

divested Himself of something. What it was, the following phrase implies:

THE FORM OF GOD

The One Who was existing in the Form of God took on the form of a servant. The word, "Taking," does not imply an exchange, but rather an addition. The "Form of God" could not be relinquished, for God cannot cease to be God. However, our Lord could and did take on the very form of a lowly servant when He entered human life by the Incarnation.

It is sometimes suggested that the term, "Servant," refers to the exalted Servant of Jehovah, but this Passage seems intended to emphasize His Condescension and Humble Station. Consequently, what an example our Lord provides considering the spirit of humility! Inasmuch as Angels also are servants, the statement

makes it clear that Christ became part of humanity: "Being made in human likeness."

Thus, by Paul using the word, "Likeness," it is implied that even though Christ became a Genuine Man, there were certain respects in which He was not absolutely like other men. Paul may have had in mind the unique union of the Divine and human Natures in Jesus or the absence of a sin nature.

In summation, Christ did not empty Himself of the Form of God (His Deity), but of the manner of existence as equal to God. He did not lay aside the Divine Attributes, but "the insignia of majesty."

Christ's Action has been described as the laying aside during the Incarnation of the independent use of His Divine Attributes.

NO REPUTATION

The phrase, "*But made Himself of no reputation,*" literally means, "*He emptied Himself.*"

Instead of asserting His Rights to the expression of the Essence of Deity, our Lord waived His Rights to that expression, being willing to relinquish it if necessary, which He did. He did not consider the exercise of that expression such a treasure that it would keep Him from setting that expression aside and making Himself of no reputation. So, on behalf of fallen humanity, He willingly and freely "*emptied Himself.*"

The Divine Majesty of which He emptied Himself was His Own Rightful Prerogative, and His Humiliation was His Own Voluntary Act.

Alford says, "*He used His equality with God as an opportunity not for self-exaltation, but for self-abasement.*"

In fact, Christ's Self-humiliation proved His Deity, for

this renunciation would have had no value if Christ were not God. He became Man but in contrast with the first man, He did not grasp at equality with God by robbery. On the contrary, He emptied Himself of all His Outward Glory of the Form of God and revealed Himself to the world in the form of a slave.

By robbery, Adam sought to exalt Himself to the dishonoring of God; the Last Adam humbled Himself to the honoring of God. The first Adam exalted Himself and was humbled; the Last Adam humbled Himself and was exalted.

OF WHAT DID HE EMPTY HIMSELF?

Christ subsisting in the Form of God, i.e., the visible glories shining forth from His Divine Essence as God, is here set in contrast with His assuming "*the form of a servant,*" which, in its turn, declares the existence of

His Human Nature. Thus, the “*form of God*” declares His Deity and the “*form of a servant*” His Humanity.

He did not hold fast and bring down to Earth the visible demonstration of His Deity — for such is the import of the word, “*Robbery*” — although it was shown out for a moment on the Mount of Transfiguration — but emptied Himself of that outward Glory in order to become Man and by His Death on the Tree secure the eternal advantage of those who would accept His Sacrifice. He fought not on His Own Glory but on the glory of others.

The question here is not between His being on an equality with God and His emptying Himself — for He never emptied Himself of His Godhead — but the contrast is between His being in the Form of God and in the form of a servant. Equality with God declares His Being; the Form of God expresses the manifestations of that Being. It was of the outward demonstrations of His

Deity that He emptied Himself.

THE SEVEN STEPS

The seven downward steps of His Great Renunciation are followed here by the seven upward steps of His Glorious Ascension (Vss. 9-11). They are as follows:

1. His Renunciation (Vs. 6).
2. Emptied Himself.
3. Servant’s Form.
4. Became in man’s likeness.
5. Humbled Himself.
6. Bowed to death.
7. And what a death! The death of the Cross!

The seven upward steps of His Exaltation are:

1. God highly exalted Him.

2. Granted Him the Name which is above every Name.
3. Universal dominion.
4. Over beings in Heaven.
5. Over beings on Earth.
6. Over beings under the Earth.
7. Divine Glory: all tongues will confess by and by that Jesus of Nazareth is Jehovah, and such confession will honor and not dishonor God.

THE FORM OF A SERVANT

He took the form of a servant at the time when He assumed humanity, as it is said, "*Being made in the likeness of men.*" It is as follows:

- His Subjection to the Law (Lk. 2:21; Gal. 5:4).
- His Subjection to His Parents (Lk. 2:5).
- His Position as a Carpenter (Mk. 6:3).

- His Sale for the price of a slave (Ex. 21:32).
- His Death, the death of a slave, and His Dependence as a Servant on God, all illustrate His Form as a servant (Isa. 49:3, 7).

This proves:

- He was in the form of a servant directly when He became man.
- He was in the Form of God before He was in the form of a servant.
- He truly subsisted in the Divine Nature as in human nature, for He was as much in the Form of God as in the form of a servant, and was so truly in the Form of God as to be on an equality with God. He therefore could have been none other than God (Isa. 46:5; Zech. 13:7) (Williams).

HIMSELF

So, we continue to come to the question, “*Of what did Christ empty Himself?*”

Was it His Deity, His Nature, His Divine Prerogative, or His Equality? Paul simply says that Christ emptied Himself.

The verb used here simply means, “*To pour out,*” with Christ Himself as the Object. Thus, Christ emptied Himself of Himself.

At no time did He allow selfish considerations to dominate His Spotless Life.

The words, “*Made Himself,*” mean, “*To make empty, to make vain or void.*” The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament except in the Passage before us. The essential idea is that of bringing to emptiness or nothingness; hence, it is applied to a case where one lays aside his rank and dignity and becomes in respect to that, “*As nothing.*” That is, he assumes a far less rank and

station.

As someone has said, “*When the sun is obscured by a cloud or in an eclipse, there is no real change of its glory, nor its beams extinguished, nor is the sun itself in any measure changed. Its luster is only for a time obscured.*” So it might have been in regard to the manifestation of the Glory of the Son of God.

A FAR GREATER WEIGHT

This one thing is certain, whatever the phrase means, “*But made Himself of no reputation,*” it is far more than the mind of man can even begin to grasp. The reason should be obvious.

Where it is possible for us to see what He became, it is, in fact, impossible for us to know in totality what He was before His Self-emptying. As a creature, we cannot really even begin to grasp the Glory and the Grandeur of

the Creator, and He was definitely the Creator (Jn. 1:1-3). To be frank, even if shown such, we do not presently have the capabilities of grasping that which we would be shown, even if that were possible. Actually, when we're given a glimpse into the spirit world of the Glory of God, we are as much at a loss to comprehend it even as the Prophets were in trying to explain it.

If the reader doubts my words, let him look again at the First Chapter of Ezekiel, or Chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation concerning what John saw. Paul didn't even bother to attempt to explain his "*Visions and Revelations.*" He just said that he saw things ". . . and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (II Cor. 12:1-4).

Even as I dictate these words, I sense the Presence of God.

WHAT DO WE GET OUT OF THIS SELF-EMPTYING OF

CHRIST?

If we see only greatness and glory, I think we miss the point. It is "*Love*" we must see! It was Love that did all of this, a Love that is beyond the comprehension of man.

A fallen race was doomed — doomed to die eternally lost. Having forfeited that which was given to them by God, man found himself in a position from which he could not be extricated, at least by his own machinations. So, if he was to be Saved, God would have to do the deed Himself.

In His Greatness and Glory, God could easily have regenerated man without the sin question being addressed; however, His Nature and Holiness could not allow such. The sin question had to be addressed and answered, and addressed in full, in other words, no shortcuts. There was no other way.

- God could simply have allowed man to die in his lostness, which, of necessity, would demand his spending eternity in the Lake of Fire. That would have satisfied the sin debt on an individual basis regarding each human being. The wages of sin is death, which means separation from God, and eternal separation from God would have paid the penalty.
- However, Love could not allow such to happen. It must be understood that man was not created by God as a result of need. God does not need anything. He created man from a position totally and completely of Love.

LOVE

Some have claimed that God created man because He

wanted or needed fellowship. Once again, God has never needed anything, much less fellowship. No! He created man simply and totally from a position of Love, and as such, He would *“crown him with glory and honor”* (Ps. 8:5). So, if Love created Him, then Love must rescue Him.

However, to rescue man, even though God had spoken all of Creation into existence (Heb. 11:3), He could not speak Redemption into existence, that is, and be true to His Nature. A debt had been incurred, a terrible debt of sin, and that debt must be paid. The only way it could be paid was by death, for that was the penalty (Gen. 2:15-17; Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23). As stated, man could not redeem himself because he had no sacrifice which would serve the purpose. He could not give himself because, due to the Fall, he was sullied, corrupt, and totally depraved, therefore, unsuitable as a sacrifice, at least that which God could accept.



