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# Paul's conception of the atonement

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B O S T O N U N I V E R S I T Y

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF THE ATONEMENT.

Submitted by

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*Approved*  
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Paul's Conception of  
The Atonement.

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- I - 1. The Cross of Christ is the very soil from which the roots of Paul's christian thought draws the nurture that gives strength and growth to the stalwart trunk of the tree of christian doctrine in whose branches theologians of all ages have sat to build their nests of theological thinking. Everything in which the Apostle exults finds root in this soil. The Cross of Christ is the pivot upon which swings the balance wheel of the Pauline gospel.\*
- I- 2. Like every other doctrine in theology the doctrine of atonement embodied a variety of theories. Even in their exegesis of Paul's statements concerning the atonement scholars hold diverse opinions as to his conception of the doctrine. It is not my intention to deal with the various theories of the atonement, trying to fit any one of them to Paul's teaching, but from the language of the Apostle that is unmistakable in its meaning, I shall, in no dogmatic or arbitrary manner endeavor to present the significance, the necessity, and the result of the Cross as conceived by the Apostle.
- I - 3. Believing that no one term is sufficient to describe the meaning of the Cross as conceived by Paul, I shall employ various terms used by him, of which account must be taken. It is my

\* 1 Cor. 1:18.

conviction that neither those who see only an objective side to the atonement, or those who claim it to be wholly subjective have stated the whole truth, but I am persuaded that we must, in order to be consistent with Paul's teaching take a middle ground and recognize in his teaching both a judicial and an ethical side.

- II - 1. In Paul's letter to the Romans he tells them that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, for in it is revealed, not only the righteousness of God but also His wrath. But before taking up ~~the~~<sup>is</sup> phase of the subject let us see if we can find in Paul's writings any reasons stated for the necessity of such revelations of God, or in other words, any necessity for the atonement. First let us, if we can, get a glimpse of the conditions which, as we believe, called forth this act of God, the atonement. The ground is found in the letter to which I have just referred in that wonderful argument for the universal need of such a plan of salvation.
- II-2. Both Jews and Gentiles are in need of salvation, for both alike are under wrath; the former because they have abused the knowledge revealed unto them thru the Law, the latter because they have neglected to see ~~in~~ the knowledge of God revealed unto them in the world of nature. The sinning Jew cannot boast of belonging to God because he is in possession of the Law, for the same Judge who judges the Gentile, who is without the Law will judge them, according to the light they have received thru the Law. Circumcision, to the transgressor of the Law

is of no value. The Jews are not in any way superior to the Gentile, for all alike, Jews and Greeks were in subjection to sin.

II - 3. By their continuance in sin men became alienated from God. \*-1  
 By sin men were rendered powerless for good.\*-2. By it  
 man's spiritual nature became blighted, and thru the weakness  
 of his earthly nature he was not able to obey the Law. \*-3.  
 Man, governed by his earthly nature, in which there is nothing  
 good, cannot do even what he would. \*-4. Men having sold  
 themselves into slavery were not at liberty to satisfy their  
 own desires, but must do what their master, Sin, demands.  
 They are not only unable to refrain from doing the things they  
 would do, but they do the things they would not. The Law  
 under which they have placed themselves is even in conflict  
 with the law of the higher self. Sin has dominion over them.  
 As sin cannot be perpetuated in life eternal, there must be  
 some means of putting an end to it here. To put an end to  
 noxious weeds that grow in our gardens we dig down and get  
 at the roots, and just so with sin, if it were to be dealt  
 with effectually the roots must be killed. And since it is  
 rooted in the selfish nature of man and inseparable from it,  
 that fleshly nature, the lower, self-seeking and self-loving

\*-1 Romans 8:2.

\*-3 Romans 8:3.

\*-2 Romans 5:6.

\*-4 Romans 7:18.



nature, in which sin finds its lower roots, must die. If man was to attain to the true life intended for him by God; if he was to attain to that purpose for which he was created, this nature, in which is rooted that which will baffle God in His great purpose and lead man to eternal destruction, must die.

