

The Divine Reason of the Cross

The Study of the Atonement as the Rationale of our Universe
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Contents

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Preface

Chapter Summaries

1 The Cross and the Highest Reason

2 The Universe Redempto-Centric

3 The Reconciled Antinomy in God

4 The Father Sharing Calvary

5 The Divine Mediation Unique

6 “The Cross” as Watchword

7 Superabundance of Grace

8 The Moral and Forensic One

9 The Evangelical Principle

10 Faith and Philosophy Congruous

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“This is the world of the logos.”—*Royce*.

“In the beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... In Him was life and the life was the light of men.”—*John*.

“For the word (logos), of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God ... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”—*Paul*.

“And through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens.”—*Paul*.

Preface

The matter at the bottom of all others with a rational and moral being is the question: what sort of a being God is. That He is, needs no proof, for man made in His image is so constructed that he must recognize Him by a primary intuition, in order to be rational, and in order to reason to any conclusion whatever. The self-conscious ego knows its own existence, the external world and the First Cause above in whom both cohere, in order to be a thinking being at all. Then when man recognizes himself and his fellows as selfish and therefore sinful, the further question arises: what sort of a being God is with respect to the sin of His creatures; and how does He deal with it? Is He an atoning Being, and how? If holy, as we are bound to believe He is, must He not condemn sin? And if ultimate well-being is yet possible to us, must He not also be forgiving, and loving in the sense of being clement to the sinner?

Questions like these are the ones that chiefly concern us as moral and sinful; and hence the two polarities of holiness and love in God in their mutual relations are above all others the most central for us. Thus we shortly arrive at the matter of atonement, and must further inquire what it is, and how it operates.

The writer has long felt it to be unfortunate for Christian thought, that in the emphasis put upon Christ as mediator, however necessary some form of the concept be, He has sometimes been made to appear as a real third party, outside of both God and man, on whom God arbitrarily imposed the exclusive cost of redeeming suffering, instead of Himself sharing all the Son endured. The work of Christ has thus been represented as an arrangement *to save us from God*, instead of (as a more reflective study of the Scriptures would lead us to see), a *self-manifestation* of God in the flesh, which *brings us home to God*.

Granting that difficulties relating to the Trinity in some form persist, is there not a way of expressing the saving relations of God to us, which will represent the whole triune God as an atoning Being, vicariously participating in the Son's redeeming passion, and so avoiding an enormous ethical anomaly troubling to the minds of many of the sincere?

The author so believes, and in the following discussion he has indicated the directional least of that way in such terms as he could command. He believes that the atonement, in some such form as he has presented it here,—as a cosmic reconciliation—is the basic truth; and that it concerns primarily the reconciliation, through the suffering of the whole Deity for sin, of the two *rapports*, or polarities expressed by holiness and love in the one triune God; and that the personal, subjective *at-one-ment* of God and man is but its corollary. He also believes, in the light of this view, that this reconciliation is a matter so deep in our universe, that it fitly forms the ground of all true philosophy in heaven and on earth. Says Eucken, “Religion does not rest upon metaphysics; it is itself a sort of metaphysic, a development of new life under a conception of a higher sphere.” Such a reconciliation at length will prove the key to all the mysteries connected with the sin-problem, and render them open secrets.

Accordingly, this discussion, while primarily the author's confession that the atoning principle is basal in God, and so in His universe, and constitutes the central message of the Christian preacher, yet incidentally is intended as a modest contribution towards the reduction of that unhappy schism between faith and philosophy, which has been a stone of stumbling to many. The subjective, and so the mystical element in both philosophy and the Christian reconciliation, will be found the solvent of much seeming variance, as between the two realms. It is after this that the best modern mind is feeling. The truest religion and the final philosophy must more and

more approach each other, until “that which is (known) in part shall be done away.” The Logos and the cosmos imply each other; and in Christ and His cross both are mediated to human understanding.

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Chapter Summaries

1. The Cross and Highest Reason

An unfortunate rendering of Paul's word "Logos" in 1 Cor. 1:18—Word used is not *rhema*—but *logos*—The divine reason of the cross implied—Also its expression—These misapprehended by both Jew and Greek—Key to the riddle of the universe—Paul preeminently deals with it—His thought concurrent with that of John's Logos—Plato yearned for the revelation of it—The Logos was the cosmic Christ, the theme of Ephesians and Colossians—Its import akin to speech in man—Paul's doctrine consonant with the final philosophy—Gospel grace cosmically grounded—This neither an agnostic nor a graceless world—Royce's "world of the Logos"—To this "the word" (or Logos) of the cross "fitted as a key to a lock."

2. The Universe Redempto-

"The Logos of the cross the coordinating centre of the cosmos—The *rationale* of the universe—The essence of gospel preaching—The real language of Calvary—The mediated expression of Deity as Redeemer—Jointly-travailing in pain with a jeopardy race—This passion in God self-incurred—Our universe then redempto-centric—Largest sense of redemption—All contemplated in creation of man foreseen as certain to fall—New creation in Christ implied in first creation—Involves more than cure of sin—Immunity against a second fall—Sin then episodal—Redemption no afterthought—Difficulties of sin problem reduced to a minimum—Room for evolution as method—Tri-theism avoided—Father and Son absolutely en rapport—Redemption immanent in the whole Deity—Rendered historic and visual in Christ—Bushnell's latest statement—Redemption, however, historicized though eternal—Relation of this to preaching.

3. The Reconciled Antinomy in God This antinomy induced by sin—An old question: "Holiness or love fundamental in God?"—Mutually condition each other—The reconciliation of holiness and clemency in God effected through self-incurred suffering—Results in self-propitiation the ground of grace—View unlike Dr. Abbott's—A penal or judgment element in the atonement—God's love provides what His holiness exacts—Christ therefore no outside third party—Professor Dorner's view as quoted by Dr. Stalker—Grace issues in clemency yet coheres with holiness—Illustrated by an ellipse with its two foci—The sovereignty of grace—This synthesis deeper than any single attribute in God's being—Relation to it of both saved and lost—Hell the recoil of a contemned grace.

4. The Father Sharing

What the Son endured the Father anticipated—If so, God a suffering being—Blessedness consistent with it—Scripture teachings—A problem for the revisers on "the blood" of God—Not Patripassianism—Christ's sufferings not His exclusively—Meaning of "Why didst Thou forsake Me?"—A self-forsakenness of God-in-Christ—The unequalled wonder of the moral universe—A death entirely unique—Dr. Horton quoted.

5. The Divine Mediation

Preceding thought necessitates something singular—Consistency and not disposition in God contemplated—An embarrassment to evangelical faith—Gospel mediation deals with moral poles in one and the same being—This fundamental in atonement—Illustrated by the Juvenile Court—The Judge becomes Redeemer—The moral leverage here—Self inflicted judicial suffering proves the power to recover—Testimony of Judge Lindsey—This mediation while legal is vastly more—Contrast with the Alabama Claims Affair—Self mediation by the one God-in-Christ—Yet place for the days manship of Christ—Paul's non forensic teaching in Galatians, "But God is one"—The reconciliation *per se* is cosmic—The particular teaching of Colossians and Ephesians—In God's self-propitiation lies the hope of destruction of sin in man—How preach this?

6. “The Cross” as Watchword

“The cross” not synonymous with Christ’s mortal dying—His death unique—Even endurance of the crucifixion but part of the atonement—The death understood only in the light of the resurrection—New empowerment when the Church awoke to it—“The cross “thereafter Christianity’s watchword—The inadequacy of the Passion Play—The Resurrection the ground of the “Parousia”—This realization created the Church—Brought temporal and eternal into logical proximity—New Testament writings understood only in this light—No vulgarity in such preaching of the cross—The real vulgarity in sin—The pity of doctrine in Hawthorne’s “Scarlet Letter”—No cure for sin—A counter-study needed—Might be called “The White Letter”—Repentance correlative to atonement.

7. Superabundance of Grace

Grace saves unto the uttermost—But redemption more than cure—A surplus age in it—The import of Paul’s argument in Romans, chapter 5—Cumulative force of the words “much more”—Five times repeated—Their exceeding superlativeness—Salvation in the inverse ratio to the loss and damage from sin—The vast antithesis between the two Adamhoods—Redemption more than a wage—The largesse of the King—Objection anticipated by Paul—His overwhelming answer in Romans, chapter 6—Culminates in chapter 8.

8. The Moral and Forensic One

Two ways of conceiving the sin-problem—The one concerns sin’s relation to God’s person and His forgiveness: The other its relation to a standard of law and justification under it—Different ways of saying the same thing—Ritual as form may be transient but its meanings eternal—Self-propitiation in God the permanent fact in either case—The Father in parable of prodigal son is God-in-Christ—A mock court is fictitious, jurisprudence is enduring reality—An entire court in the moral nature of both God and man—God is the ethical order—The atonement “a problem fit for a God”—Problem is, *how* can God forgive?—By judgment-bearing, suffering love—Grace the real transcript of God’s being—A modern prodigal—Repentance respects the bearing of sin upon suffering, gracious authority—Subjective and objective elements correlative—Atonement built on moral necessities in both God and man.

