

dwell in the midst of the world and to establish his sanctuary as the place from which he sends forth his judgement and redemption (Ps. 99 etc.). Moreover, it is in this sanctuary that God enters into a relationship with his people by an act of atonement such as can only be effected in the sanctuary (Lev. 16.16 ff). God makes a covenant with his people and separates them from the world as his own possession, and vouches himself for this covenant. 'Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy' (Lev. 19.2), and again, 'I the Lord, which sanctify you, am holy' (Lev. 21.8). This is the foundation on which the covenant is based. All the subsequent legislation presupposes and is intended to maintain the holiness of God and his people.

Like God himself, the Holy One, the people of his sanctuary are also separated from all things profane and from sin. For God has made them the people of his covenant, choosing them for himself, making atonement for them and purifying them in his sanctuary. Now the sanctuary is the temple, and the temple is the Body of Christ. Hence the ultimate purpose of God, which is to establish a holy community, is at last fulfilled in the Body of Christ. For that Body has been separated from the world and from sin, and made the peculiar possession of God and his sanctuary in the world. God dwells in it with the Holy Spirit.

How does all this come to pass? How does God create a community of saints out of sinful men and women? How can he avert the reproach of unrighteousness if he makes a covenant with sinners? How can the sinner become righteous without impairing the righteousness of God? The answer is that God justifies himself by appearing as his own advocate in defence of his own righteousness. And it is in the cross of Christ that this supreme miracle happens (Rom. 3.21 ff). It is necessary for the sinner to be parted from his sin and still live before God. But so closely is his life identified with sin that the only way in which that can be achieved is by dying. That is to say, the only way for God to maintain his righteousness is by putting the sinner to death. The problem is, how can the sinner live, and be holy before God?

This problem is solved by God himself becoming man, taking

upon him our flesh in his Son Jesus Christ, and in his body bearing our flesh to the death of the cross. In other words, by putting his own Son, the bearer of our flesh, to death, he puts to death all flesh on earth. Now it is revealed that none is good, save God alone and that none is righteous but he. Thus God has given terrible proof of his own righteousness (*ἐνδειξίς τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ*, Rom. 3.26). In order that he *alone* might be righteous, it was necessary for God to deliver the whole human race to death on the cross in the judgement of his wrath. The death of Jesus is the manifestation of God's righteousness, it is the place where God has given gracious proof of his own righteousness, the place where alone the righteousness of God will dwell. By sharing in this death we too become partakers of that righteousness. For it was *our* flesh Christ took upon him, and our sins which he bore in his body on the tree (I Pet. 2.24). What happened there to him happened to us all. He shared our life and death, that we might partake of his life and death. Since God had to establish his own righteousness in the death of Christ, it follows that we are with him in the place where God's righteousness is to be found, that is, on the cross – for he bore our flesh. Having thus died with him, we become partakers in the righteousness of God through the death of Jesus. This righteousness of God which effects the death of us sinners, is in the death of Jesus his righteousness *for us*. For the death of Jesus establishes not only the righteousness of God, it establishes his righteousness for us who are embodied in the death of Christ: 'that he himself might be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus' (Rom. 3.26). The justification of the sinner therefore consists in the sole righteousness of God, wherein the sinner is utterly and completely unrighteous, and has no righteousness whatever of his own, side by side with the righteousness of God. Whenever we desire an independent righteousness of our own we are forfeiting our only chance of justification, which is through God and his righteousness. God alone is righteous. On the cross this truth is apprehended as our condemnation as sinners. But when we are brought to faith in the death of Christ, we receive the righteousness of God triumphant on the cross in

the very place where we receive our own condemnation as sinners. We can then receive justification because we willingly renounce every attempt to establish our own righteousness and allow God alone to be righteous. Thus the only way we can be righteous in the sight of God is by recognizing that he only is righteous, and we ourselves sinners in the totality of our being. At bottom, the problem of our righteousness before God, sinners though we be, is the problem of how God alone can be righteous over against us. The only ground for our justification is the justification of God. 'That thou (i.e. God) mightest be justified in thy words, and mightest prevail when thou comest to judgement' (Rom. 3.4).

