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A Ransom for Many:

Satisfactio Vicaria

By M. H. FRANZMANN

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, said: "I will build My Church" (Matt. 16:18); it was His Messianic will and intention to restore the broken communion between God and man, to call into being a new people of God (μου την ἐκκλησίαν), in whose midst God's forgiveness might work and create life eternal (Matt. 16:18-19). Even then, when He announced the building of the new *ekklesia*, Jesus indicated that the realization of this intention would go a way counter to all human thinking and desiring (Matt. 16:23), that it would be realized by way of the death of the Christ: "*From that time forth* began Jesus to show unto His disciples how He must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:21). In the ransom saying Jesus tells *how* the Church, the new people of God, is to be built by His death. Here, too, it becomes clear that the way which Jesus is going is diametrically opposed to the thinking and planning of the heart of man, that it brings with it an inversion of all accepted values. The Church is not a "fruit upon the tree of history"; it is wholly and exclusively the creation of the Christ; it is God's deed.

I. THE CENTRAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RANSOM SAYING

Everything combines to indicate that in the ransom saying we have a word of central significance for the interpretation of the Passion and death of our Lord. It is a saying of the Passion road, a Servant-of-the-Lord saying, a Kingdom (*basileia*) saying, and an ἦλθον (I am come) saying.

A. *The Ransom Saying Is a Saying of the Passion Road*

The ransom saying is spoken on that "*iter valde memorabile*" (Bengel) when Jesus "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). It belongs to that part of the Gospel to which, in Matthew, for example, much had pointed from the very beginning: things like sinful women in the genealogy of Jesus (Tamar, Bathsheba, Rahab), by whose inclusion Matthew made clear "how deeply human sin was intermeshed with the history of Israel and of the Davidic line" (Schlatter), how Israel's past cried for a Savior like Him who had now appeared, whose name Jesus, given by God Himself, proclaimed Him as the Deliverer of a sinful people (Matt. 1:21), as Immanuel, God-with-us (Matt. 1:23); or things like the fact that Jesus took upon Himself the Baptism of sinners and thus made Himself one with sinful mankind, because it behooved Him to fulfill all righteousness, the total will of God (Matt. 3:13 ff.); or the fact that Matthew had referred the word of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 to Jesus, the Caster-out of demons and the Healer of men's diseases (Matt. 8:17): "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Is. 53:4).

The saying is spoken at a point where it becomes evident that the Gospels are (as someone has said of the Gospel according to St. Mark) a Passion story with a preface, that "their account of the life of Christ grows more and more concentrated as it draws toward the end, and that they turn the readers' attention toward every detail of the *passio magna*, to every word that is spoken."¹

Jesus strode on before His disciples, and they were "amazed" and "afraid" (Mark 10:32), not only because of the danger impending; it is an amazement and a fear evoked by the majesty of Him "who holds His own fate and that of His followers in His hand" (Bertram); it is a holy awe at the majesty of the Son of Man, going consciously and voluntarily to His death. Jesus had foretold His Passion and death thrice (Matt. 16:21 f.; 17:22; 20:17 ff.); thrice He had spoken of that Gospel in the Gospel, with its "must" (δεῖ) and "shall" (μέλλει) of the inescapable will and counsel of God; He had spoken of the cup and the Baptism of His suffering. It is in this close and tense atmosphere, this air charged with destiny, that the ransom saying flashes forth and lightninglike illumines the Passion road of the Son of Man.

B. *The Ransom Saying Is a Servant-of-the-Lord Word*

The question whether Isaiah 53 can be the basis and the point of departure for the exegesis of the ransom saying might be debated;² but the saying is unmistakably reminiscent of Isaiah 53. It speaks of ministry, of serving; the immediate context speaks of δούλος and διάκονος (Matt. 20:27); that points to *the* Servant of the Lord. It speaks of the voluntary surrender of life: Isaiah 53 says of the Servant that "He hath poured out His soul unto death" (v. 12). The saying speaks of a ransom "for many" — thrice the Prophet in Is. 52:13—53:12 speaks of the "many" who shall benefit by the suffering and dying of the Servant (52:15; 53:11-12; cp. also 53:6-8). Perhaps even the keyword of our saying, λύτρον, stems from Isaiah 53 if it is, as J. Jeremias maintains,³ merely one of a number of free New Testament renderings of the *asham* of Is. 53:10. This observation puts the ransom saying in a series with other sayings of Jesus (all of them reminiscent of Isaiah 53) which are of singular significance for our understanding of Jesus' own conception and evaluation of His suffering and death. When Jesus says of the Son of Man that "He must suffer many things and be set at naught [ἐξουδενηθῆ] as it is written of Him" (Mark 9:12), the reader involuntarily thinks of Is. 53:3: "He was despised and rejected of men. . . . He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Jesus speaks of a Stronger One who divides the spoils of the strong man (Luke 11:22); we think of Is. 53:12: "He shall divide the spoil with the strong." Jesus expects a criminal's death, and He expresses that expectation with a reference to Is. 53:12: "This that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors" (Luke 22:37). The words "shed for many" in the words of institution are reminiscent of the Hebrew wording of Is. 53:2: "He hath poured out His soul unto death." Jesus' comparison of Himself with the Paschal Lamb which is implicit in the Passover associations of the Lord's Supper likewise recalls Is. 53:7: "He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter."⁴ Perhaps even Jesus' first prediction of His Passion (Mark 2:20) contains a reminiscence of Isaiah 53 — the "taking away" of the Bridegroom (ἀπαρθῆ) recalls the LXX wording of Is. 53:8: αἴρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς. And, finally, the τιθέναι τὴν ψυχὴν of John 10:11, 15, 17, like the διδόναι τὴν ψυχὴν of the ransom saying, recalls Is. 53:10.