9. The Evangelical Principle

Paul’s “word of the cross” historically effective—Christian achievements due to it—The principle defined—Ad judgment to a new moral status—This world potentially redeemed—Man’s attitude to that fact the vital thing—The weakness of present day preaching—A better understanding of the cross would revolutionize it—Disproportionate emphasis on the tragedy—Richard Fuller’s great sermon: its strength and weakness—Three typical misconceptions—Christ not the victim but the victor of the crucifixion—Proof in John 10:18—This the cosmic reconciliation—Man’s personal *at-one-ment* with God but a corollary of the real problem—This cosmic reconciliation the sublimest movement in God’s being.

10. Faith and Philosophy Congruous

Drift of the previous discussion—To clarify ideas, but more—A plea for embodiment of idea in personal action—The postulate underlying this discussion—The cosmic atonement because deepest thing in God, the rationale of our universe—Hence ground of final philosophy—Deep import of Paul’s “Logos of the cross”—The real nexus between faith and philosophy—A balanced subjectiveness the hope of closing the chasm—A sufficient philosophy more than logical process, as religion is more than creed—Action, life, essential to both—Thought considered as active in present day metaphysics—Strength and weakness of Kant’s philosophy—Knowledge real though only partial—The spiritual dynamic in the cross—Reveals the depths of sin—Awakens gratitude and altruistic devotion—Affords the mystical energy of an indwelling Christ—Import of “days of

the Son of Man” —Ethic more than imitation of Christ—Himself formed within and indwelling us—The process of dying and living again—God’s attitude to Nineveh in contrast to Jonah’s— This ancient ethic the norm and dynamic for us—The potential but real congruity of faith and the final philosophy.

1 The Cross and the Highest Reason

In the view of the writer, it is unfortunate that the expression of Paul in First Corinthians, Chapter 1, verse eighteen, rendered “the *preaching* of the cross,” should for three centuries have stood uncorrected in the Authorized Version of the New Testament.

Probably the word “Logos” in the passage was so rendered to conform to the thought inverse twenty-eight of the same chapter, which correctly reads: “But we *preach* Christ crucified, etc.” Of course, the two passages are entirely congruous as respects the message implied; yet the variation in rendering, which has remained so long uncorrected, has resulted in a distinct loss to the thought intended by the apostle.

The word used by Paul is not *rhema* but *logos*; nor was he here dealing with “preaching” as an *instrument* of propagandism, but with the *subject-matter* of preaching, with the *very essence* of that which was to be preached: with that “Logos” of the cross which constituted its rationale, its philosophy, its *divine reason*, a reason which in another connection he declares to be “the wisdom of God.” The philosophy of this cross both the Greek sophist and the Jewish ritualist completely misunderstood; and even to this day and in evangelical circles, the misunderstanding in part remains. This “Logos of the cross” is conceived by Paul to be the key which unlocks the riddle of the universe, solves all mysteries and reconciles all things, including the apparent self contradiction in God’s own nature, as well as man’s sin and restoration. To Paul, preeminently, above all other Biblical writers by special commission, it was given to unfold and preach that solvent. For many reasons, Jesus Himself dealt less specifically with His own cross either as a message or a philosophy. Two reasons for this may here be named; first, because *He Himself was that gospel message*, and secondly, because His gospel as preached by Him was in *form more germinal than explicit*, and necessarily so at that stage of divine revelation. It would have been inopportune for Jesus to put into doctrinal form a philosophy respecting His death, when He well knew it would require several decades for the apostolic church to really apprehend and state its paradoxical uniqueness. The nature and meaning of His own death could not possibly be understood, except in the light of the pending resurrection, and the further consequent gift and illumination of the Spirit. The very meaning of the term “the cross” had to become changed, as we shall later see, by a process of historical irony before an intelligible doctrine concerning it could take form.

This in itself is nothing against the simplicity of the Gospel, which even a child can apprehend, because that is embodied in Jesus’ own sacrificial person; but it is nevertheless true, that the *rationale* of that cross is a matter so deep that even the angels cannot sound it; and the philosophic contemplation of all the ages will never exhaust it.

The thought which Paul embraces descriptive of the cross is identical with that of John in the prologue of his Gospel. In the century immediately before Christ, the Jewish mind and the Greek thought became conscious of their kinship; and at least two writers of the New Testament, and those the most philosophical, seized upon it as a tribute to the Gospel itself.

The Apostle John took the word “Logos” which human aspiration both in Plato and in Hilo had prompted it to utter, and which Jewish prophecy in various forms had tried to vocalize, gave to it a new meaning, and put it into the first sentence of his own peerless Gospel. Here he affirms that the Christ of the incarnation, whom he had seen and handled, was Himself the real Logos—the embodied reason and speech of the eternal God. Unlike the three synopses, John, for the deepest of reasons, wrote differently from others. He lived in the midst of a philosophical environment, and wrote with a deeper insight into history and speculative belief than his associate evangelists, as Paul also in his place had earlier done. John saw that the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, is that Logos—the shaping divine reason of the universe—of whom Plato’s

philosophy was broken light, and with which Philo had identified Jewish prophecy. And so John writes, “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Doubtless if Plato could have read this utterance of John, he would not only have recognized his own conception, but he would also have found the key to the deepest enigmas that had puzzled his matchless intellect. Was it not Plato who put on the lips of Socrates these words: “We will wait for one, either God or a God-inspired man, to teaches our religious duties, and to take away the darkness from our eyes”? Plato taught as definitely as Paul that “the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are unseen are eternal.” “If,” says Maurice, “in the minutest thing, Plato believed there is a reality, an archetypal form or idea, yet he believes just as firmly that every idea *has its root in* one higher than itself; and that there is a supreme idea, the foundation and consummation of all these—the idea of the absolute and perfect Being in whose mind they all dwell, and in whose eternity alone they can be thought of as eternal.”

Now both John and Paul grasped the central interpretative idea of the universe, that God’s Son as the personal eternal Word had descended from empyrean heights, and had given Himself in human terms to the world. And in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, Paul particularly sets forth the *cosmic* Christ.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has the same thought—that “*God’s ultimate word*” to us is that spoken in His Son, who has taken the universe for His inheritance, and bodies out for us the essential Being of God, and who as the medium of God’s power bears on the universe to its goal. For this interpretative word “Logos” means not only *reason—the divine reason*—but it also means *word, speech, expression*; it is the channel through which the eternal, unapproachable God discloses Himself, whether in creation, providence or redemption, as apprehensible.

The Logos for purposes of expression was to God what the gift of speech is to man who was made in His image. Speech in man is his distinguishing characteristic, placing him on a level immeasurably above the rest of the creation. Huxley calls human speech the Alps or Andes,—high over everything else in animal life. The power to understand and to make words is purely a psychological power.¹ Herein is the greatness of even the infant who has the capacity to use words, as a being with reason. Reason plus speech is the mark of the normal human soul. But what thus exists in man as product resides in God as cause in infinite measure; and the Logos becoming historic in Christ is preeminently the vocalized reason of Deity to us—one says “the intelligible expression of the Deity”—and the Logos or reason of God’s redeeming grace goes to the depths of all things written in our nature and universe.

Herein, moreover, the love of God, as John sets it forth, has been made intelligible. Of course, all this presupposes the Trinity, and that the love which was eternal, as between the persons of the Trinity, had been in the incarnation rendered concrete to us, as well as the norm of the fellowship possible between God and ourselves.

When, therefore, Paul in his letters to the churches in Grecian Asia, where the Logos doctrine of the Greek philosophers was familiar, came to speak of the “Logos of the cross” he was commending them and the seekers after wisdom of all time to that wisdom which was supremely expressed in the redeeming grace of Christ. In this doctrine he furnished the key which unlocks the mysteries and enigmas of all life and being. Paul’s doctrine, then, like John’s is that reality in which the final philosophy is constituted, as its at the spiritual basis of the universe. It is the assertion that God is not merely holy, or that He is love, or that He is consistently gracious to the sinner, or that; the redeemed man as remade into the image of God’s Son is to be His perfected child forever, but also that as all these He is also the highest reason, or rationality.

Thus the “*word* of the cross” is “made unto us *wisdom*” as well as “righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” But if in the doctrine of John the Logos was manifested as divine reason and love, in Paul’s doctrine, as we have seen, it had a still further expression in grace. This implies that the divine polarities of holiness and love, as we shall hereafter show, had been completely reconciled in the historic cross, the antinomy in God caused by man’s sin having been completely dissolved.

Paul thus affords us a point of view from which to see as nearly whole as finite minds may the method as well as the reason of the intended, reestablished fellowship between God and man. The Gospel is a “word”—an articulate revelation—from God to man. The Absolute, in this “Word,” has spoken in the only rationality that can resolve the insanity of sin. This is not an agnostic world, but a world into which a revelation knowable in itself at least in part has come; and has uttered itself in accents that can be understood. The God who speaks is a God whose inmost principle is that of holy self-sacrifice in behalf of the creation He has made. He came to a cross. He is a suffering God, the deepest sufferer in the universe, and because He is such, the world must needs be a suffering world with Him. Yet as the “faithful Creator” made common cause with it, so in the end will He surely emerge from that suffering and bring us with Him into “the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.” We shall come to a higher felicity than that of the unfallen first Adam, unspeakably higher. Our very identification with the suffering God, and His groaning creation is the guarantee of our final glorification.

