous. This is the reason why God is reconciled to the world and does not reckon unto men their trespasses.

We agree with Aulen that Paul emphasized the triumph of Christ over Satan, and the believer's triumph in Him. But we emphatically deny that to Paul this was the work of redemption. He does not teach that Christ redeemed us merely by triumphantly overwhelming the forces of evil. He teaches that Christ redeemed us by taking the guilt of our sins upon Himself and dying for us, by suffering for us the wrath of God's holiness against sin. The problem was not

the possibility that Satan had replaced God as the almighty one. The problem was sin. It was the sin problem that Christ settled by perfectly fulfilling God's law on our behalf by His sinless life, and by His death paying the penalty for the guilt of our sins, whose wages is death. Therefore when a sinner is united to Christ by faith, the holy God sees nothing to condemn, Satan has nothing to accuse of, and death has no claim. Luther lists God's Law and God's Wrath with sin, death, and the devil as enemies from which Christ delivers mankind. Obviously they belong in the category of enemies not because of inherent similarities--how blasphemous such a charge would be--but because of an external factor. That factor is man's sinfulness. Hence Christ triumphs over these enemies by what He does with man's sin. The substitutionary death of Christ is the atonement.

Any explanation of the atonement that fails to emphasize the fact that Christ by His death made atonement for our sins is not a full doctrine of the atonement. Four principal answers have been given to the question, "Why did Christ die?": (1) to atone for the sins of men, (2) to defeat the evil powers to which men are in bondage, (3) to reveal the incomparable love of God, and (4) to call men to repentance and to inspire them to noble living.

All these answers are found in Scripture. But apart from the first one the last three are incomplete and misleading. Sin is more than an evil power to be defeated,

for sin makes sinners guilty before God; until that guilt is atoned for, the triumph over evil powers is of no real value. Sinners need more than a demonstration of God's love; they need to be delivered from the guilt of their sins. Sinners need more than a powerful inspiration to noble living; they need first of all salvation from their sins. The full statement of the doctrine of the atonement includes all these answers. But central and basic is the truth that Christ died to atone for our sins.

1 John 4:10 was referred to in an earlier chapter as a fundamental atonement passage. It reads: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (ARV). This is the reason why Christ came. Because He has made propitiation for our sins, God for His sake forgives sins. This is the promise of the Gospel, as also it is of the Sacrament: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Rich in meaning is the word of dismissal, as found in one Lutheran order of service, to those kneeling at the communion rail:

Our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, who now hath bestowed upon you His holy Body and Blood, whereby He hath made full satisfaction for all your sins, strengthen and preserve you in the true faith unto everlasting life.²⁹

²⁹The Lutheran Hymnary, published by authority of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod, et al. now ELC (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House), p. 15.

The blood reminds us too of the heavenly scene:

These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple (Rev. 7:14f.).

And they have conquered him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death (Rev. 12:11).

Certainly there is victory in the Atonement as the passages just quoted indicate. "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57). Insofar as the theme of victory has been slighted let us be thankful that Aulen has emphasized it. In a day when "enlightened" people regard the devil as a figment of the imagination, let us be thankful that Aulen has reaffirmed his dread reality. Let us be thankful, too, that he knows and proclaims the victory of Christ over Satan. But the message of victory must not be given an exaggerated and improper place in the doctrine of the atonement. The Scriptural doctrine of the atonement is that Christ took upon Himself the guilt and penalty of our sins, as our substitute, and by His death restored us to God's favor.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

In this chapter are summarized the conclusions reached in this study of 2 Cor. 5:17-21, and are stated certain applications arising from that study.

The main linguistic problem involved in this study was that of the structure of verse 19. The conclusions reached were these: that ἦν καταλλάσων is a periphrastic imperfect; that therefore the first clause in this verse is, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself"; and that the remaining clauses of the verse state not the means, but the results, of the reconciling work in and through Christ.

A second linguistic problem considered was that of the force of ἑαυτῷ . Because it is a reflexive pronoun, and because its usage otherwise in the New Testament concurs, it was concluded that this word supports and strengthens the conclusion reached on the basis of other considerations, that God is reconciled.

In the exegetical study the significant conclusion was reached that the meaning of the word reconciliation is best expressed in English as "being restored to favor." This conclusion is embodied in a new translation offered in the thesis.

The study re-iterated the fundamental Gospel truth

that salvation is by grace alone. The work of reconciliation is all of God, planned and effected by God alone without any predisposing merit or contributing effort on the part of man.

Also it re-emphasized the fact that all mankind is included in God's reconciling work.

Further it made clear that it was in and through Christ that God restored the world to His favor.