Features in the Passion story also recall the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53: Jesus' silence before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, and before Herod (Mark 14:61; 15:5; Luke 23:9; cp. Is. 53:7). His intercession for His enemies (Luke 23:34; cp. Is. 53:12: "Made intercession for the transgressors"); and J. Jeremias' statement⁵ "that the numerous general references to Scriptures found in all three Synoptics in connection with Passion sayings have Isaiah 53 in mind also, perhaps even primarily," seems reasonable in view of the evidence. It is hardly an exaggeration when A. Hunter says: "If we would know how Jesus thought and felt about His passion, we must begin with Isaiah 53." The figures of the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 was for Jesus of central importance.

And the first Church so understood its Lord. Old Testament exegetes may debate the significance of the *Ebed Jabweh* as they will, for the first Church, specifically the Palestinian Church, the Messianic interpretation of at least Is. 42:1-4; 49:6; 52:12—53:13 was fixed, as it had been for Jesus Himself and for the oldest Jewish exegesis.⁶ For the first Church "the Servant" means the Messiah, and the Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth.

The influence of this *Ebed* Christology cannot be measured by statistics on the occurrence of *παῖς* (or *δοῦλος*) in the New Testament; *παῖς θεοῦ* occurs as a title of Jesus only five times in the New Testament. Yet this Christology lives and works on everywhere in the New Testament and embraces the whole faith life of the first Church — in the domains of Scripture proof, in Christological formulation, liturgy, admonition. "There is, therefore, no domain in the faith life of the early church which was not touched and somehow shaped by the *Ebed* Christology."⁷ As an *Ebed Jabweh* saying the ransom saying is of central importance.

C. *The Ransom Saying Is a Son of Man Saying*

Theologians of all stripes⁸ would probably assent to Stauffer's judgment that we have in the Son of Man sayings the words which are Jesus' very own, the words most to be relied on, Jesus' "basic and normative self-interpretation."⁹ In any case the Son of Man sayings are key words of Jesus, and the sketch of the *Via Jesu* which Stauffer in his *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* draws on

the basis of Son of Man sayings has a good Biblical-New-Testamental look.¹⁰

This primal and basic character of the Son of Man sayings is confirmed and made evident by the afterworkings of the Son of Man conception in the Letters of St. Paul. Paul, like the rest of the New Testament, avoids the term "Son of Man"; but in his "new thematic word, which says the same thing,"^{10a} namely, Ἀδάμ — ἄνθρωπος, St. Paul in Rom. 5:12 ff. utters the most fundamental things he has to say concerning the relationship between God and man, a passage which Nygren with good reason considers the climax and heart, the key to the understanding of the Epistle to the Romans.¹¹

The Son of Man sayings speak of the glory and the eternal dominion of the Son of Man, of whom Daniel (Ch. 7) had spoken; they speak of the present authority (veiled in humility) of Him who brings and incorporates the reign of God — His authority to dispose over the Sacred Sabbath, His authority to forgive sins upon the earth; they also speak of the suffering and death of the Son of Man under the must of the will and Word of God. The title "Son of Man" contains the whole paradox, both of the total poverty and of the uncompromising and unrestricted Messianic claim of Jesus. It is the nexus between the Passion and the *basileia*.¹²

