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ATONEMENT—RESURRECTION

“We love Him because he *first* loved us.” 1 John 4:19

An appreciation of God’s love to us “while we were yet sinners,” must be an important cause—not only of turning men to God, but also of *keeping* our hearts in the way of righteousness. His love was first;—not created, nor purchased, but original, self-moved and inexhaustible. It can be known only by its fruits. Christ and his work in all its parts are the fruit of the Father’s love. To know God, we must know Christ, for “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” We may not know the *philosophy* of the incarnation, but we may know the *fact*. “Hidden things belong to the Lord, but things that are *revealed* belong to us, &c. An imperfect idea of the fruit of God’s love must cause an imperfect idea of the love itself, and the effect produced on our hearts and lives must correspond. We feel drawn to defend the word of the Lord for the purpose of increasing our love to him, and so perfecting holiness in the fear (reverence) of the Lord.

One of the prominent features of God’s plan by which his love is manifested is Christ’s *death*. Perhaps no other feature has been opposed as much as the idea that the death of Christ should have anything to do with man’s salvation; and much effort has been made by some to explain it away or so modify the teachings of the bible on this subject as to make it palatable to the natural mind. The bold and reckless spirit that declares by word or action that we will believe nothing unless it accords with our reason, may be characteristic of the age in which we live, but it does not savor of the meek and quiet spirit that trembles at the word of the Lord. We do not oppose the searching and comparing of the scriptures to ascertain what they teach. That is really the disciple’s work. And it is right also to bring all theories to the test of God’s word,—to “prove all things (by that standard) and hold fast that which is good.” And in all this we shall find room for the exercise of the faculty of reason; but if in our searching we find a fact stated, the philosophy of which we can not see, it is hardly becoming in a Christian to ignore or belittle the fact. We may fail of seeing for two reasons, either because God has withheld his reason, or because we are still ignorant of some other revealed fact which in due time will make it plain. Better *if need be* to say “I do not understand,” than to deny the facts.

No careful student of the bible can fail to be impressed with the stress that is laid on the death of Christ. That some may have overlooked other truths, and so laid too much stress on the death, we will not deny, but that is no excuse for our belittling the death, by overexalting other features. A morbid desire for something new and peculiar should be checked by a careful reading of the

context, before using a verse or a small part of it in proof of a new theory.

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“When we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:6-8. How can Christ’s death show or commend God’s love to us, unless that death meets a necessity in the sinner’s case?

To do for us what we could or must do for ourselves would not be an expression of benevolence. To say that he *died* to meet our necessity would be a strange thing indeed, if it were only his *life* that could help us. But verse 10 shows us the value of both the death and the life, and should forever prevent us from confounding the two or ignoring either one. “*Reconciled* (atoned) to God by the *death* of his Son, ... *saved* by his *life*.” That there is an atonement by the *death* of Christ the above passage clearly teaches, and it is so translated in verse 11. And even if the salvation by his *life* is elsewhere called reconciliation, or if there should be discovered a dozen other reconciliations, still it remains true that we are “reconciled to God by the death of his Son,” and it is an expression of God’s great love for the world of sinners.

That this atonement by the death of Christ has no reference to the breaking down of the middle wall between the Jew and Gentile, is clear, because the apostle goes on to explain, and shows as plain as words could make it, that the atonement secures to mankind what was lost through Adam.

“*Wherefore*” in 12th verse relates back to the atonement of verse 11, and it is stated that as by one man all men were condemned to *death*, so by the atonement all men are justified to *life*. To overlook this is to ignore the “*Wherefore*” and “*Therefore*” of the apostle, verse 12-18.

We do not overlook the fact or value of Christ’s *obedience* any more than we overlook Adam’s sin. Sin brought death and righteousness brings life. But that the *death* of Christ, the righteous one, was a necessity is the idea for which we here plead. Now if any one can read carefully the whole passage and not see that Christ’s death secures to man the *recovery* from death, it will prove that the human mind is greatly biased, by its own determinations.

It is not an isolated text, however, that teaches the *recovery from death* by the death of Christ.

Atonement is the basis of Resurrection. The apostle has shown us that Christ’s death is the atoning act. We shall therefore expect to find the death of Christ associated with man’s *recovery* from death.

We are not forgetting the resurrection of Christ, nor overlooking its value as the entrance of the Head into endless life, and therefore as the key of immortality for mankind; but we are seeking to give his *death* its place as the price of redemption or recovery. Certainly man's recovery from death is one thing, and the gift of immortality is another, and they should be so considered though they are intimately related to each other. The former is the basis of the latter, and the latter is the object for which the former is accomplished. Hence it is said, "Reconciled by his death, saved by his life."

"He *died* for our sins." It is not said that he *rose* for our sins. He is the *Lamb* that taketh away the sin of the *World*. The world's sin is Adam's sin. "In whom all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12 marg.) "He bore our sins on his *own body on the tree*." "He became a *curse* for us." "*Wounded* for our transgressions." "By his *stripes* we are healed." "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." 1 Cor. 1:17. If Christ's *death* in itself does nothing, then it *is* of no effect. The cross must refer to the death and not to the after life.