III - 1. Since Paul had found that no man, Jew or Gentile could be justified by the works of the Law, he declared that, apart from the Law the righteousness of God, which is the Divine approval, or in other words, man's justification, is thru faith in Jesus Christ.\* By showing that under the Law righteousness was utterly impossible, Paul proved to the Jewish opposition that the Cross met and ended the Law. The sinning Jew, though he possessed the Law, was equally guilty before God with the Gentile, whose law was written on his heart. All sin, whether in Jew or Gentile deserves to be punished, and God, to be consistent with His nature must allow sin to work out its own punishment. The Divine moral order is such that sin works its own destruction. God gave His Son to suffer the working out of this law and so manifest God's righteousness in relation to sin, that men would be saved from sin. He allowed men to see sin work its worst on Christ. Not that God punished His son, but He permitted him to be punished by sinners. God did not inflict punishment upon Christ, but gave him into the hands of sinful men that sin might manifest its own destruction.

But it was God's will to **forgive**, and He was already

\* Romans 3:20-22.

forgiving. His long forbearance had caused some to think He was indifferent to sin. It was necessary for God to show that He was not indifferent to sin. There was occasion for such a demonstration of His righteousness as is manifest in the Cross, to show that there is no laxity on His part toward sin. It was God's purpose to justify the believer. To carry out this purpose God gave His Son to die. And Christ showed forth in his own person what sin entailed on sinners under the righteousness of God. He came under the action of the Divine wrath; not that Christ's death was in any <sup>sense</sup> penal. Christ did not suffer punishment as inflicted by the hand of God. God did not inflict on Christ, the innocent and undeserving, the punishment or penalty required by His justice to be inflicted upon sin which rightly deserved it. But God is Law as well as Love, and this Law entails the just consequences of sin. Under the Law came the Christ, nor did the Law turn aside for even the Son of God. The cup was bitter; but for Christ to let it pass from him and at the same time fulfil the Law was impossible. To refuse it means failure in His great purpose; to drink it means redemption of the world. Had Christ refused, God would have failed to accomplish His purpose. Satan would have been enthroned and God dethroned.

It was sin in its combined strength that brought about the death of Christ. With the very worst that sin could produce being brought together for the one end, sin accomplished the death of Christ. But in accomplishing this it worked out God's purpose, its own destruction.

Christ's death was the means by which God could carry out His purpose in consistency with His own nature. God set forth His Son in order to reconcile the justification of believers with His own justice. By this act He was both just and justifier. Christ's death was not only an appeal to the human heart but also a revelation of the righteousness of God which had been obscured by His forbearance with humanity, in their sins. By this act God appeared before the world as just and yet He forgives all who have faith in Jesus Christ.

III -2. From this point of view, is it not clear that the penalty which God has attached to sin, is not that of a stern Law giver, but love working toward the fulfillment of His gracious loving purpose? The lack of love is the cause of all evil. And since evil is rooted and grounded in the place which ought to be occupied by love, there must be a change. It is here we find one of the reasons for Christ's acceptance of the cross.

When God created man he said, - "Let us make man in our own image." \* Christ saw that image being defaced, and man, the highest<sup>st</sup> creation of his own hands going to destruction. And as he was Mediator on the first occasion, the occasion of creation, so now he must act as Mediator to restore man to that state in which he might have resting upon his<sup>m</sup>, not the wrath of God but the Divine approbation. We do not use the term, Mediator, in the sense of pleading or interceding that God might withhold His wrath, but in the sense of "agency"

\* Gen. 1:26.

whereby peace might be restored between man and God.

When Adam ceased to render obedience to God the relations between God and Man were at once changed. The righteousness at once displayed itself in wrath. The very nature of God is such that He recoils Himself from sin. He must be just as well as justifier of the transgressor. But His character, being love, demands a means for the salvation of the transgressor. With such conditions before us we can readily see that it was not only necessary for God to reveal to men His love, but also to manifest his righteousness in relation to evil, and His wrath toward it. God's nature is antagonistic to sin and He is ever hostile to it. If it were not that the wrath of God against sin were revealed by Christ, we as sinners, would still be in danger of being swept away by His wrath. But the righteousness of God, in His dealing with sin is revealed by the Cross, and thru Christ we have access into His grace.\*

Paul's letter to the Romans Ch. I, declares God's wrath is revealed unto them in both bodily dishonor and spiritual dishonor. He suffered them to sink lower and lower in the scale. Because they foolishly transformed the glory of the incorruptible God into a likeness of corruptible man, and bird, and beast, and reptile, God abandoned them to impurity, suffering them to follow the cravings of their lower passions till they destroyed their own bodies. And because they would not have God in their thought He abandoned them to depraved thoughts, so that their minds could not discern spiritual things. We

\* Romans 5:2.

are not to infer from this that God brought any outside influence to bear upon them to sink them into such depravity, but such is the moral order of the universe which cannot be changed to suit special conditions. On the contrary, God throws about man every possible influence that will assist him to rise instead of fall. It is for this reason and with this aim that He makes such a costly sacrifice.