D. *The Ransom Saying Is a Basileia Saying*

Therewith we have already characterized the ransom saying as a Kingdom word; for "Son of Man" and "Kingdom" are indissolubly joined. The Son of Man of Daniel 7 stands in extreme contrast to the kingdoms of this world. He not only succeeds them, but also spells their destruction. To the Son of Man is given "dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:14). The ransom saying, too, is in pointed antithesis to the kingdoms of this world (Matt. 20:25-26); and it is concerned quite specifically with Christ's kingdom. The mother of James and John requests places of honor for her sons "in Thy kingdom" (Matt. 20:21). For Jesus, however, a kingdom that is not at the same time the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the heavens is unthinkable. "To sit on My right hand

and on My left is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father" (Matt. 20:23). Jesus' every word and work aims at the royal reign of God, at the hallowing of His name, the being done of His will. When Jesus heals the sick, raises the dead, drives out demons, it signifies that God is here royally at work. "The kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matt. 12:28). With Jesus' proclamation of the reign of God, the reign of God begins; with His announcement of the acceptable year, the year of Jubilee, the year of release and restoration, has begun (Luke 4:19, 21). And Jesus' every word is intent upon the *basileia*, the royal reign of God: His call to repentance, His call to discipleship, His beatitudes, the demand for a "better" righteousness, the radicalization of the demands of the Law (that terribly inescapable "But I say unto you"), His parables, His reproaches, His rebukes, and His polemics, too—they all pursue one end, have one aim: that God count as God among men and in these last days be acknowledged as God in repentance and faith—that God "reign."

His words regarding His Passion are *basileia* words, too; in and through His suffering God becomes King, as is already apparent in the fact that Jesus likes to designate Himself as Son of Man just in His Passion sayings.¹³ Jesus interprets His Last Supper with His disciples as an anticipation of the great eschatological Messianic feast. "Thus it appears that the thought of the Kingdom, so central in the Galilean teaching, glows in the very shadow of the Cross. Jesus both lives and dies absorbed in the thought of the reign of God." And in the Gospel according to St. John, Jesus before Pilate, death-bound, speaks of His kingdom, which is not of this world. (John 18:36 f.)

In all this, including His Passion and death—particularly in His Passion and death—Jesus shows Himself conscious of the fact that He is the Bringer and the Bearer and the living Incarnation of the reign of God. As a βασιλεία saying the ransom saying is of unique significance.

E. *The Ransom Saying Is an ἡλιθον Saying*

This high (Messianic) self-consciousness of Jesus becomes especially apparent in the ἡλιθον character of the ransom saying: for "sayings marked by ἔρχεσθαι in a transferred sense take us to

the very heart of the . . . redemptive proclamation. They speak of Jesus the Messiah, of the purpose and nature of His coming, of man's attitude over against Him, of man's decision for His message. . . . They spring from the Messianic self-consciousness of Jesus and are to be understood in the light of that self-consciousness."¹⁴

The ransom saying is one of a series of such monumentally redemptive sayings of Jesus as "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5:17) — in Jesus the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* has appeared. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13); "The Son of Man is come" to do that which God had promised and foretold as His own deed (Ezek. 34:16) — "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). "I am come that they [My sheep — Jesus is the Messianic Shepherd King of Ezek. 34:23] might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47), and yet His coming issues in judgment, for this coming in surpassing grace is God's final and definitive coming and signifies and evokes final decision and definitive division. The demons sense that they see in the Son of God their superior and victorious Antagonist when they speak of His coming: "Art Thou come to destroy us?" (Mark 1:24); the Baptist knew this when he proclaimed the mightier Coming One as the One who would baptize with Spirit and with fire (Matt. 3:11); Jesus Himself indicated the judgment aspect of His coming in the negative formulation "I am not come" and more than once directly expressed it. He is not come to send peace, but a sword (Matt. 10:34), "to send fire on the earth" (Luke 12:49). For judgment (*κρίμα*) He is come into this world (John 9:39). Before Him part the ways of men, to the left and to the right, forever.

In the content of the ransom saying, we have, then, to do with the quintessence of all that Jesus is and signifies for men, with the fact that has shaped and informed the whole theology of the New Testament, the fact that is the "theology" and the "riddle" of the New Testament, as Hoskyns and Davey call it.¹⁵

After all that has been said, it is clear that the ransom saying is of unique significance for our understanding of the Atonement.

It will not do to make this thought merely peripheral, as, for instance, K. Heim does, as if it were merely an expression of the universal significance of Jesus' deed, as if it were merely one of the "*Reflexbilder, die das Geheimnis des Todes Jesu im Spiegel der ältesten Institutionen der Menschheit hervorruft.*"¹⁶

II. AS A WORD OF MINISTRY THE RANSOM SAYING IS THE CONTINUATION AND CONSUMMATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROCLAMATION OF THE MINISTERING GOD