There was only one way: God would become Man and accomplish what the first man, Adam, failed to do.

As a man, He would face the onslaughts of Satan, never one time using His Deity, but definitely using the Power of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1:32-34). However, that is not as clear-cut as it at first seems.

For the Holy Spirit to function in the manner He must function, that is, if the Ministry of Christ was to be what it should be, our Lord would have to perfectly yield in every manner and way to the Spirit and to the Father.

Christian man, even the most consecrated, yields imperfectly even at our best, whereas Jesus yielded perfectly at all times.

WAS JESUS DIFFERENT FROM US?

I think one would have to say essentially, “No”! While He was not born with a sin nature as are all other human

beings, still, that should not have made a difference. He had to be a man like all other men, or else, His Work and Function would be to no avail. That’s why the Holy Spirit through Paul referred to Him as “*the last Adam*” (I Cor. 15:45).

Some scholars argue that Jesus could not have sinned. In other words, it would not have been possible for Him to have sinned.

That is basely incorrect! Had it been impossible for Him to have sinned, the whole thing would have been a farce. While God certainly cannot sin, it definitely is possible for man to sin. Therefore, the possibility had to be there with Christ as well.

Emptying Himself of the expression of His Deity, thereby, becoming a Man, subjected Him to all that which is possible with man. Hence, He would say, “*I thirst,*” when, of course, God cannot thirst (Jn. 19:28). As

well, He grew hungry, and God cannot hunger (Mat. 4:2). Also, Jesus grew tired as a human being will, but God cannot tire, at least in that fashion (Jn. 4:6).

Yes, it would have been possible for Jesus to have sinned, but He did not sin despite every effort of Satan to make Him fail.

SATAN HAS NO PART IN ME

Had Jesus failed even one time in thought, word, or deed, we could not have been Saved. He kept the Law perfectly in every respect, the only Man Who ever did such a thing. Consequently, when He came to the conclusion of His Earthly Life and Ministry, He could say, “. . . *for the prince of this world comes (Satan), and has nothing in Me*” (Jn. 14:30).

He had no relationship with Satan or sin whatsoever and had nothing of Satan in Him. He was not subject to

death because He had not sinned.

In the Fall, Satan gained a pseudo-sovereignty over man on the principle of possession and consent of a responsible agent or government by consent of the governed. This means that, in a sense, fallen man gives Satan the right to hold him in bondage. By refusing to accept Christ, man, in essence, gives his consent to Satan to make him a slave.

There are some who claim that God permitted Satan to defeat himself by causing him to kill an innocent victim (Jesus) over Whom he had no claim.

That could only be correct in the sense that Christ allowed such to happen. No man could have killed Christ, and neither could Satan kill Christ without His Consent. In fact, Jesus did not die on the Cross until the Holy Spirit told Him to die (Heb. 9:14).

Now, we know that death is of Satan caused by sin.

We also know that Satan had no control over Christ whatsoever, and, as well, Jesus had never sinned, so there were no wages of sin, which was death, in His Life.

As stated, the only way that Satan could be said to have killed Christ is for the Lord to have allowed such.

So, what Jesus did regarding His Incarnation, His Life, His Ministry, and more particularly, His Death on the Cross and Resurrection, all as a Man, are beyond comprehension.

THE FORM OF A SERVANT

The phrase, *“And took upon Him the form of a servant,”* is actually the translation of the word, *“Servant,”* which Paul used in Philippians 1:1 to describe himself, a bond slave.

The manner in which the Greek phrase is structured means that our Lord took upon Himself the form

of a servant or slave, which was the cause of the emptying. Consequently, the translations so far could read, *“Emptied Himself, having taken the form of a bond slave.”*

As we have previously stated, the word, *“Form,”* refers to the outward expression one gives of his inward being. The words, *“Form of a bond slave,”* therefore, mean that our Lord gave outward expression to His Inmost Nature, the outward expression being that of a bond slave. When expressing Himself as a bond slave come to serve, He necessarily exchanged one form of expression for another. In Verse 6, He was in His Preincarnate State expressing Himself as Deity. In Verse 7, He expresses Himself in Incarnation as a bond slave. This is the direct opposite of what took place at the Transfiguration.

This *“form,”* not being identical with the Divine Essence but dependent upon it, and necessarily implying

it, can be parted with or laid aside. Since Christ is One with God and, therefore, pure being, absolute existence, He can exist without the form. This Form of God Christ laid aside in His Incarnation.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE SERVANT

An illustration of this self-emptying of the Son of God is found in John 13:1-17. Our Lord, seated at the table, the Master and Lord of the Disciples, is illustrative of Him in His Preincarnate Glory, giving outward expression of the Glory of His Deity to the Angels.

Our Lord, girded with a towel and washing the feet of the Disciples, is illustrative of His taking the outward expression of a servant in His Incarnation. His Outer Garments, laid aside for the time being, point to His setting aside the outward expression of His Preincarnate Glory while He expressed Himself as a bond slave.

The fact that He was still their Master and Lord while kneeling on the floor doing the work of an oriental slave speaks of the fact that our Lord's Assumption of Humanity did not mean that He relinquished His Deity. He was just as much God while on Earth in His Humiliation as He was before He came and as He is now. His Act of taking His Outer Garments again tells of the resumption of the expression of His Glory after the Resurrection (Wuest).

The word, "*Servant*," does not mean that Jesus became an actual slave of any single man — though His Service was expressed to individual men (Lk. 22:27) — but was the Actual "*Servant*" of mankind in general.

The phrase, "*Form of a servant*," should be allowed to explain the phrase, "*Form of God*," in Verse 6. The form of a servant is that which indicates a condition of a servant in contradistinction from one of higher rank. It means to

appear as a servant, to perform the offices of a servant, and to be regarded as such. He was made like a servant in the lowly condition which He assumed.

HUMILIATION

There are some who have interpreted this statement as given by Paul as meaning that He became the Servant or Minister of God and that in doing it, it was necessary that He should become a Man, but the objection to this is obvious.

It greatly weakens the force of the Apostle's argument. His object is to state the depth of humiliation to which Christ descended; and this was best done by saying that He descended to the lowest condition of humanity and appeared in the most humble garb. The idea of being a "*Servant or Minister of God*" would not express that, for this is a term which might be applied to the highest

Angel in Heaven. Though the Lord Jesus was not literally a servant or slave, yet what is affirmed here was true of Him in the following respects:

- He occupied a most lowly condition in life.
- He condescended to perform such acts as are appropriate only to those who are servants. "*... I am among you as He Who serves*" (Lk. 22:27).
- His Demeanor was that of a servant in every respect. Actually, this was one of the reasons that the religious leaders of Israel so totally rejected Him. He was not at all of the aristocracy and not at all of the upper class but, in fact, was looked at as a "*Peasant.*"

THE LIKENESS OF MEN

The phrase, "*And was made in the likeness of men,*"

presents the Lord entering into a new state of being when He became Man. However, His becoming Man did not exclude His Position of Deity. He was and is today a Person with two Natures, that of absolute Deity (Very God) and that of absolute Humanity (Very Man).

“*Likeness*,” in the Greek Text, refers to “*that which is made like something else*.” Our Lord’s Humanity was a real likeness, not a phantom or an incomplete copy of humanity, but this likeness did not express the whole of Christ’s Being.

His mode of manifestation resembled what men are, but His Humanity was not all that there was of Him. He was also Deity. Wuest says, “*He was not a Man merely as such, but the Son of God manifest in the flesh and nature of man*.”

The phrase, “*The likeness of men*,” has reference to the Humanity of Jesus, which had a beginning in time and

should be taken in the sense of Galatians 4:4: “*God sent forth His Son, born of a Woman*.”

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

Baillie said, “*The Church has never taught that the human element in Jesus, His Manhood, was or is coeternal with God, but that it is exactly like ourselves and belongs to the order of created things*.” In other words, Jesus was not always Man even though He was always God. He became a Man at a point in time.

However, none of this can be taken to be anything less than man. Christ’s Humanity was no mere mask or disguise. He was “*really like men as He was truly Man*”; but “*He was also more than a Man, without which fact there would be no resemblance but mere identity*.” Jesus Christ was Truly Man, but it was in and through Him that the Revelation of God came. This makes Him unique



and distinct from man — He is “*Very Man and Very God.*” The only way Paul can express this Truth is to speak of His Likeness to man. Christ took upon Himself not merely the fact of a human person but, as well, a human nature. So, one could say, even as we have said, that He is One Person in two natures.