If we could get a true conception of the wrath of God we should understand it as God's love operating against sin. Sin is contrary to God's purpose, and He must ever act against that which works for the destruction of His own creatures. The question might be asked, "Why does God permit sin to exist?" Has he not the power to abolish sin altogether? In reply to such questions I would say, yes, that God has the power to end all sin. He could coerce men into doing His will, but He has created men moral beings and as such they are free moral agents. To coerce would be to destroy man as a moral being and make him a mere machine. Hence the continual struggle with evil. Man to be man, must have within him both the potentiality of perfection and the possibility of destruction. Since man thru sin has alienated himself from God, he must enter into proper relationship with God by his own free will. It is for this reason that God made this great sacrifice. Why God allows sin to remain we don't know; but it was His plan that we should be given our existence as free moral agents, and then be brought into oneness with Him-

self by perfecting our personality. Man by his free will alienated himself from God and so by his free will must return from this state of separation from God to a state of oneness with God. God throws about us every possible influence that will raise us to that high ideal for which He created us. It was His plan that we should begin down low, and by a process of development attain to the highest spiritual life possible. He knew from the beginning that we would make mistakes, and so provision was made. Christ was the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

III - 3. Christ suffered on our behalf and for our sakes, in the hope that His suffering would so manifest the love of God toward us that we would be brought to salvation. "It was God's purpose in Christ to reconcile all things to himself thru the blood of the Cross". God so loved us that he surrendered His Son to the horrible death of the Cross to demonstrate His Love and His power to save men from the terrible consequence of sin. Such demonstration could not be surpassed. This is the supreme proof of God's love.

And does not Paul make our hope of salvation almost a reality when he says that since we have been reconciled by virtue of the shedding of the blood of Christ how much more shall we be saved by virtue of his life? God provided this complete sacrifice in order to so reveal His love toward us, that in the heart of man might be kindled a flame of love that would save us from the sure penalty of sin. Could any-

thing have more power to generate in the human heart a constraining influence? God could have revealed no greater love than was demonstrated in setting forth His Son. There could be no more powerful motive to lead men to Himself. The infinite love of God is revealed in Christ taking to himself the death of a sinful race and suffering all that their sins entailed. Him, who was made to be sin realized the consequences. The Garden and the Cross show us what it meant for Christ to make our sins, with the effect of God's judgment upon them, his own. The love of Christ that enabled him to drink the cup with all its bitter dregs for our sakes makes the love of God, who was in Christ, appeal to us. And yet Paul says that if there is any other thing necessary to our salvation that God, who has already given the highest and most costly sacrifice, will withhold nothing. Could man ask for any further proof of God's love? Place such love along side of our human love and it stands as far above it as the Heaven is above the earth. "Even for an upright man would scarcely anyone care to die," said Paul, "but while we were yet enemies of God," godless men, sinning against God, He puts His love far beyond any possibility of doubt, by giving His own Son to die on our behalf. Christ has done for his enemies what man would scarcely do for his friend. We were helpless; we were powerless; we were unable to save ourselves, and in an opportune time Christ died for us. "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." \*

\* Romans 5:8.



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He saved us from death by dying Himself.

IV- A.1.(a) As has already been intimated, it is my purpose to take up the various terms used by the Apostle in explaining the work of the atonement, and show by his use of these terms that to his mind there are two aspects to the redemptive work of Christ.