The study revealed that the method whereby God accomplished the work of reconciliation was that Christ was made sin for us. He was our substitute, who made satisfaction for our sins and propitiated God for us. This, and not redemption by triumph over the tyrants, is the stress of this passage.

Because Christ has made full satisfaction for our sins, God is reconciled to the world, and He views men in a new light, not imputing to them their trespasses. This is the objective reconciliation.

Because of the accomplished objective reconciliation, God has entrusted to believers the ministry of reconciliation, through which the subjective reconciliation of mankind is to be effected. He works through men as ambassadors of Christ, who are to proclaim the message that for Christ's sake God is reconciled, and that by faith men become the righteousness of God in Him. They are to plead with men to be reconciled to God by accepting the finished and offered reconciliation.

The conclusion was reached that the key to the right understanding of reconciliation is found in the phrase "in Christ." Reconciliation is effected in Him. Outside Him sinners are under the wrath and judgment of God. In Him they are the righteousness of God. In Him they are new creatures, members of the new people of God, living in the new covenant, and heirs of the new heaven and new earth.

There are a number of practical applications to be drawn from this study.

In the first place, it presents a number of challenges to the translator of Scripture. It has pointed out the difficulty involved in correctly expressing the meaning of the original text. But it has also underscored the importance of correctly expressing the meaning, lest doctrinal aberrations be abetted by misleading translations.

Our study speaks also to the interpreter of Scripture. It has made clear the fact that the Gospel is obscured and weakened by a failure to grasp or to emphasize the fact of the finished objective reconciliation. If reconciliation is presented as something to be achieved by the repentance of men, then salvation is no longer by grace alone.

Further our study has much to say to the preacher of the Gospel. It is the fact that in Christ the world is restored to God's favor and that in Him all have been pardoned that enables him to proclaim a message which is Gospel in the full sense of the word. It would be good news that

because of Christ's atoning work God will be gracious to the repentant. But it is much better news that God is gracious and is yearning for the sinner's return (Is. 44:22). It would be good news that God will prepare a feast for those who are spiritually hungry. It is better news that He has prepared the feast and is waiting for men to partake of it (Luke 14:16-17). It would be good news that God for Christ's sake is ready to forgive those who repent. But it is better news that He has pardoned and is waiting for men to accept the pardon (2 Cor. 5:18-6:2). It is this fact that enables the preacher to proclaim a finished work of salvation. It is this fact that provides a rock foundation for personal assurance of salvation.

Constantly Satan is seeking to pervert this Gospel. Repeatedly his perversion is seen in the fact that God's act of reconciliation is made to depend, in one way or another, upon human merit. But the contrasting perversion also lies close at hand, namely, to ignore the clear teaching of Scripture that the benefits of the atonement must be personally appropriated. In fact, this is the perversion of the Gospel which is particularly a danger to those who have grasped the glorious truth that God has reconciled the world to Himself. The confession, "I can do nothing for my salvation," is absolutely true in the sense that I can do nothing of myself to save myself. I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, and to that

call I respond by faith. Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to Him. My unbelief is my own fault; my faith is all His work. Yet it is only as I believe that I shall not perish but have everlasting life.

So in the preaching of that Gospel that creates faith, it must be made clear that the sermon and the absolution do not work ex opere operato any more than do the sacraments. In whichever form the grace of God comes, it can be received in vain (2 Cor. 6:1). Faith is not to be equated with the act of church membership, or with the act of partaking of the sacrament, or with the act of hearing the preached Word, or with the act of hearing the word of absolution. True faith brings nothing in its hand; but it does cling wholeheartedly to the promises in Christ. Because faith lays hold of Christ, it is imputed for righteousness (Rom. 4:5). It is he who is righteous by faith that shall live.

The final conclusion from our study is expressed in the words sola Scriptura, Christus solus, sola gratia, sola fides, sola Deo gloria:

Sola Scriptura: Everything we can know and need to know of God's work of reconciliation is contained in Scripture. History, philosophy, psychology may offer illustrations to enable us to better understand reconciliation, but they can reveal no truth not found in Scripture.

Christus solus:

Christ alone is our salvation,
Christ the rock on which we stand.

Other than this sure foundation
Will be found but sinking sand.

Sola gratia: Salvation from beginning to end is a work of grace.

Sola fides: The benefits of salvation are personally appropriated not by merit nor by effort, but by accepting the offered gift by faith.

Sola Deo gloria: Just as the work of salvation is all to the glory of God, so the believer offers his life to the glory of God. He knows that he is not his own, for he is bought with a price; so whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he desires to do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 10:31).

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