Lightfoot says, “*Christ, as the Last Adam, represents not the individual man, but the human race.*”

HUMAN LIMITATION

In attempting to explain the Deity and the Humanity of Christ, we must be very careful that we not weaken the great Testimony of His Humanity. Certainly, it fixes our thoughts on this, at least that our Lord, by becoming Man, had for His, truly for His, the experience of the human limitation, human weakness and impoverishment, human dependence, and human

subjection, singularly contrasting with the Glory of the Form of God. Thus, this humanity became His.

It was so emphatically real, and at the Incarnation, it became so emphatically the form of existence on which He entered, that it is the thing eminently to be regarded and reverently to be dwelt upon. Instead of His Fullness, this emptiness, as the Holy Spirit through the Apostle proclaims it, is to draw and fix our regard. Instead of the Form of God, there arises before us this true human history, this lowly manhood — and it took place by His Emptying Himself.

Various persons in schools have thought it right to go further. The word used here, “*In the likeness of men,*” has appeared to them to suggest that if the Son of God did not renounce His Godhead, the Divine Nature in Him must have bereaved itself of the Divine Attributes or withheld itself from the use and exercise of them so that



the all-fullness no longer was at His Disposal. In this line, they have gone on to describe or assign the mode of self-emptying, which the Incarnation should imply.

THE DIVINE MYSTERY

However, it does not appear to me that one can lay down positions as to the internal privations of One Whose nature is owned to be essentially Divine without falling into confusion and darkening of counsel. Perhaps we may do well to cherish the impression that this self-emptying on the part of the Eternal Son of God for our Salvation involves realities which we cannot conceive or put in any words. There was more in this emptying of Himself than we can think or say.

He emptied Himself when He became Man. Here we have the eminent example of a Divine mystery, which being revealed remains a mystery never to be adequately

explained, and which yet proves full of meaning and full of Power.

The Word was made flesh. He through Whom all worlds took being was seen in Judea in the lowliness of that practical historical manhood. We are hard put to explain this, but if we believe it, all things become new for us: the meaning it proves to have for human history is inexhaustible.

He emptied Himself, *“taking the form of a servant,”* or bond slave. For the creature is in absolute subjection alike to God’s Authority and to His Providence, and so Christ came to be. He entered on a discipline of subjection and obedience. In particular, He was made after the likeness of men. He was born as other children are even though He Alone experienced a unique conception. He grew as other children grow; body and mind took shape for Him under human conditions.

HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF

Paul said, “*And being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross*” (Phil. 2:8).

After describing the fact of the Incarnation, Paul turns to the consideration of the depths of humiliation to which Christ went: “*He humbled Himself*” and went to “*Death on a Cross.*”

The concluding phrase in Philippians 2:7 states what Christ actually was. The opening phrase of Philippians 2:8 looks at Him from the standpoint of how He appeared in the estimation of men.

As far as His External Appearance was concerned, He was “*found*” by them as a mere man. Outwardly considered, He was no different from other men. Even this was great condescension for One Who possessed the Form of God, but Christ’s Incomparable Act did not

end there. He further humbled Himself by “*becoming obedient to death.*” He was so committed to the Father’s Plan that He obeyed it even as far as death (Heb. 5:8). Neither was this all, for it was not ordinary death but the disgraceful death by Crucifixion, a death not allowed for Roman citizens, and to Jews, indicative of the Curse of God (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).

THE CROSS

The mention of the “*Cross*” connoted probably the cruelest form of capital punishment. Crucifixion had been practiced by the Phoenicians and Persians and was taken over by the Romans. In Rome, it was punishment reserved for slaves and foreigners, but yet, the type of death which God commanded of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, if mankind was to be redeemed. Actually, the process was twofold:

1. It had to be a Cross, actually demanded by God, which we will deal with momentarily.
2. There had to be a certain type of Sacrifice, which only the Son of God could fill. So, the act of Crucifixion itself, although necessary, could not save anyone. The total Plan of Redemption demanded not only death by Crucifixion but, as well, a perfect Sacrifice, which no human being other than Christ could fulfill.

FOUND IN FASHION

The phrase, *“And being found in fashion as a Man,”* presents the word, *“Fashion,”* as the translation of a Greek word that refers to an outward expression that is assumed from the outside and does not come from within. The Greek word for *“Form,”* as we saw, refers

to an outward expression that came from one’s inward nature, thereby, describing His Deity. That means that our Lord’s Expression of His Deity was not assumed from the outside but came from His Inmost Nature. Likewise, His Outward Expression as a bond slave came from His Inmost Nature.

However, His Expression of His Humanity came not from His Inmost Nature as God, but was assumed in the Incarnation.

The contrast here is between what He was in Himself, God, and what He appeared in the eyes of men. The word, *“Fashion,”* therefore, referred to that which is purely outward and appeals to the senses.

Our Lord’s Humanity was real. He was really a Man, but He was not a real man in the sense that He was like others of the human race, only a Man. In His Incarnation, He was always more than man. There was always that

single personality with a dual nature.

His Deity did not make Him more or less than a man, and His Humanity did not make Him less than absolute Deity. He became in the likeness of man, and He was found in fashion as a Man.

“*Likeness*” states the fact of His real resemblance to men in mode of existence, and “*fashion*” defines the outward mode and form as He appeared in the eyes of men. However, He was not found in fashion as a man, but rather “*Man.*” The indefinite article (a) should not be in the translation. He was found in outward guise as “*Man,*” not “*a man.*” He was actually “*The Man*” because He was also “*God,*” even though He had assumed human nature, but yet, without its sin.

A DIVINE MIRACLE

“*Fashion*” denotes the way Christ appeared in men’s

eyes. His contemporaries saw Jesus as they saw other men, subject to human drives and suffering (Heb. 4:15).

Isaiah said of Him, “. . . *He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him*” (Isa. 53:2).

In fact, one could say that a Divine Miracle is required to see God in this Servant. Faith that He is the Full and True Revelation of God comes “. . . *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*” (Jn. 1:13).

The confession that He is the Christ springs from a Revelation of the “*Father which is in Heaven*” (Mat. 16:16-17).

Paul puts it elsewhere, “*No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit*” (I Cor. 12:3).

PAUL’S DESCRIPTION

And so, He was “*found in fashion as Man.*” Could

words express more strongly how wonderful it is in the Apostle's eyes that He should so be found? He lived His Life and made His Mark in the world in human fashion — His Form, His Speech, His Acts, and His Way of Life declared Him Man.

But being so, He humbled Himself to a strange and great obedience, subjection. In that subjection, obedience is the part of every creature, but the obedience that Christ was called to learn was special. A heavy task was laid upon Him.

He was made under the Law, and bearing the burden of human sin, He wrought Redemption. In doing so, many great interests fell to Him to be cared for. This was done by Him, not in the manner of Godhead, which speaks and it is done, but with the pains and labor of a Faithful Servant.

"I have a Commandment," He said as He faced the Jews

who would have had His Messianic Work otherwise ordered (Jn. 12:49).

THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST

The phrase, *"He humbled Himself,"* means, *"To be made low or to bring low, but yet to do so willingly."* What a description of the Son of God.

However, this self-humbling does not refer to the self-emptying of Verse 7. That was a self-humbling in His Character as God. Here the self-humbling is the Act of our Lord as the Son of Man. As we shall see, it was the humiliation of the Death of the Cross. This we must consider: if it was humiliating to our Lord in His Humanity, how much more was it so in His Deity. In fact, humiliation was characteristic of Him as a Man. He did not aspire to high honor; He did not affect pomp and parade; He did not demand the service of a train of

menials; but He condescended to the lowest conditions of life (Lk. 22:27).

The words here are very carefully chosen by the Holy Spirit as given by the Apostle. In the former case (Vs. 7), when He became a Man, He “*emptied Himself*,” or laid aside the symbols of His Glory; now, when a Man, He further humbled Himself. That is, though He was God appearing in the form of Man — a Divine Person on Earth — yet He did not assume and assert the dignity and prerogatives appropriate to a Divine Being, or even an honored human being, but put Himself voluntarily in a condition of obedience. For such a Being to obey Law implied voluntary humiliation, and the greatness of His Humiliation was shown by His becoming entirely obedient, as stated, even till He died on the Cross.

THE PARTICULAR TIMES IN WHICH HE LIVED

The world at the time of Christ functioned on the basis of pomp, ceremony, dignity, station, and status. About a third of the population of the Roman Empire at that time were slaves. So, the very spirit of the age pointed toward catering to those of rank and station. In fact, Roman citizens were divided into three classes, Senatorial, Equestrian, and Plebeian, and the whole system of government harmonized with this triple division.