Says Professor Royce: “The eternal resolution that if the world *will* be tragic, it *shall in* Satan’s despite be spiritual, is the very essence of the eternal joy of that World-Spirit of whose wisdom ours is but the fragmentary reflection ... When you suffer, your sufferings are God’s sufferings ... In you, God Himself suffers precisely as you do and has *all your reason for overcoming this grief*” Says Alexander Vinet: “The suffering God is not simply the teaching of modern divines, it is a New Testament thought, and it is one that answers all the doubts that arise at the sight of human suffering. To know that God is suffering with it makes that suffering more awful; but it gives *strength* and *life* and *hope*, for we know that if God is in it, suffering is the *road to victory!* If He share our suffering, we shall share His crown.” Says Dr. A. H. Strong: “The eternal love of God suffering the *necessary reaction* of His own holiness against the sin of His creatures *and with a view to their salvation*—this is the essence of the atonement.”

Professor Royce, above quoted, in his closing chapter of “The Spirit of Modern Philosophy,” after noting the temptations to pessimism to which the confused phenomena of often-disappointed lives tend to drive us, falls back on “the Moral Order, “and says in brief, with profound truth, “Behind all the chaos and the mockery of life there is a suffering and Supreme One, who somehow is *able to transform it all*, and this Supreme Sufferer thus speaks to us: ‘Oh, ye who despair, I grieve with you. No pang of your finitude but is Mine too. I suffer it all, for all things are Mine. I bear it, and yet I *triumph*.’ It is this thought of the suffering God who is just our own true self, who actually and in our flesh bears the sins of the world, and whose natural body is pierced by the capricious wounds that hateful fools inflict upon Him,—it is this thought, I say, that traditional Christianity has in its deepest symbolism first taught the world, but that in its fullness only an idealistic interpretation can really and rationally express. Were not *the Logos our own fulfillment*, were He other than our very flesh,—His loftiness would be our remote and dismal helplessness. But He is ours and we are His, He is pierced and wounded for us and in us. He somehow finds (is it not through a real atonement? 2) amidst all these horrors of time, *His peace* and *ours*. We have found in a world of doubt but one assurance, but one and yet how rich. All else is hypothesis. The Logos alone is sure—the brief and seemingly so abstract creed of the idealistic philosophy—*this world is the world of the Logos*.”

Thus speaks Professor Royce. But what is the import of it all, as related to our discussion, except that in the practical wrestle with the enigma of sorrowing oft disappointed human life, all

philosophy which is of any worth, whether it be called “idealistic” “realistic” “monistic” or “pluralistic” drives its earnest disciple to *the suffering Logos* of Saint Paul, and to that of John’s Gospel? Thus the last word of philosophic groping is the first presumption of the apostolic gospel. “This is the world of the Logos, “and to this “world of the Logos” the “Logos (or divine reason) of the cross” is perfectly fitted, and it has in its theology all the future with it.

An atonement, as an objective matter to meet the case, must be as comprehensive as the effects of sin have been in the disorders introduced into our universe. This atonement in the Scriptures is represented as beginning in the timeless world which was before creation and above it, and as extending in its effects to our whole cosmos—that cosmos within which man has his earthly being and moral discipline.

A reconciliation therefore with this compass must be cosmic—that is, universal and universally reconstructive, that is potentially so. And such is the reconciliation which the Scriptures present, and which the Church was established to preach. Man’s personal subjective reconciliation to God is of course a foremost feature in it. This profoundly concerns him as man. Yet after all, great as it is, it is but a subsidiary part of the anterior cosmic reconciliation, with which from times eternal Deity was concerned in the prospect of creation as a whole.

It is this atonement as cosmic, and the divine rationale of it that we are endeavoring to set forth in this discussion.

It is said that a mechanic in Colorado has invented a phonographic safe lock which can be opened only by a spoken word of him who closes the safe. Instead of a knob on the door, the safe has the mouthpiece of a telephone. A delicate needle extends from the diaphragm of this mouthpiece to a groove in a sound-record made on the phonographic cylinder within the lock. The word on which the safe is locked is thus recorded on the cylinder in the form impressed upon it by him who locks it. The moment, therefore, he who *made the record repeats the word*, in the magical tone which characterizes that individual voice, the safe will fly open; and *no other* can command it. The record, and so the lock, will respond only to the voice of one master.

So we may conceive that as this world is the world of the Logos, an expression of the deepest wisdom of God—all things considered, God having made His mysterious record upon its delicate cylinder, His voice only, and that of the holy sacrificial love, concrete in the reason and speech of the cross, can unlock the secrets of the universe, and undo the mischief of its sin.

2 The Universe Redempto-Centric

“The word of the cross”—its divine Logos or expressed reason, both reason and speech—this then is the coordinating centre of the cosmos. That is to say, the divine “Word,” which John declares was “in the beginning,” which was “with God” and which “was God,” and which as related to the cross, in Paul’s mind, was the essence of gospel preaching, is the central communication of the redeeming God to man, as it is also at the basis of the rationale of the universe.

“In the fullness of time” it also came incarnate to the cross. The divine redemptive movement, in purpose anterior to creation, once determined upon never paused until it vicariously expressed itself in the language of Calvary. Notwithstanding the certainty which confronted the Most High, that the man He was about to create would fall into sin and death, God resolved in creating him to make common cause with him: He determined to become a suffering Deity, only so that He might bring man through the impending discipline into the higher and more secure perfection. So He who was both God, and according to the flesh the Messianic redeeming One, endured the crucial pain on our behalf.

“The Logos of the cross” is then simply the mediated expression of Deity as Redeemer. This expression is the objectification (or rendering historical and concrete) of that highest ethical nature of things ever immanent in God “from the foundation of the world.” This, in particular, is the God revealed to sinful mankind. Whatever His undisclosed relations may be to other beings,—to angels, principalities and powers in the heavenlies,—God’s expressed relations to man have this unique distinction; they are those of a Redeemer jointly-travailing in pain with a jeopardized race. This self-incurred passion on God’s part is the supreme governing relation which He sustains to our universe.

And if this be so, our universe, however it be “Theo-centric” or “Christo-centric,” is certainly *redempto-centric*. And that which makes it so is the “divine reason” in the cross of Christ. But when we say that our universe is redempto-centric we mean redemption in its transcendent sense. The term is doubtless commonly used as implying simply recovery from sin, but we mean more than this, as the Bible does. We mean the newcentring of the character in Christ contemplated in the very creation of man, and the matured result of a character tested by conflict with evil, and which like Christ and in Him comes off “more than conqueror,” because of a new spontaneous holiness so divinely inwrought that it will never again fall. We cite the following passages as samples of many that might be quoted, which present this consummate goal: “To sum up all things in Christ” ... “in whom we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:10, 11). “For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He foreordained them He also called, etc.” (Rom. 8:29). Revelation speaks of those whose name hath been “written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been (in thought eternally) slain” (Rev. 13:8).

In addition to the evidence from these and similar passages, our position respecting the largeness of redemption will be better seen if we recall the messages of the Epistles to the Romans, and to the Hebrews, respectively. In Romans we are taught the grounds on which, and the methods by which we are *delivered from* the guilt and power of sin— what we are *saved from*, how the sin-process is undone. Whereas in Hebrews, we are shown the positive realities *unto which* we are saved. “For it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons *unto glory* to make the captain of our salvation perfect (or consummated) through sufferings.” The sons of God are not only, negatively, *delivered from sin*, but they are also positively *exalted unto glory*. This latter epistle is given up to the most graphic

description of the heights of privilege, blessing and power *unto which* we are *destined*. “Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, etc.”

When God said, “Let us make man in our own image,” He had in view, as the whole trend of the Bible shows, much more than the unfallen first man of Eden. It meant, indeed, to take up the mischief of sin and effect a cure for it, even to turn the tables on it; but it was to do this on the way to a vastly higher realization,—namely, to the uplifting of humanity to the perfections of new-creation in the image of Christ Himself, glorified at the right hand of the Father. All this was involved in the redeeming pre-mundane purpose. Wherein theology has ever appeared to ground the work of redemption upon “the fall” rather than upon a purpose far anterior to that, it has been a misfortune.

Dreadful as sin is in itself, this is misplacing the emphasis in God’s scheme of the whole. “The one far-off divine event To which the whole creation moves,” comprises more than cancellation of sin; it embraces new-creation also.

But if I am asked on what more definitive grounds I feel so sanguine that our universe is redempto-centric, rather than centred about, say, law, or some nexus pertaining to natural causation, I find my exegetical ground in the direct teaching of Christ as given in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John. The teaching of this chapter beyond any other in the New Testament sets forth the nature of the moral order under which our world exists: it is the *locus classicus* respecting the new evangelical probation which God-in-Christ has made possible to us despite all the mischief which sin has wrought.

Recall three points in the course of thought in this chapter.

(a) A speculative question had been asked by the disciples respecting the why of the birth of a man in blindness. They inquired: “Master, who sinned, this man or his parents that (lit., in *order that*) he should be born blind”—impliedly resting under a *judgment* for some one’s sin.