For many years before Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans he desired to go to Rome, but being deterred so long, and encountered by dangers so often in his missionary work in those provinces, in which the Spirit of God had led him, he feared at times that his life might not be spared to carry out his desired purpose. And, finally, when he had finished the work that God had called him to do in those parts there was left but one task before him e'er he set out on his proposed voyage to Spain and Rome. But this unfinished task was by no means of minor importance. He has before him the possibility of uniting with the Mother Church at Jerusalem those churches, which he had successfully organized, or in other words the union of Jew and Gentile. With him were the representatives of the various churches, bearing the collections for which Paul had labored so earnestly. Would the Mother Church receive the money and fail to recognize the motive? It was a critical moment for Paul. His friends at Miletus wept sorely on his departure. The brethren at Tyre and Caesarea besought him not to go to Jerusalem. His zealous



opponents had made much trouble for him in the Roman provinces. They had sought in vain for his life. They had done much destructive work. They had denied his Apostolic authority, and denounced him as a proclaimer of false doctrine. Their efforts to destroy his work was not without some degree of success. And it was probably their success that prompted Paul to write this epistle to the Romans, in which he prepared a complete and comprehensive statement of the fundamental truths of the gospel which had been entrusted to him by God. The substance of the whole exposition is justification by faith. The theme is contained in the 17th verse of the first Chapter, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe." \*

(b) Here we see, not only a revelation of the righteousness of God, but also His wrath. The former is revealed in the Divine approval as manifested in the obedience of Christ, the latter in Divine disapproval, as represented in the bodily and spiritual dishonor. The Gentiles have a twofold manifestation of Divine wrath. First in bodily dishonor, their bodies being abandoned by God to impurity, and secondly in spiritual dishonor, being abandoned to depraved thoughts, so that they did all kinds of vice and wickedness. As Paul looked over humanity in all its vice and wickedness, beholding little else but marks of physical and spiritual depravity, he could

\*Romans 1:17.

not but think that the entire world had been forsaken by God. Man had changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man and birds and beasts and reptiles. \*1 When a few who felt themselves ~~secure~~, because of their possession of the written Law and the visible marks of the Covenant with their Father Abraham upon their bodies, were willing to condemn the vices of the great masses, of which they themselves were guilty, Paul turned on them with the charge that they participated in the very corruption which they condemned in the heathen, and he proves to them that God is a unit and has but one method for dealing with sin, whether in Jew or Gentile. God's judgment falls upon those who are disobedient to Truth, upon Jew first and also upon the Greek. Those who sin without law will also perish without law, and those who sin under law will be judged as being under the law. \*2

(c) The function of the Law is not to save men but to convict them of their sin. It provokes to sin. Our sinful passions being aroused by the law become active with the result that our lives bear fruit unto death. Our natural impulses are challenged and the sin that is latent in us is soon made manifest. The Law came not to justify but to bring men to a consciousness of their sin. The divine function of the law was not to give life, for it was incapable of doing that, but rather ~~a guide~~ to lead men to Christ, in order that we might be pronounced righteous as a result of faith.

\*1 Romans 1:23.

\*2 Romans 2:12.

But now that faith has come we no longer need the guide. The law has accomplished its purpose, or rather Christ has accomplished the purpose of the Law. In this sense Christ did away with the Law. The fulfilled its purpose and therefore it was no longer necessary. The power of the law was cancelled, not because Christ condemned the law but because he fulfilled it. He came not to destroy but to fulfill.\*1 The law had its message, but Christ came with a message which overshadowed that of the Law. "What the Law could not do in that it was weak thru the flesh, God did by sending His own Son to atone for sin. \*2. The Law sought to deliver men from the sway of sin but grace alone accomplished it. The ultimate object of the Law was to put an end to sin. When sin ceased, the Law would be satisfied. Christ defeated sin and is the only deliverance from sin. He accomplished the ultimate object of the Law and so satisfied it.

In his argument Paul endeavours to show not only the justice of God's wrath, but also the great necessity of some means of escape from the awful peril to which sin subjects both Jew and Gentile. It was necessary that God manifest His attitude toward sin in such a way as to produce in man a moral and spiritual change. But more, He must reveal a way of escape from His wrath. There must be a deliverance. Paul tells us where that deliverance is found. Though we have "sinned and come short of the glory of God, by God's loving-kindness <sup>we</sup> are

\*1. Matt. 5:17.

\*2. Romans 8:3.

being pronounced righteous thru the deliverance found in Christ." \*1. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians he tells them that the day of the Lord is at hand. The wrath is coming and coming when it is least expected. When all is quiet, ruin will suddenly come upon them and there will be no escape. \*2. But those who have put on faith and love as their breast-plate are not destined to wrath, but to salvation thru Jesus who died for them. It is those who put on faith who receive any benefit from the Cross. The sacrifice of the Cross was provided as a means of reconciliation, not for all, but only for those who accept Christ thru faith.