The Son of Man is come, and His coming signifies ministry. In ministry lies the greatness and the majesty of the Son of Man, who is to come in the clouds of heaven; the greatness and the glory of the universal and eternal reign which He establishes is *diakonia*. The Son of Man is God's definitive, ultimate Word to mankind. It is a word of that God who from the beginning has ministered unto men, of the God who in boundless condescension created man in His image for an I-and-thou communion with Himself and gave him a share in His dominion over Creation: "Replenish the earth, and subdue it." That world at whose consummate splendor the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy, that "very good" world, He, the ministering God, gave to man for his domain. And when this paradisiacal communion was broken and destroyed by man, it was God who, though He cursed the ground for man's sake and subjected it to vanity, yet did so in hope. The angel with the fiery sword was not God's last word even then. His ultimate word was the promise of the Woman's Seed. God chose out a man from among fallen mankind, a man in whom all nations were to be blessed. God, of His good pleasure, made a covenant with him and with the nation sprung from his loins: "I will be thy God." The history of this people of God is anything but an epic of the greatness and the heroic accomplishments of the people of Israel. It is throughout the tidings of the grace and the ministry of God to a rebellious and a stiff-necked people; it is the history of Him who styles Himself the Father, Mother, Spouse, and Redeemer of Israel. The Old Testament is the book of the God who ministers to His people and, through His people, to mankind. It is the high song of the Well-beloved who had a vineyard on a fruitful

hill—"And He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine press therein. . . . The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant" (Is. 5:1, 2, 7).

In the Son of Man this ministering God intervenes consummately and decisively in the history of mankind: "Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them" (Mark 12:6). In Him God speaks His ultimate word, and that word is ministry. This God "has" His glory on high in that He creates peace on earth: He has this glory in active, ministering good will toward men (Luke 2:14). God now speaks in One who is His Son, and His Word is high-priestly ministry, the expiation and cancellation of man's guilt through the Son (Hebrews 1). His Word is the light and life of man, grace for grace, grace and truth, which become living reality in the Son (John 1).

III. THIS MINISTRY OF JESUS IS MINISTRY TO THE FULL: VOLUNTARY, OBEDIENT, TOTAL SELF-DEVOTION

God's last Word, the whole significance of the coming of the Son of Man, is ministry, and it is ministry to the uttermost. It is self-devotion upon the Cross of Golgotha: "God there ministers to us sinners. There the love of God the Father is consummated. . . . The man Jesus, mysteriously One with God the Son, there upon Golgotha, ministers to us sinners."¹⁷ When Jesus gives His life (*ψυχή*), He gives Himself, for "*ψυχή* is life, not as a state of the self, but the self itself."¹⁸ Therein the *ἀγάπη*, the spontaneous, forthbreaking, outbursting love of the Christ becomes fully visible, the love of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us (Eph. 5:2), the love of the Son of God, who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me* (Gal. 2:20). The voluntariness, the free and full obedience of Jesus' going into death appears here, too; that is hinted at in the word *ἤλθεν*, which indicates a goal consciously pursued and is apparent in the Passion story of the Gospels, too. Jesus is not hounded toward Jerusalem, He sets His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). He is not somehow or other caught by His enemies; He confronts His enemies. He does not merely pine away upon the cross; He accepts the strengthening

wine and departs with a loud cry (Matt. 27:50). Jesus' giving of Himself is an act of love, an act which is as such an act of free obedience to God, the fulfillment of all righteousness, the fulfillment of God's will expressed in the Law, the will that Jesus repeatedly summed up in the twin command of ἀγάπη. Schlatter says of the pericope on the chief commandment (Matt. 22:34-40): "This section is indispensable . . . for an understanding of the Cross. . . . Jesus could not . . . go to the Cross, if He saw in the Law any other will of God but that which desires love for God and for man, a will which removes all restrictions upon loving, and makes of all that Jesus is and has a gift proffered to God,—proffered to Him in such a way that it binds Jesus in total communion to men, so that He cannot forsake and despise them."¹⁹

IV. THE WORD *λύτρον* PRONOUNCES A JUDGMENT UPON SINFUL MAN IN HIS GUILT AND LOSTNESS

The Son of Man gives His life, his ψυχή (soul, *nephesh*) into death. The holy will of God is: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4); but here a soul that never sinned, that no man ever convicted of sin (John 8:46), goes into death. We have seen the grace of God herein; but God's ἀποτομία (Rom. 11:22), the "severity" of God is visible here, too, the severity of Him who demands a life for a life. The connotation of *λύτρον* makes this fact clear.

For the word *λύτρον* (λυ-τρόω: means of release) contains, first of all, a verdict upon man and his sin. It points to man's sin as his guilt, his debt, his ὀφείλημα (Matt. 6:12), as an overpoweringly unpayable debt, owed to a King who can call us to account, who has every right to say, "Pay what thou owest Me," a King to whom our lives are forfeit, unless *He* cancel our debt and forgive us (Matt. 18:23-35). This word *λύτρον* marks our human life a forfeited life, a life under threat of death. Matthew 20 and John 10 agree in what they presuppose of man: "The guilt and imprisonment that call for a ransom, and the danger which arises from the wolf's attack, look to the same condition of man. . . . Because man is bound and because His flock is in mortal danger . . . Jesus will not protect His own life, but will die that He may help them."²⁰ All that Jesus presupposes of the state of man in the Parable of the

Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18) as man's normal state, all that Paul says of man's guilt in Rom. 1:18—3:20 and Eph. 2:1-3, of man's being dead in trespasses and sin, of man under the impulse and dominion of the unholy ghost, in demonic revolt against God (Eph. 2:2), of God's wrath in exceptionless vigor upon every ἀσέβεια and every ἀδικία of man, of the inescapability of Judgment and destruction—all that is presupposed in the word λύτρον. The life of the many is a convicted, a forfeited, a lost life.