Jesus answered in a way that seemed to deny the nexus between blindness and sin altogether. “Neither did this man sin nor his parents, *but that* (lit., *but in order that*) the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

Now Christ here is not denying the relation between blindness and sin, but in a hyperbolic expression is emphasizing a *deeper sequence*, namely that between the man’s blindness and His own coming into the world. There is a *new “in order that.”* His coming and His redemptive work have *transcended* the old nexus of natural causation. The world has come under a redemptive order, so that every man’s seeming calamity is but an *occasion* for the working of redemptive grace. Man even at the worst under a gospel system is but a *candidate for grace*.

Then the ground-purpose of God deeper than creation, deeper also than any permissive purpose in allowing sin to come into the world, is a *purpose redemptive*, and redemption in a deeper sense than the mere undoing of sin: a result is in prospect that will work higher works, *turn the tables* upon sin, bring to God a higher glory and to man a higher destiny despite his inbred sin.

(b) Having laid down this principle Jesus then proceeds to another declaration respecting the bearing of such a fact upon His work and ours in so far as we share His work with Him. “We—not I—must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work.” Jesus here is not speaking of the *night of death* when our probation ceases, but of the *night of judicial darkness* into which the hardened Pharisees were deliberately walking, in refusing His gospel light, to which the man born blind was so trusting himself. This man born in such a night of darkness had emerged into high noon of spiritual light, and in testimony was pouring it upon the judicially blinded

Pharisees, who had proved themselves false shepherds also. Accordingly their sin and darkness *remained*. For them no day ever broke. In a redeemed moral order, however, there was no

natural or inherited darkness but could be so relieved as to share the glory of “the sun of Righteousness” Himself.

(c) Finally, in summing up the philosophy of the whole case, in verse thirty-nine Jesus, by a great generalization, said: “For *judgment* came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind.”

What is this but the pronouncement that the coming of God-in-Christ into this world was in order to introduce another type of judgment than could ever have been possible under law, or mere natural causation. Christ speaks of a *new kind of judgment*—a *judgment which by His grace becomes salvation*, and not damnation, even though sin be the awful fact it is. If it be true, as it undoubtedly is in one view of the case, that through Christ we are saved *from* judgment, it is also true in another view of the case, that “we are” *saved by judgment*, through what Dr. Forsyth calls Christ’s “judgment-death.” Godin- Christ having taken up in Himself all the moral issues involved in the race’s sin, and voluntarily vicariously endured their just judgment, He has the right freely to give to every sinner on earth, no matter how deep and deadly his heredity of evil may be, the full benefit of that saving death. They—the sinful world—are in Christ “*adjudged*” to that status. “That they which see not—like the man born blind, but who welcome his grace— may see”; and also conversely, “that they who see—like the proud Pharisees, boasting that all the light is with them, though they sacrilegiously refuse” the true light which now shineth—“may become judicially and finally blinded forever.”

Such, as I understand Christ to teach in this great chapter, is the nature of the gospel probation. It declares the kind of a world in which we live, the kind of moral order under which all men, whether they realize it fully or not, exist and are permitted to live out their careers. On this definitive basis, therefore, as central to all other teaching in the Holy Scriptures on the subject, I plant my feet and gather my deepest inspirations for the preaching of a gospel of hope to all the sinful and despairing sons of men.

While in the Biblical record the incoming of sin in the order of time stands at the very beginning of history; and while the outworking of redemption historically presented comes late in time, nevertheless in reality sin is episodal: in the scheme of the whole it enters as a parenthesis, between the eternal redeeming purpose, and the historical denouement in the economy of Grace.

Redemption, then, is grounded in the eternal purpose of God’s grace, “Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit, ... according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Redemption, then, in the large is anything but an after-thought, a mere appendix to make good an unexpected disaster which had overtaken God’s universe. Both sin and redemption were foreseen from the beginning, and the latter in the plan is so related to the former, that in the end a greater good will result, however puzzling the problem may be to us.

Referring to the problem of evil in his recent work, “The Philosophical Basis of Religion,” Professor Watson of Queen’s University, Canada, says: “The high destiny of man, and the infinite perfection of God, make it inconceivable how there should be a universe containing beings who realize what is the meaning of their own life and of the whole, unless those beings (by a disciplinary testing-process) pass through the long and painful process by which the absolutely good is revealed as that which can overcome the deepest depths of evil.”

This may be thought an overstatement, yet such a process the sin of man with the long *reductio ad absurdum* in it, and the application of the Redeemer’s grace to it, will doubtless in the end turn out to be. The triumphant issue will be all-glorious. “But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together with Him and made us sit together in heavenly

places in Christ Jesus with Him, *that in the ages to come, He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*”

This positive form of a theodicy has at least this to commend it: it reduces the difficulties of the sin-problem to their minimum. It makes this larger conception of redemption the ground-plan of the universe (rather than an after-thought): it leaves room for an ascending evolution in God’s method of doing things if only the term “evolution” be confined to its proper limits—with a permissive element in it, whereby God uses or overrules the exercise of man’s freedom, and whereby God is not made responsible for sin.

But above all other considerations for thus placing the emphasis in a study of God’s

ways with men is this; that it reflects a higher glory upon the character of God. It lodges the redeeming principle in the whole Deity. While conserving the Trinity, it saves us from that tri-theism which has so obtained as to picture one person in Deity as protecting us from another person in the same Deity. Has it been anything short of a calamity to the

evangelical system, that God the Father has often been shown as a distant impassible, abstract majesty, and that the Son has been set over against Him to protect the sinner from Him? Has not this conception destroyed the real Fatherhood altogether, and made God to appear as chiefly concerned to preserve His abstract passionless honor, with Christ enduring all the pain of upholding this standard, while man gets the benefit of it? Of course such a view entirely overlooks the organic union between the Father and the Son (which union has respect both to moral honor and redeeming passion), and the organic union also contemplated between Christ and the believer. These two unities entirely alter the case, so that after all we have Deity in immediate relation to the repentant and believing sinner, although the principle on which the reconciliation was effected requires mediating activities of a unique sort, of which we shall hereafter more fully speak.

We here, however, reiterate that all the redemption that was ever mediated in Jesus Christ was immanent in Deity as such. Our God is a redeeming God, an atoning Being, expressing Himself indeed in Christ His Son, but always in indivisible unity with Himself.

While we thus distinguish in thought between the atoning sufferings of Christ as historic, visual and so more concretely apprehensible, and the anterior sufferings which the Father must have endured from the beginning as certainly as He foreknew that the race He was about to create would lapse into sin, yet it must not be inferred that this in any degree lessens the historic reality and place of Christ’s sufferings as the culmination of God’s own atoning anguish (as if they were merely scenic in character), or that the one was adequate without the other. Both the historic and the eternal presupposed each other, and are to be thought of as parts of each other. The chief reason for now putting the case as we have is in order to remove from our thought the false and artificial antithesis between the Father and the Son which our forms of representation of Christ’s sufferings have often created in our own minds and those of others; as if God the Father was no sharer in those sufferings, and implacable indeed towards men until some innocent third party should intervene before He could love at all. This so dreadfully caricatures God, so falsifies the situation, that we are compelled to seek some form of statement which represents the whole case more truly. But it is not meant to lessen one whit the immense emphasis that should be put upon the pains of Deity in Jesus as vicariously and historically endured for the sinner. We also need to have a most concrete and vivid conception of the Christ as Deity in human form to whom we may individually become united, and so realize the hope of our own ethical reconstruction. Without this we cannot get an adequate conception of the new ethical possibilities in ourselves. We do well, then, to go on placing emphasis upon the concrete sufferings of Christ in order to increase confidence in the ethical effectiveness of God’s sacrificial love in our behalf, and that we may become consciously redeemed in Him. If, then, in our

analysis of the situation, which the present study is intended to be, we are able to distinguish more clearly the implications of evangelical terms, we shall avoid some unhappy confusions and remove some stones of stumbling.

There is no antithesis between the sufferings of God the Father, and those of Jesus Christ His Son, as pertaining to redemption. What was in time historically finished and objectified in the work of the Son was ever immanent in the Father, whose truest designation is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Says Dr. Bushnell in his “Forgiveness and Law,” a discussion greatly modifying some of the unfortunate statements in his earlier work, “The Vicarious Sacrifice,” “The transactional matter of Christ’s life and death is a specimen chapter, so to speak, of the infinite book that records the eternal going on of God’s blessed nature within.

All God’s forgiving dispositions are dateless, and are cast in this mould. The Lambhood nature is in Him, and the cross set up before the incarnate Son arrives. The propitiation, so called, is not (merely) a fact accomplished in time, but an historic matter represented in that way to exhibit the interior, ante-mundane, eternally proceeding sacrifice of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world.”

I would, however, go a step further than Dr. Bushnell, and say that the historical *representation* is an *actual part* of the atonement. That atonement needed to be historicized, in order to meet the fact that the *sin* of the world, which it was to meet, is a historical matter. The atonement in principle and in God is dateless, but as taking effect on man it is historical though dateless.

Any conception of the atonement which gives the impression that it is an afterthought must lead to the inference that God’s original thought respecting His creation, and what would come of it, was incomplete and so a product of an incompetent God. And it reduces Christ’s work to an impertinence. Such a conclusion of course dethrones God.