IV-A -2- (a) Atonement has not been made for my individual sin, unless I, myself, have received it thru faith. If my sins have already been atoned for it would be wrong for God to class me as a sinner. We must be careful in our interpretation, else we will be caught in the same snare into which Paul found the Pharisees. They thought that mere possession of the Law would secure salvation. Christ is not the atonement, but a means of atonement. He is the Mediator or Agent by which atonement is made. Christ has made atonement for the sins, not of generations yet unborn, but for him who by faith accepts the work of the Cross. We must not see in the Cross expiation alone, else we fail to get a true conception of the real significance of the Cross. We must not think of the Cross as Christ's sacrifice to appease an angry God, or to induce

\*1. Romans 3:24.

\*2. I Thes. 1:10, 5:3.

Him to forgive sinners. The atonement originated with God. He was already forgiving. It was because of this that the sacrifice was made. It was the forgiving Spirit in God that prompted Him to make the sacrifice. He provided the sacrifice Himself. And if men by faith accepted the sacrifice they were at once accepted by Him and they were admitted into that relationship with God, as though they had not sinned.

- (b) This is what constitutes forgiveness. Though the death of Christ is the ground upon which God ceased to impute sin, the death of Christ did not bring about the determination in God, not to impute sin; but rather His determination to cease imputing sin brought about the death of His Son. It
- (c) was God who took the initiative in this work. His infinite love prompted Him to make this great sacrifice, and the same love in Christ prompted him to obedience to God's wise purpose, even unto death, in order that His purpose for humanity might not fail. The atonement proceeded from God. Man could not atone for sin. He was helpless and ignorant of God, a slave to his own passions, with a mind that was reprobate, unable to form any true conception of God. Such was the condition of man, estranged from God.

IV-A-3-(a) For the recovering of man from this condition of lostness and separation from God to a life of the Spirit, Christ gave his life. To liberate man from the bondage of sin, Christ laid down his life as a ransom that he might redeem us from the awful penalty of the sin in which we were enslaved. Not

- (b) that Christ's life was a ransom or payment to God in the sense that we were bought off from Him, but that we were purchased for Him. We are set free from the bonds of a power hostile to God. Christ died in order to set us free, not from the physical death, but the death to which sin leads us, viz. separation from God. For death means separation from God. This is the consequence of sin. It means, not extinction of our being but our exclusion from God's Kingdom. Death is not an event by which man passes out of existence; it is a state of exclusion from Divine presence, in which we suffer everlasting remorse of conscience for what we have done and what we might have done. It is a state from which there is no resurrection. God willed that all men should live this life. Under the Law all men were condemned, for all have sinned. From
- (c) the curse of the Law Christ purchased us by the shedding of his blood. He redeemed us from the curse of the Law by enduring that curse himself. "He was made a curse for us" for the law said "Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree." \* Our liberation from the curse of the Law, and from sin, and death, which is the consequence of sin, comes only thru the Cross. The Cross is our avenue of approach to freedom in God; it is the channel thru which liberation comes from God. We must die to sin and immediately the Spirit of Christ floods the soul which once was occupied by sin, and we become filled with all

\*Gal. 3:13.

the fullness of God. Having died with Christ to sin we become alive with him unto righteousness. We have our part to do as well as God. Though it is impossible for us to make atonement, it is ours to receive it. We can and must, in order to receive any benefit from the atonement, put ourselves in a receptive, willing attitude toward God. This being done we at once

- (a) begin to be drawn to God. As the sun, casting its rays across the sleepy buds of the tender plant, turns the plant to the light, so the Cross, shedding its bright beams over the sleeping consciousness of man turns him to the light of the revelation of God. "I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." \* - 1  
 If we could see God thru the Cross we would be drawn to God. As the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar by the priests, so the blood of Christ sprinkled on our souls renews us to that life to which God created us, a life of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. If this is not taken in a spiritual sense it is meaningless. The blood sprinkled upon the altar had not of itself any expiatory force. No more had the blood of Christ any intrinsic value to propiate an angry or offended God. The Cross was not to make God willing to forgive; far from that. It was God's own means of reconciliation. "God was in Christ reconciling the world." \*2

IV-A-4-(a) There is self sacrifice not only in Christ's death but he manifests a self sacrifice that has previously been made. He willingly gave himself up to a life in the flesh. He placed himself in the fleshly human nature. He took upon himself the

\*1. John 12:32.