V. THE WORD λύτρον SPEAKS ALSO OF GOD'S LOVE, OF GOD'S GRACIOUS "NEVERTHELESS" OVER AGAINST THE LOST LIFE OF MANKIND

However, the *συνὴ δέ* of the appearance of the righteousness of God of Rom. 3:21 appears in λύτρον, too, in all its comforting severity. For λύτρον signifies redemption, and that, too, in the strict sense—redemption by way of restitution, restoration, substitution, requital. This holds on either of two possible interpretations of λύτρον. It holds if we interpret λύτρον in the light of the Old Testament word כֶּפֶר with Proksch (which is perhaps the more probable) and understand it in a legal sense, as a payment: "As a 'covering' כֶּפֶר is always used in the sense of an equivalent, as we in German speak of the '*Deckung einer Schuld*,' so that a conception of value is always involved. With this is connected the idea of substitution, which is always given with כֶּפֶר. There is not simply a release from guilt and indebtedness (*Schuld*); rather the guilt and indebtedness is recognized in the substitutionary gift, and payment is made (*wird gebüsst*). As a translation for כֶּפֶר, λύτρον therefore always signifies a substitutionary gift whose value counts as an equivalent (*Deckung*) for the guilt indebtedness, so that the latter is not simply canceled or wiped out. Moreover, λύτρον/כֶּפֶר always is concerned with a substitutionary gift as the equivalent for a human life. . . . The life is per se forfeit, be it to a man (Ex. 21:30) or be it to God—in sacral Law the distinction can hardly be made."²¹

The same holds, too, if we think of λύτρον as belonging to the sacral, sacrificial sphere.—Possibly the two ideas are not mutually exclusive, but supplement each other; in the Hebrew root כֶּפֶר sacral and legal conceptions lie side by side,²² and Paul in

Romans, for example, passes directly from the legal conception of ἀπολύτρωσις to the sacral conception of ἱλαστήριον, without mediation or modulation (Rom. 3:24-25), wherein our confessional writings imitate him.²³ — It is entirely possible that the first readers of the Gospels associated sacral ideas with the word λύτρων; J. Jeremias surmises²⁴ that λύτρων is one of a number of early Christian renderings of the *asham* (אָשָׁם), the guilt offering of Is. 53:10. Now, on the one hand, the idea of substitution is contained in the sacrificial idea: Hermann admonishes us²⁵ to stick to the Old Testament materials themselves in interpreting the blood rites of the Old Testament and then goes on: "If the materials have again and again shown or indicated that the life of man is threatened if expiation is not effected, then inevitably the thought must have existed that the blood of the sacrificial animal effects the preservation of the otherwise forfeited life by virtue of the animal life contained in it. That the idea of a substitution — whatever its extent — did exist ought not to be denied in the light of the evidence of קָפַר and the noncultic use of כָּפַר." And, on the other hand, the substitutionary idea is given with the picture of the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

In either interpretation, or in a combination of the two interpretations, of the word λύτρων, the thought of a substitutionary performance is firmly established. Firmly established, too, is the fact that the λύτρων is God's deed and God's grace; for the acceptance of the קָפַר/λύτρων cannot be forced upon anyone; the acceptance of the λύτρων lies in the free will of the injured person.²⁶ "When the Godhead permits or accepts a ransom, that in any case shows that the Godhead is not irreconcilable, is gracious . . . and so the 'ransom' is one of the points where grace and justice touch each other."²⁷ And in the sacral sphere the basic idea is that the sacrificial blood has expiatory power because God has so ordained it: "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls" (Lev. 17:11). "Reconciliation, atonement, can be made only if the human life is rescued by a substitutionary offering. But this substitutionary offering must be recognized and accepted by God, who cannot be compelled to accept it but acts of His own free will. He alone, then, can determine the validity of the

substitutionary offering; the fact and the value of the sacrifice depend solely and wholly upon His will."²⁸

The λύτρον is accordingly the counterpart of the "But God" of Ephesians 2 — "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (Eph. 2:4-5). The λύτρον is God's great *nevertheless* over against the lost and forfeited life of mankind.