Any form of redemption which is outside of God, which is insular, or an addition to God’s scheme of the whole, cannot abide. Christ must not be made antithetical to God, since in the New Testament He is shown to be the revelation of God. He but brings to light what was previously obscure. He opens to human realization only what was ever immanent in God’s thought and being. Hence the universe is intrinsically redempto-centric.

3 The Reconciled Antinomy in God

In the contemplation of the divine perfections, it is an old question whether there be one attribute in God so fundamental that it furnishes the governing law for the exercise of all the other attributes, and if so which one it is? With some theologians, holiness is made this fundamental perfection, and with others love in the sense of benevolence is exalted to that supreme place. By one school of thought it is declared that holiness, as supposedly most ethical, affords the law that governs all; that our moral sense compels us to believe that the interests of holiness, supremely, must be conserved.

Others maintain that love, in order to render holiness itself ethical, is entitled to the commanding place: for man without his consent was so created and placed that sin was permitted to enter humanity from without. This implies that God is responsible for the possibility at least of sin. Besides divine love can desire only the holiest things. And from this position it is hard to escape if we really weigh our terms, and would obviate the charge of arbitrariness in God.

Now is there not danger of conceiving of these two alternatives respecting the central attribute, too abstractly, and also of making God's being too departmental? If we view these attributes as expressing *polarities* in the one indivisible God seeking harmonious expression, are not the difficulties better overcome? And is not a harmony to be found in an element easily overlooked, namely, the element embraced in that idea of a redemptocentric purpose in God, on which this discussion proceeds? Sin, the abuse of free agency, was at a certain stage foreseen as certain to invade our universe, and yet from the beginning God provided amply and holily to meet it. When, therefore, we come to the concrete matter of man's new possibilities in Christ, this problem respecting the exercise of either God's holy, or love polarity, in the ascendent is radically altered. Sin, whether as anticipated by the Creator, or as become actual in our world, created an antinomy in the very being of God, created a new ethical exigency for God and the universe, so that for the legitimate expression of either or both of these polarities in question a reconciliation was necessary, that is, a reconciliation of opposite moral relationships within God's being itself. On the one hand, as we must believe, the self-affirmatory character of the divine purity would compel displeasure against sin; and on the other hand, the divine clemency which on God's part yearns to impart its own holy nature to His creatures would constrain Him to forgive and cleanse from that sin. The reconciliation was effected through the self-provided, suffering reconciliation of God-in-Christ. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Thus the antinomy in the divine Being itself was dissolved. This was in principle the objective atonement. It needed, however, to be historically finished in Christ—in the Logos incarnate—among other reasons, in order that there might be one in human nature to whom we might be vitally united and through that union have hope of ethical renewal. Moreover, it was only as the atoning principle became concretely expressed in Christ, that humanity generally could get hold of it.

Now this reconciliation being accomplished, a new manifestation of the divine Being rose to the supreme place, namely what the Bible calls His "grace,"—a synthesis of both holiness and love—something made possible only by God Himself, and wrought through His own suffering. This real conception of grace as a synthesis of love *and* holiness is admittedly so unique that many earnest minds, habituated as they are to live in modernistic terms of law, of mere phenomenal antecedents and consequents—if not in a mechanical determinism—have quite lost sight of the Bible concept of grace.

When this reconciliation-principle, however, is grasped and given its true place, the throne of God henceforth becomes a "throne of grace." As shown in the Apocalypse, the

Lamb, as one who had been slain and is alive again, lion-like rules as king. In this way God propitiates Himself, Himself assuming the suffering which otherwise had deservedly fallen upon us. Dr. Lyman Abbott even, who, as is well known, is a strong opponent to the conception of the atonement as a propitiation to righteousness, yet tries to maintain a doctrine of self-propitiation on the part of God. But note its peculiarity. Dr. Abbott holds that this propitiation is the self-propitiation of *love* only, and that its influences are exerted through education, so curing sin. In explaining his view in his "Theology of an Evolutionist," he says: "We believe not in the propitiation of an angry (meaning an exasperated) God, by another's suffering to appease the Father's wrath, but in the perpetual self-propitiation of the Father (not "holy Father"), whose mercy going forth to redeem from sin satisfies as nothing else could the divine indignation against sin by abolishing it." But we believe it truer to say sin can be abolished only by a vicarious suffering for it, endured in the depths of the Logos, of the divine-human One. Dr. Abbott further holds that sacrifice is in no sense a *penalty* borne by an innocent sufferer for guilty men.

Concerning these representations we inquire: (1) What sort of a self-propitiation is that of mere love which finds no problem of moral righteousness in God to meet? If there is only love (in the sense of clemency), then there is no principle in God requiring propitiation at all. It is a contradiction in terms to speak of a self-propitiation of love, unless love be conceived as cohering in holiness in a strictly ethical way. And if love be so viewed, Dr. Abbott means by love what we mean by the synthesis of both holiness and love, that is grace in the exact sense of the term. And so Dr. Abbott would remain orthodox after all. If Dr. Abbott uses the term love so as to embrace also what we mean by holiness, then he implies all that we mean by holiness and love, only he excludes any reference to judicial public sanctions as needing to be conserved by the atonement.

(2) We should grant that the conception of God as an angry, or exasperated God, and so needing to be propitiated by another suffering party outside Himself, is far from a true representation concerning God. This would be immoral. But so also is any selfpropitiation of love, since a propitiation which is without regard to the sanctions of right moral government and public interests legitimizes sin. God is ever in solidarity with Christ the Son, so that what the Son suffers the Father also suffers with Him. Dr. Abbott also and all his school of thought in their statements quite miss the point that Deity has in itself the two *rappports* or polarities of holiness and love (in the sense of clemency), each demanding its proper expression in view of the sin which has come into the world.

When, therefore, in the Scriptures God is represented as sacrificially suffering in behalf of the guilty, we must conclude He does truly propitiate Himself. There is then a *penal element* which He Himself bears, inasmuch as He expresses His grace in such a way as consistently to forgive and cure sin. He can justify the ungodly, while Himself remaining just. God's self-propitiation is a propitiation which holiness *exacts* and clemency *provides*. It is in this sense that Christ, as a manifestation of what was immanent in Deity, bears our penalty.

Undoubtedly it is untrue to fact when Christ is presented as a strictly outside and third party, bearing a penalty which God exacts from Him although due to man. When, however, this penal element is thrown back into the experience of God Himself, even into the "*holy* Father," and conceived as self-incurred from the foundation of the world, although historically finished and expressed in Christ, who shared it with the Father, the difficulty which has so stumbled Dr. Abbott, and which he so unhappily construes, is greatly relieved. So long as God is a suffering God in behalf of the sinner whom He would recover, that suffering in the very nature of the case has a penal element in it, and it is sheer unreason to ignore it. Dr. Abbott's notion then of the self-propitiation in God is wide of the facts, and entirely fictitious: it ignores or overlooks the main issue, as between holiness and clement love.

The inadequacy of the conception of the divine love, unqualified by holiness, represented by Dr. Abbott's view, reminds us of a reference by Dr. Stalker in his recent book on the atonement. He is referring to the manner in which Professor Dorner of Germany was wont to deal with that notion of love, or grace in God which is not tempered by holiness. "it was the habit of Dorner," says Stalker, "to say, with a blush, half indignation, half shame, on his sensitive face, and amidst a death-like silence in his classroom, that a love which gives itself utterly and absolutely *away without respect to anything*, even to character, is the love not of God, but of a harlot."

Dorner duly construed the justice of God as that with which love itself internally coheres—that is, the very self-determination of love to continue itself, to *uphold itself in rectitude*, even when giving itself away—that, and that only is a self-respecting love, and one that the moral universe can respect or get any value from. But this is grace. If God in-Christ assumed a role in which He had to endure a forsakenness of soul as "numbered with the transgressors," how could it but involve the element of penalty, although a penalty self-incurred in behalf of the sinner, or vicariously? Then a conception of penalty thus voluntarily assumed only is, when perceived, morally adapted to win men to personal reconciliation with God and loathing of sin as nothing else is.

The interrelations of the polarities¹ of holiness and love in God and their coherence in grace may be looked at in yet another way. Let neither of the two perfections or polarities in question be regarded as dominant, but rather be conceived as corresponding to the two foci of an ellipse.

An ellipse, let it be remembered, is a figure so drawn about two points, called foci, that the sum of the distances from these two to any point on the periphery of the figure is always equal. So in the very concept of an ellipse every point on the periphery of the figure stands equally related to these combined foci. In the figure neither focus alone can be the constructive basis of the figure. For beneath all the elements in the figure there is a *deeper composite centre* though invisible, in which the ellipse finds its unity. It is in some such way that the grace of God in the atonement represents the synthesis of both holiness and love. These polarities as jointly affecting everything in the divine government become grace. It is this grace which is the foundational unifying fact in the reconciling and governing relation of God to our universe. This world is under the aegis of grace, and not of either holiness or love alone. The sovereignty of our God is a sovereignty of grace. Thus the mutual relations of one focus to the other, and of both to any and all points on the periphery in an ellipse, better illustrate the realities in a redemptive system than the conception of a circle as a figure described about a single point, with either holiness or love conceived as central, could. The latter conception is an abstraction in thought and results theologically in a house divided against itself—an antithesis in God's own nature. The former conception does justice to the realities of the case, and preserves the balance of the one God-in-Christ relating Himself savingly yet holily to a perverse and guilty world.