The Senatorial class was composed of descendents of senators and those upon whom the emperors conferred the privilege of wearing the tunic with broad purple border, the sign of membership in this order.

The Equestrian class was made up of those of lesser rank, but yet, who were wealthy. They had the privilege of wearing the narrow purple band on the tunic.

The Plebeians, which consisted of the general Roman public, wore no band of any nature on their garments.

The spirit of the age had also greatly infected Israel.

THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

Within Israel at the time of Christ, there were found two major parties, one strict and the other lax in the observance of Mosaic Law. The leaders of the former were the highly popular Pharisees, who, according to their name, were the “*Separatists*,” separated from the common and lawless masses, at least according to their interpretation. They tried to surpass each other in their zeal for the traditional ordinances and pious observances, although it was also possible at times to find real piety among them. However, they appear at their worst in the New Testament records where they are described as taking a hostile attitude toward the higher and the highest form of Divine Revelation, and I speak of Christ Himself.

THE SADDUCEES

Their rivals, the Sadducees, were less fanatical in their observance of the demands of the Law and more willing to compromise with the spirit of the times. To this part belonged many of the more prominent Priests.

Out of this mix came the Jewish Sanhedrin to the highest tribunal of some 71 members, and also of the lower tribunals of 23 members, of which Jerusalem had two. It constituted the ruling hierarchy of Israel. It was made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees, but more so by the Pharisees. It is said that in the time of Salome, they were so powerful that “*the Queen ruled only in name, but the Pharisees in reality.*”

So, in the time of Christ, the Sanhedrin was formally led by the Sadducean High Priests, but practically ruled by the Pharisees. Most, if not all, of its members were extremely wealthy. Consequently, the status or station

in Israel went down from this ruling body through the ranks of these two parties, which, in effect, separated themselves from the “*common masses*,” as they were called. In fact, during the time of Christ, the religious leaders of Israel, actually consisting of these of which we have mentioned, held themselves aloof from the common people. They would not think of mixing with them, much less personally giving spiritual instruction. Worse yet, they had no real spiritual instruction to give inasmuch as they really did not know God.

JESUS

Into this status conscious hierarchy of Israel came Christ. He was a Peasant, the Son of a carpenter, at least, that was what was thought. As such, He had no contact whatsoever with this ruling hierarchy, consequently, not at all a product of its schools, etc. As a result, He

was looked at by the ruling hierarchy of Israel as an unlettered, untutored, and, therefore, ignorant product of the masses. He held no station, no status, no place, and no position. Consequently, He was automatically labeled as “*One of no consequence.*”

Worse yet, He was brought up in this despised village of Nazareth, prompting the reply of Nathaniel, “. . . *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth . . . ?*” (Jn. 1:45-46).

Nazareth lay close to several main trade routes for easy contact with the outside world. In fact, it is believed that a Roman garrison was stationed nearby as well. The place was scorned by strict Jews because of this outside influence, and worst of all, the Roman influence, if, in fact, a Roman garrison indeed was stationed nearby. Even though born in Bethlehem, Jesus spent nearly 30 years in Nazareth (Lk. 2:39).

The schooling that Jesus formally had was that of the ordinary village child, which means He was taught to read and write (Lk. 4:17; Jn. 8:6-8). However, on the commencing of His Ministry, even His Own Townsfolk would not receive Him.

THE NAZARENES

After the beginning of His Ministry when He first ministered to them, and already having heard reports of great things done elsewhere, they at first listened to Him with admiration. Then, as the magnitude of the claims He was making became apparent to His Audience, a very different spirit took possession of them.

“Who was this Who spoke this? Was it not Joseph’s son?” (Lk. 4:22). There seemed to be disappointment, as well, that Jesus showed no disposition to gratify them by working before them any of the Miracles of which

they had heard so much (Lk. 4:23). Consequently, He told His Hearers that He had not expected any better reception. In reply to their reproach that He had wrought Miracles elsewhere but had wrought none among them, He quoted examples of Prophets who had done the same thing, Elijah and Elisha (Lk. 4:24-28).

This completed the exasperation of the Nazarenes who, springing forward, dragged Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, and would have thrown Him down had something in the aspect of Jesus not restrained them.

HIS TEACHING AND PREACHING

The Scripture says, *“He taught them as having authority, and not as the Scribes”* (Mk. 1:22).

The Scribes gave forth nothing of their own. They but repeated the statements of the so-called great

authorities of the past. Consequently, it was a surprise to the people to find in Jesus One Whose Wisdom, like waters from a clear fountain, came fresh and sparkling from His Own Lips. The authority also with which Jesus spoke commanded attention. He sought support in the opinion of no others but gave forth His Statements with firmness, decision, dignity, and emphasis.

This, as well, angered the Pharisees and Sadducees, who, in fact, He ignored, seeking not at all their approval or advice. Consequently, He clashed with them more and more as they sought to find means to oppose and accuse Him, accepting Him not at all. In fact, they *“took counsel to destroy Him”* (Mk. 3:6).

At the beginning of His Ministry, He attracted great crowds of people, with untold numbers being healed of every manner of disease, and even the dead being raised. This gained Him a wide popularity, at least at first.

However, as the opposition increased, the last year of His Ministry saw the crowds diminishing somewhat, with Him more and more privately teaching His Disciples.

The Scriptures plainly say, *“They hated Me without a cause”* (Ps. 35:19; 69:4; 109:3; 119:161; Jn. 15:25).

Even though we have only touched the surface, perhaps we can still see somewhat the magnitude of the humiliation He suffered, not only becoming Man, but rather a Man most humiliated.

OBEDIENCE

The phrase, *“Became obedient unto death,”* does not mean that He became obedient to death. He was always the Master of Death. In fact, He died as no other individual ever died or ever will die. He died of His Own Volition. He actually dismissed His Human Spirit, but not until the Holy Spirit told Him to do so (Heb. 9:14).

The word, “*Unto*,” is the translation of a Greek word which means, “*Up to the point of*.” Our Lord was obedient to the Father up to the point of dying. In fact, He said, “. . . *Lo, I come to do Your Will, O God . . .*” (Heb. 10:9).

Yet Christ subjected Himself to death “. . . *that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*” (Heb. 2:14-15). It must be emphasized that Christ’s Acts of self-humiliation and obedience to death were voluntary — of Himself, as stated, He laid down His Life (Jn. 10:17-18) — while, at the same time, such were in accord with the Will of the Father.

Should it be said that if He was God Himself, He must have been Himself the Law-Giver, we may reply that this rendered His Obedience the more wonderful and the more meritorious. If for an important purpose

a monarch should place himself in a position to obey his own laws, nothing could show in a more striking manner their importance in his view.

The highest honor that has been shown to the Law of God on Earth was that it was perfectly observed by Him Who made the Law — the great Mediator. In fact, He obeyed even when obedience terminated in death.

In the case of Jesus, all of this was wholly voluntary. He placed Himself in the condition of a Servant to do the Will of God and then never shrank from what that condition involved.

THE DEATH OF THE CROSS

The phrase, “*Even the death of the Cross*,” presents the character of His Death. It was the death of a Cross, its nature one of ignominy and degradation. It was the kind of death meted out to criminals and only to those who

were not citizens of the Roman Empire. *“The death of the Cross”* indicates the climax of Christ’s Self-abasement, for it was the most ignominious, as stated, of all the modes of death then known. In fact, the Law of Moses had spoken a curse upon such a death (Deut. 21:23). Thus, the Cross was surrounded by the deepest shame (Heb. 12:2).

However, by His Obedience even unto *“the death of the Cross,”* Christ “. . . has abolished death, and has brought Life and immortality to light through the Gospel” (II Tim. 1:10). Consequently, *“The Cross of Christ has come to be His Crown of Glory”* (Rom. 5:19).

WAS SUCH A DEATH NECESSARY?

Yes, it was!

If it is to be noticed, Paul did not say, *“The death on the Cross,”* but rather, *“The death of the Cross.”* The idea

is He came to die on the Cross. That was the purpose of His Incarnation, the very purpose of His Coming, and the very purpose of it all.

As we have previously said, His Death by Crucifixion was not an execution in the truest sense of the word. In other words, He did not run afoul of Roman or Jewish law, thereby, suffering this ignominious death. While they definitely played their part in this travesty, still, it was the Will of God for Him to die accordingly. Jesus said of this situation, *“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence comes!”* (Mat. 18:7).

If the church misunderstands the Sacrificial Atoning Death of Christ in any manner, negative results will always follow. The purpose of the Great Plan of God as it regarded the Redemption of fallen humanity was always the *“Cross”* (Gen. 3:15; I Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8).