"Mankind" — no less is involved in ἀντὶ πολλῶν, "for many." What is generally conceded for *harabbim*, οἱ πολλοί — that the expression not only can in Semitic-Greek usage mean "many" as contrasted with "all," but also can have an inclusive sense — can be the case with the anarthrous *rabbim*, πολλοί, as J. Jeremias has shown.²⁹ The inclusive sense of πολλῶν here in Matt. 20:28 is ensured by the universalism of Isaiah 40—66, whose 53d chapter is echoed in the ransom saying. It is ensured further by the universal claim implied in the title Son of Man (which Jesus never uses of His mission as confined to Israel), the universalism of the thought of the βασιλεία (Matt. 8:11), which plays a role in the context, and finally by the reproduction of this *verbum Christi* in 1 Tim. 2:6 as ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων. This does not mean Pauline influence upon the Gospel according to St. Mark or St. Matthew. It does mean that Paul was the faithful disciple and messenger of Jesus when he saw the love of Christ in the fact that He died for all, so that all have died (and live) in Him; when he saw in God's working in Christ the reconciliation of the κόσμος (2 Cor. 5:14-19).

VI. THE RECIPIENT OF THE RANSOM IS THE RIGHTEOUS GOD WHO VISITS AND PUNISHES SIN. JESUS' SUFFERING IS EXPIATORY AND PENAL SUFFERING, IS "SATISFACTIO VICARIA" IN THE STRICT SENSE

The word λύτρον signifies the full, all-comprehensive grace of God as it is revealed in Jesus the Substitute. That the word also points to the righteousness and the righteous judgment of God will become clear when we ask, "Who is the recipient of the ransom?" and consider the meaning of ἀντὶ in ἀντὶ πολλῶν. If the forfeited life which is redeemed and rescued by this ransom is the

life of the sinner, the recipient can only be God;³⁰ for our sin always and eternally concerns God: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight" (Ps. 51:4). The God of the ransom saying, who is left unnamed, reverentially, in the saying, "is the God of Psalm 90 who returns men to the dust, whose wrath as the reality of our existence is attested by our dying, the God with whom and of whom one can speak only out of the depths."³¹ If we have to do with Him who is as a consuming fire, then we must not shrink away from the ultimate sign of Jesus' thought here, but must take *avri* quite seriously. It signifies "in our stead," not merely "for our benefit." That can only mean that the Son of Man, who came to minister and to give His life, came under the wrath of the living God in our stead. It means that His sufferings were expiatory-propitiatory and penal sufferings. It will not do to take refuge in a sort of pious agnosticism here and so ignore, or conceal from ourselves, the austere severity of Jesus' thought. Such an evasion is forbidden by Jesus' description of His death as a cup which He must drink, just before the ransom saying (Matt. 20:22; Mark 10:38); in seventeen of the twenty cases in the Old Testament where "cup" occurs in a figurative sense, it signifies a suffering ordained by God, especially penal suffering, judgment. "It describes God's punishment upon human sin" (Hunter). The parallelism of Ps. 75:7-8 is characteristic of this Old Testament usage. V. 7: "God is the *Judge*; He putteth down one and setteth up another." V. 8: "For in the hand of the Lord there is a *cup*, and the wine is red. It is full of mixture; and He poureth out of the same, but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall . . . drink them."³² The cup at which Jesus trembles in Gethsemane can only be the cup of God's wrath over the sins of mankind. God smites the Shepherd (Matt. 26:31). God gives the Son the cup of death, the cup of His judgment upon human sin (John 18:11) — what is the meaning else of that dreadful cry from the cross: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Even Vincent Taylor, who recoils from Luther's interpretation (Luther sees in the Crucified thus crying Him who has gone into hell for us and has been forsaken of God, like one eternally damned), even Vincent Taylor finds himself forced to see in Jesus' suffering a sort of penal suffering (in view of the in-

sufficiency of all other explanation): "The suffering is not a punishment directly inflicted by God and is penal only in so far as it is a sharing in the sense of desolation and loss which sin brings in its train."³³ Jesus, according to Taylor, feels Himself forsaken because He loves sinners: in His love for them He comes so close to their lot that in His spirit He feels the gloom and darkness of divine Judgment upon sin.

But that is not doing justice to the texts themselves, which speak of facts, not merely of feelings. Paul understood his Lord better. Stauffer has given the Pauline thought a trenchant formulation:

God is just. He does not merely cancel the inherited guilt which the millennia of history have accumulated. He visits it upon the Crucifixus. Here God's retributive justice is revealed. And yet, and just in this way, God's will to reconciliation triumphantly asserts itself. For the righteous God acquits guilty man in the name of the Crucifixus and declares him righteous. Here the righteousness of God as God's gift is revealed. That is the paradoxical tension between the two senses of the *iustitia Dei* of Rom. 3:25 f. . . . God's righteousness is retributive righteousness and is a given, imputed righteousness at one and the same time, retributive upon the Crucifixus, given and imputed to us. Behold the goodness and the severity of God!³⁴

We have to do here with the strict *satisfactio* of our Confessional Writings, with the Christ "*vere passus, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, ut reconciliaret nobis patrem et hostia esset . . . qui sua morte pro nostris peccatis satisfecit*" (Augsb. Conf., III and IV), with the *satisfactio* of comforting severity, which he who must condemn himself can understand and appreciate.³⁵