It is such a biplex unity in God as the ellipse constitutes, which consists with an atonement eternal in principle, makes it primarily resident in God, and a truly cosmical matter, instead of a phenomenal event occurring merely in time, if not an afterthought in the divine economy.

Grace for its free expression is thus the resultant of the reconciled opposing *rapproches* or polarities in God. This grace is universal in its relationships, is potential for the salvation of all men, and becomes efficient for all who do not in unbelief reject it. In this view, therefore, while the proper functions of both holiness and love are conserved as always alike immanent in Deity, and mutually qualifying each other, yet their joint exercise is so applied that grace becomes the regnant expression of the Most High. And so judgment becomes for the believing salvation, and for the disbelieving "the second Death."

A view of the universe and of its God thus conceived in a redempto-centric system compels us to recognize the principle of grace,—itself resulting from a proper union of God's holiness and

love,—as supreme in the government of all finite human beings. All such beings are brought into existence under its aegis, have their moral trial under it, and must reckon with it at the last. Even angels will have it for a theme of endless contemplation, for they cannot sound its depths. The fallen ones will be compelled to see the folly and guilt of rebellion against such a sovereignty, and the human race, preëminently created in Christ and for Him, will find this God of grace an endless theme of ever-growing apprehension, wonder and praise.

God hath summed up (or gathered together) “all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.” This is the very acme of God’s manifested being to the whole universe He has made, and is deeper than any single attribute in His being: it is the expression of the harmony of all His attributes in absolute equipoise, and yet in their most glorious exhibition: *it is the sovereignty of grace*. Even the lost in perdition will forever find themselves in a moral retributive relation to such a Deity as God is in Christ, that is a God of grace; and the very depth of the final burning will consist in the fact that men have contemned such grace, and thus the love of God as really as His holiness will be for such a consuming fire. There is no wrath like “the wrath of the Lamb.”

In one of Dante’s conceptions of the retribution of heaven against the lost, he likens the mercy of God in its reaction upon the damned to the dropping of roses out of heaven

upon their heads, but which as they fall turn to coals of juniper. That is, he would teach that hell in one of its aspects is the insane reaction of finite rebellion against an infinite mercy. This doom will not be the result of anything arbitrary, or even abstractly ethical in Deity, but of something severer still, standing in a category by itself, namely, the contempt of that grace, which is the final principle in the Infinite’s relation to mankind.

It is not the fact of transgression as such which gives God the deepest pain, but the contempt of that grace which has undertaken at such self-cost to redeem from sin. And hence the severest judgment to come upon the universe cannot be the reaction of an abstract holiness against sin *per se*, but the reaction of a despised grace (combining both holiness and love) upon those who sacrilegiously tread that grace underfoot. Hell is the recoil of such profanation upon the profane one, and in its manifestation it will itself reflect glory upon the God of this universe, and compel all beings to respond to Him, who rules in mercy and truth forever, their endless “Amen!”

In the end every form and degree of opposition to the God of such a grace will be left without a shadow of excuse. “True and righteous O Lord, are Thy judgments altogether.”

4 The Father Sharing Calvary

Now, as to the Father's relation to the Saviour's historical suffering, must we not say that the Father anticipated and shared in all the humiliation and woe the Son endured? In so far, indeed, as the infinitely Holy is a being without schism, and so without any element of self-reproach in Himself, so far the fathers were right when they said the infinitely Blessed cannot suffer. Moreover, in the social harmonies of the Trinity, there is ever a basis for God's eternal and constitutional blessedness. But since sin has invaded the universe, it has afflicted God; it has made a difference with Him; and for this difference the race is responsible. This sin has laid on Him the moral necessity of enduring measureless pain, if in consistency with Himself He would recover us from our guilt and ruin. Note these specimen passages of Scripture which might be greatly multiplied. We are told the sins of the antediluvians "grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. 6:9). "Blessed be the God who daily beareth our burden, even the God who is our salvation" (Psalm 68: 19).

Over Ephraim, God was ever yearning, "O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up?" "How shall I put thee among the children?" The Holy Spirit in Romans has represented this suffering in that threefold universe anguish—the three groanings—"The *whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together.*" "Even *we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan* within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," and "the *Holy Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be littered*" (Rom. 8:22-26). And all this is the earnest expectation of the creation, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. "He *spared not His own Son*" (Rom. 8:32). "In all their affliction *He was afflicted*" though it is also true that "the angel of His presence saved them."

Paul in his farewell address to the elders at Ephesus goes so far as to speak of "the Church of God which He (God) hath purchased (or acquired) with His own blood." The statement is so startling that it is said that the late revisers shrank from using the word; and especially as in some of the early manuscripts the word "Lord" had been inserted in its place. Careful search, however, decided that the most reliable manuscripts had the word "God," and so it was retained in the Revised Version, and the other reading is given in the margin. These words, then, we may conclude, actually came from the lips of Paul.

They were uttered in the glow of a great emotional discourse, when, as one has said, he was not dealing so much with a formal logic, as he was giving expression to an intense spiritual vision. Under these conditions, he was expressing the great truth that there is a redeeming passion in the heart of the Father as well as in the heart of Christ; and so he does not shrink from speaking even of symbolic blood (and that of God), which in all Hebrew thought stands for sacrifice.¹

I do not forget that there was an ancient heresy known as "Patripassianism." This, however, was an error not like that we are considering with respect to *the atonement*, but with respect to the *person of Christ*.

That error maintained that Christ in the incarnation had no actual humanity, but was only a manifestation of God: it was God the Father who walked the earth, who hungered, fasted and died on the cross in the mere semblance of the Son. In casting out this error the Church long cast out with it the precious truth that Deity itself suffered in all that Jesus suffered—suffered in inexpressible pain at sin, and in sympathy with Christ; that in a deep sense God "tasted death" upon the cross; that there was a cross in heaven, long ere it was set up on Calvary; that a sword pierced the heart of the heavenly Father, long before it entered the heart of Mary, Jesus' earthly mother. This pre-mundane anguish in God was the very fount and source of the entire sacrificial life of Christ, as well as a part of it. "God *so loved* the world that He *gave* His Only Begotten Son." So God has become the supreme sufferer, and sympathetically with Him the whole creation also labors in travail pains.

Then it may be truly said that God-in-Christ suffered all that Christ endured. These sufferings were not those of some outside third party, implying that the Trinity was divided against itself, but those of a Christ in solidarity with the Father Himself, albeit in racial union with our human selves also.

The extremity of that anguish was reached when the Redeemer on Golgotha cried out, “My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?” But has it not often been popularly assumed that this cry was that of a strictly isolated individual,—the man Christ Jesus— estranged from another strictly isolated individual—the holy Father, God?

Some have thought the cry represented some morbid mood in Jesus. But true martyrs are not morbid; they are rather divinely elated in such crises. Was not the realization something far deeper than that involved in either supposition? Not that one strictly separate being was piteously appealing to another strictly separate being; certainly not that the innocent Son was undergoing the infliction of atrocious wrong and injustice from an unfeeling Father; nor that Jesus was abandoned to a morbid eclipse of faith just at the moment when, in His redeeming self-consciousness, all the realities in the case required that He should be in supreme possession of Himself.

The situation we conceive rather to be this: the sense of forsakenness expressed by Christ in that hour was that of the *self-forsakenness* of God-in-Christ. The cry was the lone soliloquy of God-in-Christ standing in behalf of guilty man over against the holy Deity conceived as Judge of the guilty, the cry of Deity at the antipodes of Deity, suffering the awful sense of the moral distance, the incongruity of the two positions. King David thus suffered the dreadful sense of humiliated majesty when, a fugitive from Jerusalem, he bemoaned the degradation of Absalom his son in himself. Nothing, but for the divine purpose of Deity to redeem, could have been more foreign to God. It was the sense of the moral oppositeness in these two relations and the self-incurred horror (the real atonement) entailed by it, that evoked the cry, “Why didst Thou forsake Me?”

Taken in the wholeness of the case, the cry represents the one unequalled solitary wonder of the moral universe. It was what Dr. Forsyth variously calls “the infinite divine tragedy,” “the solemn and ordered crisis within God Himself,” “a judgment-death.” And yet to go to such a length “became Him.”

Not long since, a young teacher of a certain modern type of theology flippantly said from the pulpit: “I am not saved by a death that happened centuries ago!” Whereupon Dr. R. F. Horton remarks: “Not saved by a death that occurred centuries ago? Well, there is just so much of truth in that remark as this: that Christ’s death is *not long ago: it is in eternity*. That is the teaching of Scripture. This man was ‘slain before the foundation of the world.’ It was a thing manifest in time, but it is not a thing temporal: it is an eternal factor of the life of God, and of the world. Not saved by a death that happened centuries ago, but saved by the death that is eternal—manifested centuries ago, upon the cross where Jesus died.” A happy answer to a common but shallow saying. It will not do so to preach the gospel of “here and now,” as to leave eternity out of the reckoning. God doesn’t, nor will men if they are wise.