All the predictions of the Prophets, whether directly or indirectly, pointed toward the “*Cross*” (Isa., Chpt. 53). The Incarnation of Christ (God becoming Man) was all for the purpose of the “*Cross*” (Mat. 20:28; Mk. 10:45; I Tim. 2:6). Even though He performed Miracles and healed the sick, still, His Major Purpose was always the “*Cross*” (Mat. 16:21-25).

WHY WAS THE CROSS NECESSARY?

Death is the signature of failure and disgrace. Even with sinless creatures, it seems so. Their beauty and their use are past; their worth is measured and exhausted; they die. More emphatically in a nature like ours, which aims at fellowship with God and immortality, death is significant this way and bears the character of doom.

So, we are taught to think that death entered by

sin, but the valid death of crucifixion inflicted for the worst crimes is most significant this way. What it comprehended for our Lord, although necessary, we cannot measure. We know that He looked to it with the most solemn expectation, and when it came, the experience was overwhelming (Lk. 22:39-45). He submitted to the doom and blight of death, and through death, He made Atonement and finished transgression.

CRUCIFIXION, THE WORST FORM OF DEATH

The Incarnation was the way in which our Lord bound Himself to our woeful fortunes, and carried to us the benefits with which He would enrich us; and His Death was for our sins, endured that we might live.

This type of death was necessary for several reasons:

- Death was mandated for all who broke the Law (the Law of Moses, i.e., “*Law of God*”), and all had broken

that Law, with the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:10; 6:23).

- The crime of the breaking of the Law of God is the worst crime that one could begin to imagine. Sin strikes at the very Holiness and Righteousness of God and is destructive of all things (Jn. 10:10). Consequently, the Death of Christ on the Cross, the worst form of death, showed the awfulness of that monster called sin (Deut. 21:22-23; Gal. 3:13). It showed the necessity of the worst type of punishment, a punishment, incidentally, that should have been ours.
- As well, when Jesus went to the Cross, He did so as a Sacrifice. In the offering up of Himself as a Sacrifice, He had to atone for the vilest sins, the worst sins, and the most heinous sins that could ever be imagined. Consequently, for that to be done,

the Cross was a necessity.

In view of the tremendous significance of this, which, in fact, is the most important thing in the history of man, perhaps it would help us to look at this great Sacrifice of Christ more closely.

ATONEMENT

Considering that Jesus atoned for all sin by His Death on the Cross, past, present, and future, at least for all who will believe (Jn. 3:16), perhaps the word, "*Atonement*," explains best all the rudiments of Redemption.

The word, "*Atonement*," is one of the few theological terms which derived basically from Anglo-Saxon terminology. It means, "*A making at one*," and points to a process of bringing those who are estranged into a unity. The word is used frequently in the Old Testament but is found only once in the New Testament, and

would perhaps even then have been better translated, *“Reconciliation.”*

Its use in theology is to denote the Work of Christ in dealing with the problem posed by the sin of man and in bringing sinners into right relation with God.

It was used frequently in the Old Testament because the Work of Redemption was, in effect, a futuristic Work, which would not be brought about until Jesus came and paid the price on Calvary’s Cross.

Redemption in the New Testament is a fact, hence, there are other words which describe it to a greater degree, such as Reconciliation, Justification, Adoption, Propitiation, etc. Nevertheless, the word, *“Atonement,”* probably helps individuals to understand the Sacrifice of Christ better than any other word.

Its use in theology is to denote the Work of Christ in dealing with the problem posed by the sin of man and in

bringing sinners into right relation with God.

THE NEED FOR ATONEMENT

The need for Atonement is brought about by three things:

1. The universality of sin.
2. The seriousness of sin.
3. Man’s inability to deal with sin.

The first point is attested in many places: *“There is no man who does not sin”* (I Ki. 8:46); *“There is none who does good, no, not one”* (Ps. 14:3); *“There is not a righteous man on Earth, who does good, and never sins”* (Eccl. 7:20). Jesus told the rich young ruler, *“No one is good but God Alone”* (Mk. 10:18), and Paul writes, *“All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). Much more could be cited.

The seriousness of sin is seen in Passages which show God's Aversion to it. The Prophet Habakkuk prayed, "*You Who are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wrong*" (Hab. 1:13).

Sin separates from God (Prov. 15:29; Isa. 59:2). Jesus said of one's sin, which is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, that it will never be forgiven (Mk. 3:29). Of Judas He said, "*It would have been better for that man if he had not been born*" (Mk. 14:21). Before being Saved, men are "*estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds*" (Col. 1:21). There awaits the unrepentant sinner only "*a fearful prospect of Judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries*" (Heb. 10:27).

Man cannot deal with the situation. He is not able to keep his sin hidden (Num. 32:23), and he cannot cleanse himself of it (Prov. 20:9).

No deeds of law will ever enable man to stand before

God justified (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16). If he must depend on himself, then man will never be saved. Perhaps the most important evidence of this is the very fact of the Atonement. If the Son of God came to Earth to save men, then men were sinners and their plight serious indeed.

ATONEMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

God and man are hopelessly estranged by man's sin, and there is no way back from man's side, but God provides the way.

In the Old Testament, Atonement is usually said to be obtained by the sacrifices, but it must never be forgotten that God says of Atoning Blood, "*I have given it for you upon the Altar to make Atonement for your souls*" (Lev. 17:11). Atonement is secured not by any value inherent in the sacrificial victim, but because sacrifice is the Divinely-appointed way of securing Atonement. In

effect, Atonement was secured by Faith in the coming One the sacrifices represented, namely Christ.

The sacrifices point us to certain truths concerning Atonement. Thus, the victim must always be unblemished, which indicates the necessity for perfection. The victims cost something, for Atonement is not cheap, and sin is never to be taken lightly.

BLOOD

The death of the victim was the important thing. This is brought out partly in the allusions to “*blood*,” partly in the general character of the rite itself, and partly in other references to Atonement.

There are several allusions to Atonement, either affected or contemplated by means other than the rite itself. Where these bear on the problem, they point to death as the way. Thus, in Exodus 32:30-32, Moses seeks

to make an Atonement for the sin of the people, and he does so by asking God to blot him out of the Book which He has written. Phinehas made an Atonement by slaying certain transgressors (Num. 25:6-8, 13). Other Passages might be cited.

It is clear that in the Old Testament, it was recognized that death was the penalty for sin (Ezek. 18:20), but that God graciously permitted the death of a sacrificial victim to substitute for the death of the sinner. So clear is the connection that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews can sum it up by saying, “*Without the shedding of Blood there is no forgiveness of sins*” (Heb. 9:22).

ATONEMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament takes the line that the sacrifices of old were not the root cause of the putting away of sins. Redemption is to be obtained even “*from*

the transgressions under the First Covenant” only by the Death of Christ (Heb. 9:15). This means that the sacrifices only pointed to the One Who was to come, thereby, symbolic of His Death. Salvation demanded Faith in Christ rather than the sacrifice of the animal itself, which only pointed to the One Who was to come. In fact, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4), meaning that these sacrifices only pointed to the One Who was to come and Who could take away sins, which He did (Jn. 1:29).

Consequently, the Cross is absolutely central to the New Testament and, indeed, to the whole Bible. All before lead up to it. All after look back to it.

Since it occupies the critical place, it is not surprising that there is a vast volume of teaching about it. The New Testament writers, writing from different standpoints and with different emphasis, give us a number of facets

of the Atonement. There is no repetition of a stereotyped line of teaching. Each writes as he sees.

Some saw more and more deeply than others, but they did not see something different. In what follows, we shall consider first of all what might be termed, *“The common basic teaching,”* about the Atonement, and then some of the information that we owe to one or other of the New Testament theologians.

THE ATONEMENT REVEALS GOD’S LOVE FOR MEN

All are agreed that the Atonement proceeds from the Love of God. It is not something wrung from a stern and unwilling Father, perfectly just, but perfectly inflexible by a loving Son. The Atonement shows us the Love of the Father just as it does the Love of the Son. Paul gives us the classic exposition of this when he says, *“God shows His Love for us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died*

compelling Divine necessity.

This we see also in our Lord's Prayer in Gethsemane that the Will of the Father be done (Mat. 26:42). Similarly, in Hebrews we read that it was "*by the Grace of God*" that Christ tasted death for us all (Heb. 2:9).

This thought is found throughout the New Testament, and we must bear it well in mind when we reflect on the manner of the Atonement.

THE SACRIFICIAL ASPECT OF CHRIST'S DEATH

Another thought that is widespread is that the Death of Christ is a death for sin. It is not simply that certain wicked men rose up against Him. It is not that His Enemies conspired against Him and that He was not able to resist them. He "*was put to death for our trespasses*" (Rom. 4:25). In other words, no one actually took the Life of Jesus from Him; in fact, He gave it up willingly (Jn. 10:18). He came specifically to die for our sins. His Blood was shed "*for many for the forgiveness of sins*" (Mat. 26:28).