For this reason, too, "the appreciation of Jesus' death as a ransom is a basic part in the confession of His Church, a part that dare not be given up,"³⁶ for this ransom saying speaks, as Jesus always speaks, to the sinners, to us: "Whoso knows the *pondus peccati* (Anselm) . . . assents to Jesus' judgment upon sin and confesses Jesus' death as the Ransom for himself."³⁷

No one will maintain that the cross of Jesus is viewed exclusively from the ransom-*satisfactio* point of view in the New Testament. That the death of Jesus is a battle waged against demonic powers and is a victory and triumph over them is emphasized particularly in the Gospel according to St. John (John 10:12 ff.; 14:30;

12:31).³⁸ But that this is the crucial and decisive point of view, as Aulén, Heim, and others have maintained, cannot be proved exegetically and is, as P. Althaus has seen, dubious for systematic reasons also:

The decisive line of thought is that which refers the cross to God, as a sacrifice offered to Him, as an enduring of His wrath, as means of expiation and atonement. Such a thought has its basis in the facts of the case, too. For Satan's power and authority has its basis in the wrath of God. Satan is only the instrument of God's wrath . . . therefore the conception of Christ's work as a battle with Satan cannot be the decisive and controlling one. Otherwise sin as guilt over against God and the wrath of God will necessarily cease to be accented in theology. . . . Today, too [when conception of demonic powers has an especial appeal] theology must see in the might of the powers of destruction God's judgment upon our sin. And the form of the doctrine of the Atonement, too, must serve that end.³⁹

VII. THE "SATISFACTIO VICARIA" IS ANYTHING BUT A RATIONAL EXPLANATION OF THE ATONEMENT; IT DESCRIBES THE ABSOLUTE MIRACLE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR SINNERS

The Church will probably always have to endure the reproach that the *satisfactio* doctrine is a flat and shallow rationalization of the death of Christ. But the reproach is in reality totally unjustified, for the doctrine of the substitutionary satisfaction is anything but a transparent, dryly rational explanation of what happened in Christ. On the contrary, it resists every attempt to "explain" it. Think of the unanswered and never-to-be-answered question of the "equivalence" of Christ's suffering with the accumulated guilt of mankind. This full and whole substitution on Christ's part can be grasped only in faith, only in prayer and adoration. It is probably no accident that Peter Brunner, who views the Cross from the vantage point of the Church's worship, has portrayed the *satisfactio vicaria* with exceptional beauty and with a hymnic clarity.⁴⁰ We have to do with a fact of love, with the mysterious force of that divine love which reaches out infinitely to draw men to itself, with the power of God's longing for the creature whom He has made in His image and after His likeness, whom He will not let go.

This disposes of K. Heim's dictum that the idea of transferral of

guilt is an unethical, immoral thought.⁴¹ It is just the psychologically incomprehensible, the empirically impossible, the ethically dubious thing—the fact that the consequences of our sinful decisions and sinful deeds which weigh upon and crush us, our guilt, can be taken from us and be laid upon another—just this thing is for God's love (and for His alone) a miraculous possibility. It is just here that God's deed surpasses the measure of all human possibilities; just here God's deed upon the cross is seen as the absolute miracle that it is, as equivalence, as *satisfactio vicaria*. The ἀντὶ πολλῶν of the ransom saying becomes transparent only in the doxology of the redeemed.

VIII. THE RANSOM SAYING IS THE WORD THAT CALLS THE CHURCH INTO BEING AND IS THEREFORE THE CORE AND HEART OF THE CHURCH'S PROCLAMATION, NORM FOR THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH, AND A CONSTANT CALL TO REPENTANCE AND A LIFE OF HOLY FEAR

The ransom saying is a word of immeasurable significance for the life of the church. It is, first, the word that creates the Church. In the ransom saying the Christ has said, "*Fiat ecclesia!*" By His death the Christ builds His Church. Only thus can the new people of God be created. Only by the blood of Christ can those who are afar off be brought near to God (Eph. 2:13). And only by remaining conscious of its origin does the Church remain Church. *Theologia crucis* is theology of remembrance: "Remember," God cries out to Israel, "remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt and that the Lord, thy God, brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm" (Deut. 5:15); remembrance spells obedience. Διὸ μνημονεύετε, Paul cries to the Gentile Christians (Eph. 2:11-12). Remembrance spells faith.

Therefore the content of the ransom saying is the core and heart of the Church's proclamation. Whatever new means and vehicles of proclamation we may find, as Church we can proclaim only one thing, Christ and Him crucified: the Cross, the Ransom, must be preached, not merely touched upon or presupposed. It is in virtue of just this its content that the Word has its divine δύναμις, as the Word of the Cross (1 Cor. 1:18, 23-24). When we say "proclamation," we must think of the Sacraments, too, when speaking of the Church, perhaps first of them. Where the thought

of the Church is alive, the Sacraments come into their own. Church, Baptism, Lord's Supper, all have a common center given them by the Word, the death of Christ as a ransom for many.