All that matters is that God's righteousness should prevail over ours, that God's righteousness should be maintained in his own eyes, and that he alone should be righteous. This is the divine victory which is fought and won on the cross, and it is this that makes the cross an act not only of judgement but also of atonement (*ἰλαστήριον*, verse 25) for all who believe that in the death of Christ God alone is righteous, and who recognize their sins. The righteousness of God itself effects atonement (*πρόθετο*, verse 25). 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself' (II Cor. 5.19). 'Not reckoning unto them their trespasses' – he bore them, and bore the death which they deserved. 'Having committed unto us the word of reconciliation'; this word looks for faith, the faith that God alone is righteous, and in Jesus has become our righteousness. But between the death of Christ and the apostolic gospel of the cross there lay the resurrection, which alone gives the cross its redemptive power. The gospel of Christ crucified is always the gospel of him who was not holden of death. 'We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of God, as though God were entreating you by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled unto God.' The message of the atonement is the word of Christ himself. He is the risen Lord, who bears witness to himself in the word of the apostle as one who was crucified. Discover your true selves, says the apostle, in the death of Jesus, in the righteousness of God which is granted there to us. The man who discovers his true self in the death of Jesus, discovers it in the sole righteousness of God.

'Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' The innocent victim is put to death because he bears our sinful flesh. He is hated by God and men and accursed, made guilty for the sake of our flesh. But *we* find in his death the righteousness of God.

We are in him in virtue of his incarnation. Thus he died for us that we sinners might become in him the righteousness of God, as sinners absolved from sin through the sole righteousness of God. If in the sight of God Christ is our sin (which deserves condemnation) then we are righteousness in him (though of course this righteousness is not our own – *ἰδία δικαιοσύνη*, Rom. 10.3; Phil. 3.9), but in the strictest sense the righteousness of God and his alone. Hence the righteousness of God means this, that we who are sinners become his righteousness, and our (that is, his) righteousness (Isa. 54.17) means that God alone is righteous, and we are sinners accepted by him. The righteousness of God is Christ himself (I Cor. 1.30). And Christ is 'God with us', 'Immanuel' (Isa. 7.14), The Lord our Righteousness (Jer. 33.16).

The proclamation of the death of Christ for us is the preaching of justification. The means whereby we are incorporated into the Body of Christ, that is, into his death and resurrection, is baptism. Just as Christ died once and for all, so we are baptized and justified once and for all. Both events are in the strictest sense *unrepeatable*. Only repeatable is the recollection of the event that happened for our sake once and for all, and it needs to be repeated daily. But our recollection is always different in kind from the reality itself. If we forfeit reality, we can never recover it. The Epistle to the Hebrews is right in insisting on this (Heb. 6.5 f; 10.26 f). 'If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' The baptized always stand under the rule 'Know ye not?' (Rom. 6.3; I Cor. 3.16; 6.19), and 'Reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 6.11). All that can happen has happened already, not only on the cross, but also in us. We have been separated from sin, we are dead, we are justified. With that the work of God is complete. He has established his sanctuary on earth in righteousness. This sanctuary is Christ, the Body of

Christ. Our separation from sin has been accomplished through our death as sinners in Jesus Christ. God has prepared himself a people which has been justified from sin. This people is the community of the disciples of Jesus, the community of the saints. They are taken up into his sanctuary, and in fact they are his sanctuary, his temple. They are taken out of the world and live in a new realm of their own in the midst of the world.

Henceforth the New Testament simply calls the Christians 'saints'. It does not, as we might have expected, call them 'the righteous', perhaps because that term hardly does justice to the gift they have received. In any case, its reference is to the unique event of baptism and justification. It is true, of course, that our recollection of that event has daily to be renewed. It is equally true that the saints remain justified sinners. But there is also a further gift than these, the gift of final perseverance, or sanctification. Both gifts have the same source. Jesus Christ and him crucified (I Cor. 1.2; 6.11), and both have the same content, which is fellowship and communion with him. They are inseparably connected, but for that very reason not identical. Justification is the means whereby we appropriate the saving act of God in the past, and sanctification the promise of God's activity in the present and future. Justification secured our entrance into fellowship and communion with Christ through the unique and final event of his death, and sanctification keeps us in that fellowship in Christ. Justification is primarily concerned with the relation between man and the law of God, sanctification with the Christian's separation from the world until the second coming of Christ. Justification makes the individual a member of the Church whereas sanctification preserves the Church with all its members. Justification enables the believer to break away from his sinful past, sanctification enables him to abide in Christ, to persevere in faith and to grow in love. We may perhaps think of justification and sanctification as bearing the same relation to each other as creation and preservation. Justification is the new creation of the new man, and sanctification his preservation until the day of Jesus Christ.

Sanctification is the fulfilment of the divine purpose enunciated