"The preaching of the *cross* is to them that perish *foolishness*, but to us that are saved it is the *power* of God." (Ver. 18.)

"The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ *crucified*." (Ver. 22-23.)

"I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Ch. 2:2. From what he said in the first chapter, we know Paul made a specialty of the *death* in his preaching. The cross is the *basis* of all the glory. He laid down his life for the sheep. "No man taketh it from me. I lay it down of myself." To Pilate he said, "ye could have no power at all were it not given you from above."

After the *hour* for the *Passover* (he being the Antitype, and it must be fulfilled on time) he no longer sought to protect himself, nor allowed others to protect him, but gave himself into their hands. *His* hour had come; then and not till then "they killed the Prince of life." "He gave his life a *Ransom* for many,"—"A Ransom

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for *all*, to be testified in due time." Hence, being redeemed,—"*bought* with a *price*," we are not our own.

The most desperate shift to avoid the force of all the scriptures which speak of Christ's shedding

his blood as a ransom, is that which says the life he gave to redeem us was his *preexistent* life,—that he died *twice*, once when the word was made flesh, and then his death on the cross. It hardly seems possible that any could believe that the incarnation was by *death*. It is, to say the least, a hypothesis without any *scriptural* support, and a little scripture is worth more than a good deal of reasoning. We might as well call translation death, but “Enoch was translated that he should *not see death*.”

But Paul shows us that instead of *taking* the body being the sacrifice, the body was prepared to *be a sacrifice*. (Heb. 10:5-12.)

The preexistent Word is not presented in the character of a Lamb. The offerings under the law foreshadowed not the coming in the flesh, but the death of the flesh, “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.” (Ver. 10.) The same thought as: “Who gave himself a *ransom* for all.” “He died for our sins according to the scriptures, (the types and shadows) and rose again the *third day*” (from the time he *died*, and not thirty-three years after he died).

That Christ died in the same sense in which men die, and in which men are counted dead before they die, must be true or there would be no relation between his death and theirs. Here again the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if *one died* for all then were all *dead* (not all *actually* dead, but *counted* dead, “death (sentence) passed on all.” His death was of the *same kind*, met the claim as a Ransom, so that all are his, and *counted* alive, for the object as stated, “that he died for all that they who *live*, should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.”

The idea is here suggested that he gained the right to control *all* for whom he died. This work of redeeming by death, is not to be confounded with the work of the second Adam, which is to impart spiritual life. Christ did not become the second Adam until he was made a “quickening spirit.” That our Lord Jesus is the antitype of Adam as Head of a new race is true, but he is *more* than that. Adam, besides being head of a race, was lord of all creation. So too Jesus died and rose again that he might be *Lord* both of the dead and the living. (Rom. 14:9.) So too, the uttermost parts of the earth are to be his possession. Ps. 2.

Lord does not mean Head in the sense of Father alone, but refers to the fact of his having *power to control*. “*All power is given unto me both in Heaven and Earth.*” Angels and men, the dead and living alike, are his to command.

So Paul tells us Christ descended in Hades, and then ascended leading “captivity captive,” took the *power* in his own hand.

That this is not a baseless assumption is shown in Heb. 2. There we learn that the very purpose for which Christ took our nature was, that “by the grace of God he *might taste death* for every man.” “That through death he might destroy him that *had the power* of death—i.e. the Devil, and *deliver* them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” He binds the strong man, the prison keeper, and delivers the captives. He delivers them from the death of which they were afraid during their lifetime. They never had a spiritual lifetime, and never dreaded spiritual death. Christ took the natural that he might redeem the natural, and possesses the spiritual that he may impart the spiritual, is the evident teaching of the Bible. The same thought of his having power over the *dead* is brought to view in Rev. 1:18. “I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore; Amen; and have the *keys of Hades* and of *death*.”

This is in keeping with all the rest. Christ *died* that we might live, and *lives* that we might live forever.

This view of the subject does not shut God out of the work and plan, for it *is* his plan to work in and by the Lord Jesus.

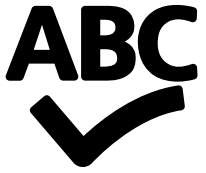
The undeveloped, preexistent Word was with God in the old creation, and without him was not anything made that was made. The Word made flesh, was, in the body prepared, the sacrifice, the ransom for all, and the Word glorified, with his army will go forth conquering. Rev. 19. God in man is man’s hope. “God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”

That the terms death and life are used figuratively sometimes we freely admit, and the context will determine it, but when speaking of the penalty of sin and resurrection from it, the death of Christ must serve as the key. Thus as well as otherwise we can glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brethren let us beware of anything that belittles, or sets aside the death of Christ, as the offering and propitiation for sin, not ours only but also for the sins of he whole world. The simplicity, nature, object and extent of this ransom will be testified—made known in due time.

J. H. P.

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— October, 1879 —



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