The ransom saying is also norm for the life of the Church. The meaning of the life of the Creator of the Church is ministry. The meaning of the life of the Church can only be ministry, *διακονία*, self-sacrificing love. The ransom saying rules out all merely individualistic and contemplative piety. It spells active serving, *διακονία*, and it spells missions, for the Church always sees in the world the *πολλοί* for whom Christ died.

The ransom saying is at the same time a monitory call to repentance for the Church. The "My" of our Lord's "I will build My Church" is powerfully underscored by the ransom saying, and all attempts at self-glorification are cut off at the root. "A dreadful word for all prelates!" Luther says of the narrative in which the ransom saying occurs. And let us not think only of Rome. The danger of self-glorification lies near to us all today, when advancing techniques make possible and almost demand ecclesiastical mass formation. The word has something to say to the more refined forms of prelate-making, too; e.g., to the *iurare in verba magistri* in theology. Think of the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, where Paul labors to bring these advanced theologians, these puffed-up insouciant prelate-makers, back under the Cross.

The ransom saying is, generally, a call to holy fear in the Christian life. "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter. 1:17-19). "Wherefore, my beloved" [since by obedience unto death upon the cross Jesus has been exalted by God to be the *kyrios* before whom every knee shall bow — therefore], work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). By God's grace and by God's action we have been released from prison and have been set free. That means, we have been set free for one another; this freedom is a freedom to forgive. As a Church we live of God's forgiveness; the Church that lives of the Word of the Ransom can live only in the Fifth Petition, or it is doomed.

St. Louis, Mo.

NOTES

1. W. Elert, *Der Christliche Glaube*, p. 416.
2. *Tb. W.* IV, 708, 11 ff.; n. 442; 709; 29 f. (*Tb. W.* will be used throughout for Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament.*)
3. J. Jeremias, *Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (3d ed., 1949), pp. 108 ff.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
5. Jeremias, *Tb. W.*, V, 706, 697, 8 ff.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 703—709.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 709.
8. Cp., e. g., Hoskyns and Davey, *The Riddle of the New Testament*, p. 112.
9. *Theologie des N. T.*, p. 10.
10. *Tb. des N. T.*, p. 10 ff.
- 10a. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
11. *Commentary on Romans*, pp. 20 ff.
12. Cp. Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, pp. 258 f. "This usage indicates how intimately the Kingdom and His death are related in His thinking. . . ."
13. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
14. Schneider, *Tb. W.*, II, 664 f.
15. *Riddle of the N. T.*, p. 172.
16. *Jesus der Weltvollender* (3d ed.), p. 127.
17. P. Brunner, *Zur Lehre vom Gottesdienst, Leiturgia*, 2, pp. 147 f.
18. Buechsel, *Tb. W.*, IV, 343, 32 ff., cp. Blass-Debrunner, *Grammatik*, § 283, 4.
19. *Der Evangelist Matthäus*, p. 657.
20. A. Schlatter, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, p. 657.
21. *Tb. W.*, IV, 330.
22. Cp. Proksch, *Tb. des A. T.*, p. 558.
23. Cp. E. Schlink, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, p. 128.
24. *Tb. W.*, V, 708.
25. *Tb. W.*, III, 311.
26. Proksch, *Tb. W.*, IV, 330.
27. Buechsel, *Tb. W.*, IV, 342.
28. Proksch, *Tb. des A. T.*, p. 561.
29. *Abendmahlsworte*, pp. 91 f.
30. The devil cannot be thought of as the recipient of the ransom, cp. Buechsel, *Tb. W.*, IV, 345.
31. Buechsel, *Tb. W.*, IV, 345—346.
32. Cp. also Is. 51:17, 22; 49:12; Ps. 11:6-7; Jer. 25:15-38; Lam. 2:13; 5:21-22.
33. *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, pp. 159 ff.
34. *Tb. des N. T.*, p. 126.
35. Schlatter, *Neutestamentl. Tb.*, II, 262—263.
36. Buechsel, *Tb. W.*, IV, 351.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Cp. V. Taylor, pp. 260 f., "Aulén is completely justified in maintaining that the idea of the death of Jesus as the conquest of Satan, evil, and death . . . is rooted in the Gospel tradition. . . . Undoubtedly it is one of the ways in which Jesus related His Passion to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. More central is the belief of Jesus that His Messianic suffering is representative and vicarious."
39. *Die Christliche Wahrheit* (2d ed., 1949), II, 260—261.
40. *Zur Lehre v. Gottesd.*, e. g., pp. 126, 127, 136, 148, 149.
41. *Jesus der Weltvollender*, p. 128.