He "*made purification for sins*" (Heb. 1:3). He "*bore our sins in His Body on the Tree*" (I Pet. 2:24). He is "*the Propitiation for our sins*" (I Jn. 2:2). In fact, the Cross of Christ will never be understood unless it is seen that there on the Cross, the Saviour was dealing with the sins of all mankind.

In doing this, He fulfilled all that the old sacrifices had foreshadowed, and the New Testament writers loved to think of His Death as a Sacrifice, which it definitely was. Jesus Himself referred to His Blood as "*Blood of the Covenant*" (Mk. 14:24), which points us to the sacrificial rites for its understanding.

Indeed, much of the language used in the institution of the Holy Communion is Sacrificial, pointing to the Sacrifice which was accomplished on the Cross.

THE LAMB OF GOD

Paul tells us that Christ "*loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant Offering and Sacrifice to God*" (Eph. 5:2). On occasion, Paul refers not to sacrifice in general but a specific Sacrifice, as in I Corinthians 5:7, "*For Christ our Pascal Lamb (Passover Lamb) has been sacrificed.*" Peter speaks of "*the Precious Blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot*" (I Pet. 1:19), which indicates that in one aspect Christ's Death was a Sacrifice. In John's Gospel we read the words of John the Baptist, ". . . *Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world*" (Jn. 1:29).

Sacrifice was practically the universal religious rite of the First Century. Wherever men were and whatever their background, they would discern a sacrificial allusion. The New Testament writers made use of this and employed sacrificial terminology to bring out what Christ has done for men. All that to which the sacrifices pointed and more, He fully accomplished by His Death.

THE REPRESENTATIVE NATURE OF CHRIST'S DEATH

It is agreed by most students that Christ's Death was vicarious (substitutionary). In one sense, He died "*for sin,*" and another, He died "*for us,*" but "*vicarious*" is a term which may mean much or little. It is better to be

more precise.

Most scholars today accept the view that the Death of Christ is representative. That is to say, it is not that Christ died and somehow the benefits of that Death became available to men. It is rather that He died specifically for us. He was our Representative as He hung on the Cross. This is expressed succinctly in II Corinthians 5:14, “*One died for all; therefore, all have died.*”

The Death of the Representative counts as the death of those He represents. When Christ is spoken of as our “*Advocate with the Father*” (I Jn. 2:1), there is the plain thought of representation. As the Passage immediately goes on to deal with His Death for sin, it is relevant to our purpose.

The Epistle to the Hebrews has as one of its major themes that of Christ as our Great High Priest. The thought is repeated over and over. Now, whatever else may be said about a High Priest, He represented men. Thus, the thought of representation may be said to be very strong in the Book of Hebrews.

SUBSTITUTION TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

However, we can say more:

Whereas representation is definitely taught in the New Testament, substitution is, as well, and graphically so, which, in effect, goes a step further than representation.

In the three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there is the great ransom saying, “*The Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His Life as a ransom for many*” (Mk. 10:45).

The same Truth is indicated by Passages which speak of Christ as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, Chapter 53, for of Him it is said, “*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: and the chastisement of our peace is upon Him; and with His Stripes we are healed . . . the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isa. 53:5-6).

The shrinking of Christ in Gethsemane points in the same direction. He was Courageous, but many far less worthy than He have faced death calmly. The agony seems to be inexplicable, other than on the grounds disclosed by Paul, that for our sake God “*made Him to be sin (a Sin-Offering), Who knew no sin*” (II Cor. 5:21).

In His Death, He took our place, and His Holy Soul shrank from this identification with sinners. It seems that no less than this gives meaning to the cry of dereliction, “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*” (Mk. 15:34).

The general thought of all this is that men should die, but Christ died instead, which, of course, is substitution.

WHAT THE CROSS TELLS US

Paul tells us that Christ “*redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us*” (Gal. 3:13). He bore our curse, which is but another way of “*substitution.*”

The same thought lies behind Romans 3:21-26, where the Apostle develops the thought that God’s Justice is manifested in the process whereby sin is forgive, i.e., “*the Cross.*” He is not saying, as some have

thought, that God's Righteousness is shown in the fact that sin is forgiven, but that it is shown in the way in which sin is forgiven. Atonement is not a matter of passing over sin as had been done previously (Rom. 3:25). The Cross shows that God is Just at the same time as it shows Him justifying Believers.

This must mean that God's Justice is vindicated in the way sin is dealt with. This seems another way of saying that Christ bore the penalty of men's sin. This is also the thought in Passages dealing with sin-bearing, as Hebrews 9:28 and I Peter 2:24. The meaning of bearing sin is made clear by a number of Old Testament Passages where the context shows that the bearing of penalty is meant.

For example, in Ezekiel 18:20, we read, "*The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for ('bear' in the Hebrew) the iniquity of the Father. . . ,*" and in Numbers 14:34, the wilderness wanderings are described as a bearing of iniquities. Christ's bearing of our sin then means that He bore our penalty.

This is extremely important in that some are teaching that Christ actually became a sinner on the Cross by taking on the nature of Satan, which, of course, is ludicrous.

THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION

Substitutionalized behind the statement in I Timothy 2:6 is that Christ gave Himself "*a ransom for all.*" The word, "*Ransom,*" given here in the Greek is, "*Antilytron,*" and is a strong compound meaning, "*Substitute-ransom.*"

It is that which is given in exchange for another as the price of his

Redemption. Actually, it is impossible to empty the word of substitutionary associations.

A similar thought lies behind John's recording of the cynical prophecy of Caiaphas, "*It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish*" (Jn. 11:50). For Caiaphas, the words were sheer political expediency, but John saw in them a Prophecy that Christ should die instead of the people.

This is a formidable body of evidence proving the fact of substitution on the part of Christ, but is in no way exhausted. In other words, the Word of God teaches emphatically that Jesus Christ was our Substitute. In the face of all this, it seems impossible to deny that substitution is one strand in the New Testament understanding of the Work of Christ.

DELIVERANCE

There are many truths set forth concerning the Atonement, with the Holy Spirit, in effect, addressing this all-important subject in so many ways that it should not be possible for the Bible student to misunderstand what is being said. In fact, and as should be overly obvious, the Atonement, which, of course, signifies what Jesus did at the Cross and the Resurrection as it regards the great Salvation experience, is the Foundation, the very bedrock of the Christian Faith. If men are mixed-up concerning the Atonement, in other words, if they have something wrong concerning this firm Foundation as it regards their interpretation or thinking, everything else will be somewhat wrong as well.

In fact, I personally believe that much error begins with this — an improper interpretation of the Atonement. Consequently, this must be corrected first of all before anything else can be properly addressed.

Paul sees in the Cross the way of Deliverance, in fact, the only way. This means not only Deliverance for the unsaved soul coming to Christ, to which it most certainly does refer, but, as well, for the Christian. This is where many Christians miss it. They understand the Atonement as it regards their initial Salvation experience, but have little idea as to how it affects their everyday walk before God. Therefore, they attempt to sanctify themselves by methods of their own devising, the devising of other people, etc. Irrespective, any way other than God's Prescribed Order, which is the Finished Work of Christ, which, of course, is the Atonement, is doomed to failure.

Men naturally are enslaved to sin (Rom. 6:17; 7:14), but *"In Christ,"* and only *"In Christ,"* are men free. That applies to the Christian just as well as it applies to the unsaved soul coming to Christ (Rom. 6:14-22).

Along with being free in Christ, which takes place at Conversion, similarly through Christ, Believers are delivered from the flesh. They have *"crucified the flesh"* (Gal. 5:24).

WHAT DOES CRUCIFYING THE FLESH MEAN?

Let's see first what it doesn't mean.

Believers have been attempting to do this from day one. They (and I should say, *"We"*) have tried to do this by using every method imaginable.

What is the flesh?

Paul uses the word, *"Flesh,"* in many ways. It can refer to the physical man. As well, it can refer to the sin nature. It also can refer to the efforts of individuals to sanctify themselves by their own ability, etc. So, it is used in a variety of ways.

However, the word, *"Flesh,"* as Paul uses it in Galatians 5:24, refers to the physical man, in other words, our personal ability as a human being, our talents, education, motivation, willpower, etc.

All these things are not sin within themselves. We turn them into sin if we try to live for God by the means of those things listed, plus others we haven't mentioned. Due to the Fall, the physical body and the mind of man have been made insufficient for the task. So, the Lord has provided a way of victory as well as Salvation. It is the Cross of Christ. It only requires us to place our Faith entirely within Christ and what He did for us at the Cross, and then the Holy Spirit, Who Alone can bring about that which we need, can do His Office Work in our lives.