\*2 II Cor. 5:19.



very nature that had failed to accomplish, or even recognize the purpose of God. He took upon himself the form of man, who had changed the glory of God into the image of man, and beast, and bird, and reptiles, and had worshiped the creature rather than the Creator.\*1. He identified himself with our sin that we might be identified with God's righteousness.

- (c) "For him who knew no sin, made he to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God." \*2. It was in this sense, the fact that he accepted the nature in which sin had so far won the victory, that Christ was made to be sin. And we might go farther still and say that on the Cross, which
- (a) is the consummation of the life of obedience, Christ suffered what sin deserves to suffer, death or separation from God. This may seem extreme doctrine, but it is my belief that when Christ on the Cross cried out in agony, "MY God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" he, for that moment, suffered what we will suffer thru all eternity, if we continue in sin, a consciousness of separation from God. This is Christ's identification with humanity. This is being "made sin." As a result of his relation with humanity, he bore the judgment of God on humanity's sin. He went to the extreme limit in receiving the punishment due to sin. He suffered its full consequence. In this fleshly human nature Christ lived a life of perfect obedience to God. From the manger in Bethlehem to the Cross on Calvary, Christ lived in union with his Father.

\*1. Romans 1:25.

\*2. II Cor. 5:21.



His life and his death were for the one aim. The Cross of Christ and his life are like the garment over which lots were cast, one connected whole, seamless and inseparable. The whole teaching of his life was to bring man into a true conception of his relation to the Father, and to this end he accepted the Cross. This was the consummation of a perfect life of oneness with God. Christ was the Personality in which was clothed the Spirit of God in order to reveal to humanity the Fatherhood of God. The Cross was the final deed. The love of God shines thru the Cross to the salvation of men. As Christ, in his human nature lived a life of oneness with God, so may we, by faith in Christ be brought into a mysterious union with him.

IV-B-1-(a) And herein lies the subjective aspect of the atonement. If the Cross is the objective fact, then the consciousness of our union with Christ is the subjective centre. Christ by taking upon himself this human nature in which sin had already conquered, and in this nature living a life of perfect obedience to God's will, even unto death, shows humanity accepting the will of God, thus making the human will one with the Divine. Thus Christ has shown by actuality what is potential in man. This is reconciliation full and complete. And this oneness is brought about in man, as in Christ, by subjecting our will to the will of God. We must crucify that lower selfish nature; we must set up the cross in our own hearts and on it crucify all that separates us from God.

(b) Then we are baptized into his death; we are buried with him, and rise into a new life in God. We die to sin with Christ and rise with him to a life of fellowship with God. We mortify our natural selfishness and become new creatures in Christ, living a new life of love in the Spirit. Just as one who dies the physical death is freed from all that pertains to the earthly life, so he who dies the death of the Cross, the death to sin, is set free from all that pertains to the selfish, sinful nature. Just as a woman whose husband is dead is free to marry another, so we who undergo death in the crucified body of Christ are free to become united to Him who raised up Christ from the dead. As we become united with him in his death we shall also be united with him in his resurrection. As we share his death we shall also share his life. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." \* If we have in us the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead that Spirit dwelling within us, shall give us life.

(c). And the primary condition of this Spirit dwelling within us is faith. By faith are we justified. Faith is the subjective condition of God's righteousness in us. Faith reaches out to receive the gifts of grace offered to us by God thru Christ. By this we mean the soul of man functioning in such a way as to bring man into that attitude toward God in which His righteousness is revealed and His grace is received.

\* Romans 6:5.

It is faith that brings us into union with the Personality of Christ, and thru him into union with the Holy Spirit. By faith we are brought into vital connection with a living Personality, even Christ Jesus. Immediately on our death with Christ to our selfish nature, to sin, we begin a new life of faith in God. By faith is meant self-committal to God's will. It is more than intellectual assent. It is a confidence in God. To confide in God we must act as though we trusted Him. Faith can only be demonstrated by action. It includes repentance. And along side of repentance comes obedience. The two go hand in hand. Faith is primary, because by faith we enter into union with Christ in his death and resurrection. We die to sin and become alive in Christ. Then, in obedience to the Spirit of Christ that dwells in us we acquire more faith and so the process of development of our spiritual life goes on. Faith is the fundamental breach with sin.