The substance of this chapter appeared in *The Standard*, of Chicago, April 2, 1909. By courtesy of the editors it appears here as an organic part of this discussion, which it was originally intended to be.—The Author. 2By a polarity in God, I do not mean a mere attribute, considered in isolation from all others; but I mean the entirety of all that is in God conceived as moving, say, now in the interests of holiness, and now in the interests of love, as the case may be. It is the harmonizing through judicial sacrificial suffering of the antinomy in the way of the simultaneous expression of these two polarities if sin is to be savingly dealt with, that constitutes the cosmic reconciliation, and first in the very being of God.

5 The Divine Mediation Unique

The moment it is seen that in the redeeming work the whole God is acting in unity with His triune self, and in incipient unity with our humanity also, another thing of vast moment to Christian thought follows: namely, our conception of mediation is radically altered and greatly enlarged.

It has been a point of difficulty with many, whether the use of the term “mediated” does not imply unwillingness on the part of God to forgive. I submit a view of the case which places the emphasis more truly, and so obviates this difficulty.

Doubtless the mediation of Christ has often been so presented as to imply an unwillingness on the part of God to forgive. There is, however, a mediation free from this implication, and one which represents the Father and the Son as absolutely *en rapport* with each other in the whole case. This mediation contemplates not disposition but *consistency* in moral relations. When sin invaded this universe, it must have profoundly afflicted God, the whole Deity. In view of the evil that sin is, our own moral natures tell us that the rectitude and the clemency principles in the divine Being must have felt incompatibility, and therefore pain in its presence; and the Scriptures so represent. If this be true then God the Father must have shared in all that His beloved Son suffered. It is a caricature of God that represents Him as impassible while laying on His innocent Son what He Himself could not or would not endure.

It is doubtless an embarrassment to the evangelical faith that Christ, instead of being conceived as a manifestation of the vicarious suffering immanent in His Father also, has been regarded and represented in what He endured for us as a third party outside of God, and as if that suffering had been arbitrarily laid upon Him by His Father, and He another being.

In legal mediation it is true that two parties in controversy are presupposed; the offending party, and the offended party. Besides there is the referee, or go-between. It was so, *e. g.*, in the Alabama-claims affair, between the United States and Great Britain.

The case was settled by a court of arbitration held on neutral territory in Geneva, Switzerland. But the mediation which I now present does not have to do so much with two parties as with two moral relations in one and the same party. I mean such relations, *rappports*, or moral poles² as rectitude or holiness, and clemency, or benevolent love, in the one governing God. This mediation concerns primarily moral consistency in God’s treatment of sin.

Some illustrations may help us to grasp this unique mediation. We have heard much in the recent past of the new jurisdiction employed in the juvenile court, for which Judge Lindsey, of Denver, primarily stands. A new and better way of dealing with youthful criminals has come in. The peculiarity of this court is that inasmuch as it has to do, not with confirmed criminals, but with children who have slipped into petty transgressions through youthful impulses or unfortunate surroundings, these children shall not be sent to prison outright, but put under another kind of probation, namely one of grace and good-will.

While the judge retains his jurisdiction over the transgressor, the child still being under arrest, yet he is also placed under a regime of corrective love, supplied by schools or other kindly agencies which will help to improve the condition of the delinquent. A probation officer is also appointed,—representing both the court and the friendly agency.

He is in solidarity with both. The antinomy in the case—the conflict in the opposing polarities in the court’s mind—however, is recognized. The principle of rectitude is still on the bench while its opposite polarity, the recovery-principle, is in the reforming agency.

The paternal judge, still remaining judicial, is also in the spirit of redemptive love, while in the court’s probation officer the principle of mediation is objectified. The judicial principle in the

court, which must punish wrong-doing, and the mediatorial principle are, however, brought *en rapport* with each other through suffering, sin-bearing love on the part, not of a benevolent individual, but of the court, a *public, judicial authority*.

If one would know through what crucial sorrows Judge Lindsey himself has passed in the process of morally qualifying to administer his new court, let him read the tale as rehearsed by the judge himself in recent numbers of *Everybody's Magazine*, since October, 1909. The self-incurred sufferings on the part of the judge for the sake of the cause he has espoused are at the bottom of everything great in it, and the moral efficacy of his court would be *nil* if that crucial experience of the judge were wanting. One of these youthful culprits, in a dark prison den, in behalf of whom the judge's help had been asked as he saw the judge still doubtful of him, as he turned to leave the cell cried out with tears, "Oh, judge, judge, if you'll let me go, I'll never *get you into trouble* again!" The judge recognized the new note of loyalty in the remark, since it sensed the bearing of the boy's wrong-doing not upon himself, but upon the *suffering authority* that longed to help him; and so the judge took the boy with him out of prison and to a new life.

Judge Lindsey tells us that in view of the new power he has gained, he can safely send most of his cases to the reformatory or industrial school for discipline, entirely unattended by an officer. He reports that out of 507 cases sent up in eight years only five have failed him, while in the same period the police working on the old plan had fortytwo "breakaways" who were never rearrested.

Now it is by means of the self-inflicted, judicial suffering—the moral liability interposed by the court on itself—that the opposing polarities or opposites in the court are reconciled and the moral power gained. The judge vicariously suffers for and with the boy in his jeopardy through wrong-doing. He incurs the crucial risk before the public of his default of appearance at the reform-school doors.

The boy above referred to under Judge Lindsey's court, asked by his mother how it was he became so good for the judge when he would not be for her or the policeman, replied, "Well, maw, you see if I gets bad ag'in the judge he'll lose his job. I've got to stay with him, 'cause he stayed with me!" Whereupon Judge Lindsey remarks: "I have

used that note of loyalty hundreds of times in our work with the boys, and it is almost infallibly successful." Moreover, it is only the successful working of this principle with young criminals before the public that has thus far prevented envious politicians from ousting the judge from his position.

Thus the world's Redeemer gains power over us. Through vicarious judicial suffering God-in-Christ becomes mediator, while the ermine remains spotless white. The ransomed soul feels it has "got to stay with the judge" because the judge has so "stayed with" it. It was so with the renewed Jean Valjean in his relation to the good bishop in Hugo's great story.

This judicial atoning anguish in God's redemptive process is, however, a unique thing. It is so compatible with blessedness in God that it becomes what Dr. Charles Cuthbert characterized as "the lone ecstasy" (of His quenchless holy love, a love which demands the unequalled sorrow, concrete in Calvary's cross), "as the only available language wherein it can get its full meaning understood." it is an ecstasy and also a pain, which only the perfect God can really know.

If the two principles of judicial rectitude and clemency in God be conceived as the two foci of an ellipse, then these foci find their moral unity in the principle of grace which is the synthesis of both. This we saw in a preceding chapter. But this moral synthesis is reached through judicial, sacrificial suffering, self-incurred in the passion of the Infinite to reach and recover us. This pain is thus the basis as well as the channel through which the sinner is forgiven and renewed. It is at measureless cost to the Infinite that "Mercy and truth are met together, (that) righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

The United States government was recently self-moved to return to China one-half of the excessive indemnity of \$24,000,000 levied against her after the Boxer uprising. It was in part an act of justice. There was, however, in it an act of clemency also on which our government proceeded. Not by calling in a third party to advise or mediate, the United States in the spirit of self-sacrifice returned to China the \$12,000,000, in large part as a token of its good-will; and in turn China astonished the world by reciprocating the spirit of our own act, resolving to spend every dollar of the restored fund in sending us her select sons to educate.

Who can fail to see that a mediation of this sort stands on a plane unique and different from the legal mediation employed in the Alabama-claims affair? While an element of mystery in this new form of mediation still remains, yet the effect produced upon the moral sense by a work springing from the heart of Deity, however humanized and objectified in the work of Christ, is far better than one which represents that work as artificially imposed by God upon another. Let this idea once be grasped that the gospel mediation is something which at bottom lies in the depths of the Deity itself, and the difficulty is simplified, and the whole subject of the atonement assumes a more ethical and vital character.

Says Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, in speaking of the angel who wrestled with Jacob at the Jabbok, and who departed at daybreak, "There was *more of the angel in Jacob* than there had ever been before; and it was doubtless this that won the heart of his brother Esau. The angel can best fight for us by making his home in us. When Jesus as a companion disappeared from the disciples, losing Him as a companion they made room for the indweller; He tarried near His own till the cross was planted as a living tree in their inmost soul, and so they were furnished and strengthened for their day's work. The sorrowing face of Jesus could not stop Peter from denying Him; that same Peter having *lost the face* and *gained the power* of Jesus, brought in Pentecost, made councils feel helpless and could sleep in prison with Herod's sword waiting to be unsheathed at daybreak."

Present day emphasis is on the subjective, experiential relation to Christ; and this is important in its place. Sometimes, however, it is so emphasized as to ignore or exclude the objective in the atoning work above set forth, as Ritschlianism does. But to do this is to set aside the basal thing in the moral universe; and then theology becomes false both to experience and to the Bible.

Then there is a mediation that is voluntary, long-suffering and self-wrought. Some of the analogies above employed indeed are not perfect. It is still true that in view of our estrangement from God the one divine-human Mediator between God and man is needed as a daysman, who can lay His hand on both of us. The mystery in the Trinity still remains. Yet Christ is no third outside party in such sense as makes His will or disposition antithetical to the Father's on the one hand, or that ignores the potential corporate union with the believer on the other. While the New Testament language characteristically represents our salvation as "through Christ," the implication, however, always is that this mediation is effected in a solidarity both with the Father and with the believer. This is the mystical element in faith that can never be ignored and yet preserve the Scripture conception of the method of salvation.