However, if we place our faith in anything other than Christ and the Cross, this greatly limits the Holy Spirit and actually puts the Believer into a place of living in spiritual adultery (Rom. 7:1-4).

So, what does Paul mean when he, in effect, tells us that we must *"crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts"*? (Gal. 5:24).

This is done and can only be done by the Believer placing his or her Faith exclusively in Christ and the Cross, and maintaining it exclusively in Christ and the Cross (Rom. 6:1-14; 8:1-11; I Cor. 1:17, 18, 23; 2:2).

The great Apostle tells us in Galatians that we cannot live for God by the means of the flesh but only by the means of the Spirit. He said, *“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:25).

What does he mean by that?

HOW DO WE WALK IN THE SPIRIT?

The word, *“Walk,”* as Paul used the word, refers to how we live this life, how we order our behavior, how we conduct ourselves, etc. So, this tells us that the great Apostle is addressing us as to how we live this life. We can only do so by *“walking in the Spirit.”*

Now, as already asked, how do we do that?

The Holy Spirit works entirely within the parameters, so to speak, of the Finished Work of Christ. In other words, it's the Cross that gave and gives the Holy Spirit the legal means for Him to do what He wants to do within our hearts and lives.

For instance, before the Cross, due to the fact that the sin debt was unpaid, the Holy Spirit could not come into the heart and life of Believers to dwell permanently. Paul said, *“The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins”* (Heb. 10:4). In fact, when Believers in Old Testament times died, their soul and spirit did not go to Heaven but rather down into Paradise, which was in the heart of the Earth (Lk., Chpt. 16). Once again, the reason for that was because the animal sacrifices were insufficient to take away sins. So, the Holy Spirit was very limited during those times as to what He could actually do because of the reasons given.

However, when Jesus died on the Cross, thereby, paying the sin debt in totality, this made it possible for the Holy Spirit to live within our hearts and lives, and to do so permanently (Jn. 14:16-17).

The manner in which the Believer can walk in the Spirit, and the only way, is that we place our Faith exclusively in Christ and the Cross, and maintain it exclusively in Christ and the Cross. As we have already stated, the Cross of Christ is the Means, and the only Means, by which all of these wonderful things are given to us. When the Believer places his or her Faith exclusively in Christ and the Cross, this is *“walking in the Spirit,”* in other words, the way the Spirit works. This is the only way that one can have victory over the flesh.

GOING BEYOND THE CROSS

Considering that the Cross of Christ answered every question and pointed out every way, where else is there to go? Furthermore, where do we find in the Bible that we ought to go beyond the Cross?

Some might say, *“Well, we go to the Holy Spirit.”* The Holy Spirit works exclusively within the parameters of the Finished Work of Christ and will not work outside those parameters, so much so that it is referred to as a Law. Paul said:

“The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of Sin and Death” (Rom. 8:2). So, if you're going to go with the Holy Spirit, you have to go with the Cross.

Others would claim that we go on to the Resurrection. While, of course, the

Resurrection and anything and everything that Christ did was of immense significance, still, our Redemption was not purchased at the Resurrection, but rather the Cross. Paul said:

“Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (I Cor. 1:17).

If it is to be noticed, Paul did not say, *“Lest the Resurrection be made of none effect.”*

The great Apostle also said, *“For the preaching of the Cross is to them who perish foolishness; but to we who are Saved it is the Power of God”* (I Cor. 1:18).

He did not say, *“For the preaching of the Resurrection. . . .”*

The great Apostle also said, *“I determined to know nothing among you save Christ and Him Crucified”* (I Cor. 2:2).

He did not say, *“I determined to know nothing among you save the Resurrection. . . .”*

THE RESURRECTION LIFE

Every Believer is importuned by the Lord to live the Resurrection Life, but how do we do that? Paul again told us how that is done. He said:

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His Death (the Cross), we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection” (Rom. 6:5).

The idea is, it is impossible to live the Resurrection Life if we do not first of all understand the Cross of Christ.

In fact, every single Doctrine in the Bible is built squarely on the Foundation of the Cross of Christ (I Pet. 1:18-20). Actually, all false doctrine

begins with an improper interpretation of the Cross, a misunderstanding of the Cross, or a denial of the Cross. In fact, the Cross of Christ is so prominent in the Bible that it is impossible to ignore this which the Lord has done that man might be Saved.

Every single sacrifice given in the Old Testament from day one, which numbers into the multiplicities of millions, all and without fail typified the coming Redeemer and the price that He would pay on the Cross. In fact, there is only one Type of the Resurrection in the Old Testament that I can recall at present, and that pertains to the cleansing of the leper.

One bird was killed in running water, which typified the Cross, and the second bird was let go into the sky, typifying the Resurrection of Christ. As far as I can recall, that is the extent of the type of the Resurrection found in the Old Testament.

When one goes beyond the Cross, one loses one's way. In fact, the Cross of Christ is so prominent that in the last two Chapters in the Book of Revelation, which portrays the coming Perfect Age which will last forever and forever, Christ is referred to seven times as the *“Lamb,”* which is a portrayal of the Cross.

Why would the Holy Spirit refer to Christ at that particular time as *“the Lamb,”* considering that Satan and all the demon spirits and fallen Angels are locked away in the Lake of Fire, meaning that there is no more sin and no more temptation? Seven times Christ is referred to as *“the Lamb”* simply because the Holy Spirit wants all to know that every Saint of God will enjoy the New Jerusalem forever and forever because of what Jesus Christ did at

the Cross. Let me say it again:

If one tries to go beyond the Cross, one goes into spiritual oblivion.

Chapter Two

THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS THE ONLY
MEANS BY WHICH ALL OF THESE
WONDERFUL THINGS ARE GIVEN TO US

Sometime back, a young man asked me the question, “*Is it Who He was, or What He did?*”

It was asked rather sarcastically, and I knew that he was denigrating the Cross. He was trying to say that Redemption and all that it affords was because of Who Jesus Christ was and is, God manifest in the flesh.

To be sure, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, is the Only One Who could have carried out this great Plan of Redemption. No one else could have done this thing. Abraham could not have done it, Moses could not have done it, David could not have done it, etc. All of these were born in original sin, therefore, instantly making them ineligible to serve as the perfect sacrifice. Make no mistake about it, the

Cross of Christ was to satisfy the demands of God. It had nothing to do with Satan, at least, that something was owed this evil monarch. It was that which God demanded. Think about the following for a few moments:

Jesus Christ has always been God. As God, He was unformed, unmade, uncreated, always was, always is, and always shall be, but please consider the following:

He has always been God, never ceasing to be God when He became Man. However, if Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, had remained in Heaven, despite the fact of His being God, not a single soul would have ever been saved. In other words, merely being God, as important and necessary as that was, saved no one.

Before man could be redeemed, God had to become Man, and He had to do so for the purpose of going to the Cross. That’s the reason that we say that “*the Cross of Christ is the only Means by which all of these wonderful things from God, paid for by Jesus Christ, can be given to us.*”

So, the answer to the question is that both, Who He was and What He did, were absolutely necessary. But we must

remember, man is not saved because Jesus Christ is God. Man is Saved because Jesus Christ was the Perfect Sacrifice offered up at Calvary's Cross, which satisfied the demands of a thrice-Holy God. We always go back to the Cross! The Cross! The Cross!

Paul said:

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (I Cor. 1:17).

Anything and everything that we as Believers receive from the Lord, all, and without exception, is made possible by the Cross of Christ. This we must ever understand.

We are Saved simply because of what Jesus Christ did at the Cross. We are baptized with the Holy Spirit simply because of what Christ did at the Cross. All Blessings come through the Cross, even as all answers to prayer come through the Cross. All communion with the Lord is made possible by the Cross. Before the Cross, man could not approach God due to the fact that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4). Under the old Economy of God, it was only the High Priests who could approach God, and then, only once a year,

the Great Day of Atonement, and not without blood. But now, due to the Cross and what it effected, meaning that there Jesus Christ atoned for all sin, past, present, and future, at least for all who will believe (Jn. 3:16), any Believer can *"come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need"* (Heb. 4:16). What a privilege! The Cross of Christ changed everything because it atoned for all sin.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

When we speak of the Cross of Christ and what was there accomplished, we aren't speaking of the wooden beam on which Jesus died. In fact, if someone found in Jerusalem the Cross on which Jesus died, and it could be proven as such, still, that wooden beam would not have any more power than a dead stick out in the road. It's not the wooden beam on which He died, although that was necessary, but it was what He there accomplished.