IV - **B** - 2 [ ] By faith the evil self, which is the root of all sin (a) is crucified with Christ, and sin loses its power. Sin has then no more dominion over us, but we thru Christ have conquered sin by crucifying that in which it was rooted. "Knowing this that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that we should be no longer in bondage to sin, for he that hath died is justified from sin."\*

[ ] The life in the Spirit means death to sin. The power of sin

\*Romans 6;6-7

is destroyed, the soul of the believer is quickened to a life of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.\*1 Man is no longer a dwelling place of sin and uncleanness, but by faith in Christ becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost.\*2 By dying with Christ to sin and rising again with him in fellowship, so that our life is hid with him in God, we cancel the power of sin, so that it no more has any dominion over us. For those who are thus united with Christ in God there can be no condemnation, for Christ in his earthly nature condemned sin, and so those who have Christ within them "The body is dead because of sin and the spirit is life because of righteousness."\*3. If we, by the power of the Spirit put an end to the evil nature, then the Holy Spirit, uniting with our spirit bears witness to the fact that we are joint heirs with Christ of all God's heritage. Sin has received its death blow. In the death of Christ the power of sin was broken, so that it is no longer a barrier between God and him who believes in Jesus Christ.

Reconciliation has been made. The work which <sup>was</sup> consummated in the Cross is a complete reconciliation. It is a finished work. The Cross does not represent something that God is willing to do, but, what has already been done. Peace between God and man was procured.

- (b) And this was a peace which meant more than the removal of man's antagonism to God; It was also the removal of the Divine wrath. It is held by some that God's attitude is not that of

\*1. Rom. 14:17.

\*2. Rom. 6.

\*3. Rom. 8:10.

wrath toward the sinner, but toward sin. But what is sin? Sin, in the abstract is nothing. It can be designated by zero. It means nothing. In order to have sin we must have an active agent sinning, and it is toward this active agent that God is antagonistic. He who sins is in danger, and Christ came to proclaim peace to those who were in danger, that they might no longer remain under the Divine wrath. His proclamation to the world was that God has removed his wrath. Reconciliation has been made by his death, and it is for man to accept it and enter at once into a new life.

(c) The Cross speaks God's forgiveness; it holds out God's grace. Here is life eternal; accept it and escape the awful consequence of sin, - death. The Cross is God Himself drawing near to sinful man with His forgiving love. The Cross of Christ is the pledge of God to the world of His desire to forgive men their trespasses and reconcile the world unto Himself. The father went forth to meet the prodigal who was returning home. He held out his arms to receive him. He was ready to forgive. But God did not wait for man to come to himself and see his Father's house with much and to spare, to arise and return to his Father. But when man was in a far country, estranged from God, wandering farther and farther away from Home, God sent forth His Son to seek for the lost brothers and bring them home. The prodigal knew not how his father would receive him. But Christ came to tell us that our Father is reconciled, that He has forgiven us and wants us to come home. It is such pardoning love that will draw the world

to God. It is such sacrificing love that assures men of the forgiveness of their sin, and leads them to faith in Christ as their Saviour: Just as the sunshine, streaming its rays onto the little bud, causes it to blossom into a beautiful flower, so the Cross of Christ casting its beams of love into the soul of man, blossoms it forth into a new and beautiful life of faith in God.

(d) Our first need is forgiveness and following this is the cleansing. We are justified by faith in Christ and the Spirit of God floods into the soul and at once begins a process of cleansing of all the thoughts and desires of the heart. This process continues until we attain to the full standard of the perfection of Christ. "Not that I am already made perfect, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."\* This union with Christ is maintained by humility and lovingkindness toward one another. All is unity, one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, transcendent and immanent.

(e) Thru such union with Christ we cast off the old nature, with its selfish passions, which breed corruption, and by constant renewing of our minds we clothe ourselves with the new nature which resembles God and which brings forth righteousness, and holiness.

And so we see that in all the diversity of opinion and

\* Phil. 3:14.

variety of theories concerning the atonement the light of God's forgiving love shines thru them all. For He understood the condition and cause of man's alienation, He realized the necessity of a revelation of His righteousness and love and by His holy love for the creation of His own hand He made the highest and most costly sacrifice, in order to redeem men from their alienated and lost condition into a perfect oneness with Himself.

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