WHAT DID JESUS DO AT THE CROSS?

As stated, He atoned for all sin, past, present, and future, at least for all who will believe (Jn. 3:16). Sin provides the legal means that Satan has to hold man captive. However, with all sin atoned, which Jesus did at the Cross, this removed the legal right that Satan had to hold anyone in bondage. So, that being the case, how do we account for the entirety of the world basically being in bondage and, sadly and regrettably, even most of the church?

As it regards the unredeemed, they are in bondage to Satan, ruled by the sin nature, simply because they will not take advantage of what Jesus did at Calvary's Cross. In fact, that is the same identical reason that most Christians presently are in spiritual bondage to Satan.

Virtually the entirety of the church world will agree with the statement that, "*Jesus Christ is the Source of all things we receive from God.*" However, when we say that "*the Cross of Christ is the Means, and the only Means by which we receive all of these wonderful things from the Lord,*" that's where we have a problem. In fact, the church bounces from one fad to the other.

When Frances and I were starting out in evangelistic work

back in the mid-1950's, at a given point in time, Christians being demon possessed and needing demons cast out of them began to make the rounds. In other words, Christians were taught that if they had a problem with lust, then that meant they had a "*lust demon*"; if they had a problem of unforgiveness, that meant they had a "*demon of unforgiveness,*" etc. They would then have to find a preacher who understood these things, and who could lay hands on them and rebuke this demon spirit, and then they would be free.

While it sounded right to a lot of Christians, it wasn't right. There is nothing in the Word of God that substantiates such a thing. Others have claimed that one can go on a protracted fast and get victory over sin, take the Lord's Supper once each day and effect victory over sin, etc. While fasting and the Lord's Supper are viable, Scriptural prerogatives, still, there will be no victory over sin by such a method.

Sin was dealt with at the Cross of Christ and only at the Cross. So, for the Believer to have victory over sin, his Faith must be placed exclusively in Christ and the Cross. Then and only then can the Holy Spirit help him as it regards this problem that all

of us face.

FULFILLING THE LAW

As it regards the Law of God, every human being in history has broken that Law, with the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who kept it perfectly. The Law demanded death, which we will deal with more extensively momentarily.

Jesus kept the Law perfectly in His Life and Living, never sinning even one time in word, thought, or deed. In fact, had He sinned even one time, He could not have served as the Perfect Sacrifice. So, as our Substitute Man, He kept the Law perfectly, all on our behalf. In other words, our Faith in Him transfers us from the position of lawbreaker to the position of Law-keeper. The position of lawbreaker demands death. This means separation from God forever, which means Hellfire. The position of Law-keeper is all in Christ and what He did at the Cross.

As it regards the broken Law, of which every human being was and is guilty, Jesus satisfied that by giving Himself as a Perfect Sacrifice on Calvary's Cross. That's the reason we say

that the Cross of Christ is the only Means by which we can receive from God.

Concerning the Cross, Paul said, "*Blotting out the handwriting of Ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross*" (Col. 2:14).

This Verse vividly describes the attendant circumstances of forgiveness in Christ. One is the cancellation of "*the written code . . . that was against us.*"

What is cancelled is called, "*The written code,*" an expression used of any document written by hand. The reference is to the Mosaic Law, and the thought is that God has blotted it out so that it no longer stands against us. We will deal with this momentarily as to how this was done.

The idea of its cancellation or removal is that it has been removed permanently, that is, removed so that its claims against us can never again alienate us from God.

Paul's vivid metaphor of nailing the Law to the Cross has been variously explained. However, it probably has to do with an Old Testament practice called, "*The double,*" which we will also attempt to explain to a greater degree momentarily.

THE LAW OF GOD

The phrase, *“Blotting out the handwriting of Ordinances that was against us,”* pertains, as stated, to the Law of Moses. This was God’s Standard of Righteousness, which man could not reach. God’s Nature demands Righteousness, which refers to a strict adherence to the Law on all accounts and at all times. Man being fallen and, thereby, containing a satanic nature made it impossible for him to come up to God’s Standard, or anywhere close for that matter. Consequently, this Law is conceived here as a bond, a bill of debt, if you will, standing against those who have not received Christ, whether then or now.

Of course, man little recognizes God’s Standard of Righteousness; however, not recognizing this Standard in no way closes the door to the coming Judgment. Man may go on in his merry way as if this Law does not exist, trying to make himself believe that it is of no consequence, that is, if he thinks about it at all. However, the truth is, he will answer to this Law in Jesus Christ, or he will answer to it at the Great White

Throne Judgment, with the latter having no reprieve (Rev. 20:11-15).

The battleground of the Atonement is seen in Calvary’s Cross. The charges against man were nailed with Christ to that rough tree. The *“handwriting of Ordinances”* is a signed bond, if you will, an IOU made to God and signed (or admitted) by mankind. By that I mean the following:

All responsible men admit the fact of sin and consent to the justice of the death penalty for it, at least if they think about it sensibly.

WHY IS MAN UNABLE TO KEEP THE LAW?

Paul gives us the answer to that in the great Book of Romans. The Holy Spirit through him said:

“And if Christ be in you (He is in you through the Power and Person of the Spirit [Gal. 2:20]), the body is dead because of sin (means that the physical body has been rendered helpless because of the Fall; consequently, the Believer trying to overcome by willpower presents a fruitless task); but the Spirit

is Life because of Righteousness (*only the Holy Spirit can make us what we ought to be, which means we cannot do it ourselves; once again, He performs all that He does within the confines of the Finished Work of Christ*)” (Rom. 8:10).

The cause of all the problems is the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It so weakened the human body, plus the human mind, making it impossible to do what needed to be done. So, if it was to be done, meaning that man would be Saved, God would have to perform the task Himself, which He did.

THE APPLICATION OF GOD’S LAW PRESENTLY

Some preachers claim that these Passages as given by Paul blot out the Law in totality for both the Saved and the unsaved.

In a measure, that is true, but only in a potential sense. In fact, even as we’ve already stated, Jesus did atone for all sin and for all time. However, the effectiveness of the Atonement, so to speak, only functions in the realm of those who will accept God’s Pardon, which must be made on the basis of

the Finished Work of Christ. In other words, the Law of God, i.e., God’s Standard of Righteousness, i.e., man’s debt owed to God, cannot be assuaged unless the individual accepts Christ. Otherwise, it is not blotted out, and the charges are still leveled at the Christ rejecter.

SIN

Many think that because we’re living in the day of Grace, sin is excused; however, sin is never excused!

The Grace of God is tied totally to the Cross of Christ in an absolute sense and cannot be received by anyone unless the great Sacrifice of Christ is accepted. Actually, that should go without saying. God cannot wink at sin, cannot overlook sin, and cannot ignore sin, even the slightest sin, even in His Own Children. The Scripture plainly tells us, *“For if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation. . . ?”* (Heb. 2:2-3).

The whole thing was settled in Christ, and is only settled in Christ, even as Paul proclaims here. Man accepts that and is

Saved, or he rejects that and is lost.

So, let not anyone think that because this is the age and day of Grace that all Judgment has been suspended, the Law of God has been suspended, and man is free to sin. Nothing could be further from the truth. God hates sin now as much as He always hated sin. The God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament. God does not change because God cannot change, and because God doesn't need to change. How can perfection change! If man does not accept Christ, man will answer ultimately to the Law of God at the Great White Throne Judgment. In other words, man will answer to Jesus Christ and what He did for us at the Cross, thereby, accepting Him as Saviour and Lord, or man will face Jesus Christ as the Judge at the Great White Throne Judgment, but face Christ, man will!

HANDWRITING

This speaks of the Ten Commandments, which constitute the Law of God, His Moral Standard of Righteousness, and was actually given on “. . . *two Tables of Testimony, tables of stone, written with the Finger of God*” (Ex. 31:18).

In other words, what God gave to men, proverbially speaking, was written in black and white so as to be undeniable. Exodus, Chapter 20, proclaims these Commandments, written very simply and easy to understand, so that no one has any excuse for not understanding what God has said. Once again, “*It's the Law.*”

Before the Law of Moses was given (the Law of God and the Law of Moses are one and the same), there was no clear definition of sin. To be sure, sin existed from the time of the Fall, and exceedingly so, but as to exactly what different types of sin were, man had no definition. Of course, the Law of God changed all of that, leaving man without excuse.

JEW'S ONLY?

Some may argue that the Law of God was for Jews only, considering that it was given solely to them. However, even though it was given solely to the Jews, nevertheless, it pertained to all of humanity.

While provision was definitely made for Gentiles, still, the insistence then was not nearly as strong as it presently is