Then the element of suffering in inter-human relations, as in the reconciling agency of the courts referred to, is feeble as compared with the suffering of Deity over human sin.

The human suffering is not of itself efficacious to expiate, cancel sin, *per se*. But it springs out of the divine idea, is an echo of it, and has its moral impressional value from the fact that it reflects the deeper self-expiating principle in God—that "God for Christ's sake" has forgiven us.

The original initiative in mediation, however, is as really of the Father as of the Son. This gospel mediation is the work of one indivisible Deity notwithstanding the composite element in the daysmanship.

Now, strange to say, it is this very idea of voluntary self-mediation, on the part of the one indivisible God-in-Christ, that the much misunderstood Paul teaches in his Epistle to the Galatians, believed by some high authorities to have been written prior to the Epistle to the Romans, if not to all his other epistles. He is arguing for the priority and supremacy of the self-mediated covenant of promise made direct to Abraham over the covenant of law, mediated through Moses, a third party; and he says: "Now a mediator— that is, as in the mediation of the law where two parties besides Moses, the go-between, were involved—is (indeed)" not a mediator of one, but, says Paul (in the gospel mediation I am commending), "God is one," or single. That is, the Gospel, as a pure gift to the sinner, is singly-mediated by God in His unity, although a trinity.

This is one of Paul's *non-forensic* representations, implying the direct forgiveness of God, which in other connections he phrases in juridical terms of "justification" from the guilt and condemnation of a broken law. These two things, however, in Scripture thought and in principle are absolutely one and the same thing, as they are also in Judge Lindsey's court. The myriad-minded, universal "apostle to the nations" is no more chargeable with obsession by rabbinical fictions (however on occasions he uses forensic terms to express the realities of moral situations), than is the Denver judge. In God's being both law and love are alive. This self-reconciled antinomy between God's holiness and His clemency, rendered graciously objective in the divine-human Christ, is *per se* the atonement, the objective cosmic reconciliation, in the moral government of God. On this ground the sinner can be consistently and more obviously forgiven. It is exclusively and fundamentally God's own act, consonant with and grounded in "the Lamb foreknown (as sacrificially offered) from the foundation of the world."

In the new covenant, God-in-Christ by self-sacrifice so deals with the opposite moral relationships or *rappports* in His own being, namely, His righteousness prompting Him to punish sin, and His love prompting Him to be gracious, as to eliminate the "mittler," as the Germans call the middle-man in legal mediations. With the middle-man the wrongdoer also as a party in controversy disappears, inasmuch as by the grace in the principle of the new mediation the wrongdoer's interests have all been taken up and conserved by God Himself, so that the strife ceases; and thus judgment becomes in this form of settlement of the case *salvation*. But God, by whose unaided grace the whole case is cared for, is the *one indivisible party* in the mediation.

For a very striking confirmation of this oneness of God-in-Christ, observe in the high priestly prayer of Jesus in the seventeenth chapter of John how completely Jesus identifies every aspiration and utterance in that intercession with an anterior purpose or act in His Father. In about forty different phrases this identification in various forms is reiterated. For example, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do." Even in intercession, then, Jesus can do not one original thing in isolation from the Father: "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing." Thus the Father-in-the-Son intercedes with Himself, as on the cross He *cried out unto Himself*, and as in the whole of the atonement He *propitiates Himself*. That is in principle He simply does one thing in order to another, He sacrifices self in order righteously to ransom. All this introduces us to a unique conception of vicariousness; and it is this the world needs to be clearly shown, if evangelicalism is to stand.

This unique vicariousness embraces two things: first, that divine action in our behalf, wherein God-in-Christ receives upon Himself the self-imposed judgment that belonged to us, corresponding and concrete to Christ's dying; secondly, that other action of God incarnate wherein as a risen Redeemer He indwells us and imparts to us His own new vitalities. It embraces what Dr. William Ashmore called "a *death-bearing quality* and a *life-giving power*."

The subjective personal *at-one-ment* of the individual sinner with God—so often mistaken for “the reconciliation” of Romans (Rom. 5:11)—is a purely secondary matter as related to that prior reconciliation; it is a subordinate detail occurring under the superior and anterior act of God.

This self-mediation of our God-in-Christ is the central thing in the Gospel; it is that which renders it evangelical—good news; it constitutes the very aegis under which the whole world, including the heathen, exists, and without which any gracious theodicy is impossible, it is “the summation of those things in the heavens”—which Paul in Colossians (chap. 1:20-23) says “were (cosmically) reconciled by the blood of the cross”: it is that into which “angels desire to look,” but cannot sound; it is the profoundest form of moral energy known to our universe; it is the ground-purpose of the redeeming God.

It is original, immanent, even eternal in God. In Christ it became actually finished, humanized, and was rendered concrete and visualized, so that the world can better get hold of it. Accordingly also it should be the ground-principle and the key-note of all Christian preaching.

While God does not need to be appeased, or placated from without, He does Himself—Christ need, in behalf of man, to exercise the principle of self-propitiation from within. Moreover, it is on this basis—that is, on a righteous ground—as well as to provide a dynamic for it, that we have hope of the ultimate destruction of the sin-principle in our penitent selves, and of our final transformation into a higher state of being than that which was in the original man of Eden, in whom our race defaulted. For salvation is ever more than restoration; it is redemption, and new-creation in Christ Jesus.

It is this unique type of mediation—the self-mediation of God-in-Christ—that needs to be preached, if we are to recover the pristine power of the Gospel. And we need the help of all the concrete analogies that can be found in life, literature and experience to convey its meanings.

True, no human illustration is quite adequate, for the mediation to be commended is super-legal, whereas the current idea is habitually legal. Analogies do not abound, for the conception of God-in-Christ with diverse polarities self-reconciled in Himself, is without an adequate parallel in the universe, or at least except as the working of man’s own moral nature reflects it.

Redemption is God’s “strange work.” But even so, we must strive to apprehend it, if we are to preach at all, and to preach it truly and impressively is the highest of all services that man can render to his fellow.

6 “The Cross” as Watchword

In striving to interpret the term “the cross” we need ever to consider the changed meaning which the term as a synonym of the death of Christ came to have subsequent to the resurrection. This death was something below the surface, something entirely unparalleled in the whole universe. This death is often spoken of as if it were only or primarily mortal dissolution, although confessedly that of an extraordinary personage.

But Christ’s death was something inexpressibly deeper than mere tragedy, even though painted with a brush as graphic as Tissot’s. There was indeed a tragedy in it; and the sensational impress of it, since sin would perpetrate the outrage, is great. The endurance of that ignominy in part, as marking one form of the length to which redemptive love would go, was doubtless embraced in the atoning work, but the cruel profanation of the sanctuary of the Saviour’s flesh by the Jews and Romans, in itself considered, was not “the reconciliation” which the New Testament so emphasizes.

Let us now note the manner in which Christ’s death after His resurrection came to have for the apostolic church a changed meaning.

When the Jews cried, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” they meant in modern terms “To the gibbet—to the scaffold!” They intended by the very manner of Christ’s public execution to load Him with shame and reproach. After the crucifixion event, the disciples themselves were in despair over the outcome of the life of their great Teacher and wonder-worker.

Until the third day certainly, after the burial of Jesus in the grave of Joseph, they thought everything was lost. The very preciousness of their recollection of Him but added poignancy to their grief over their lost Master. They had given Him up as gone forever. But the day came when their sorrow and despair were turned into unspeakable joy. They were at first, however, very “slow of heart to believe” the accounts of such of their number as professed to have seen Him alive. Their reports seemed to them “as idle tales”; and they were convinced of their truth only as they were compelled by the strongest evidence to believe. In the case of Thomas he declared that he would believe only after the sight of the wounds of the spear and the nails. It is certain that none of the disciples expected the resurrection. The women went to the tomb, not to see a risen Redeemer, but to embalm a dead body. The idea that the first disciples invented the story of the resurrection on the basis of a predetermined scheme is the most absurd supposition possible. Nothing short of the actual emergence of the body from the tomb could have turned the first despair into that exalted joy which shortly characterized the disciples.

The dilemma suggested by Godet for those who deny the fact of Christ’s resurrection is in point here: “Either Christ’s body remained in the hands of His disciples, or it was given up to the Jews. If the disciples retained it, they were impostors; but this is not maintained by modern rationalists. If the Jews retained it, why did they not produce it as conclusive evidence against the disciples and silence the pretense forever?” The moment, however, the disciples were convinced that Jesus was alive again, their distress and doubt gave way, and they knew Him to be “the Prince of life,” “the Lord of glory.” Henceforth, they became lion-like in courage, aglow with insight respecting the meaning of their ancient prophecies, and with such power preached Jesus and the resurrection, that the wonders of Pentecost, and all the victories of the next three centuries followed, and the Eastern world was Christianized.

It was through such a process as this that the ignominious term “the cross” took on a meaning so changed as to become henceforth the greatest *watchword* in all history. So it was that the meaning of the synonymous terms “the death of Christ,” and “the cross” were altered to conform to the unique and elevated sense in which the apostolic church understood the facts. And yet it must be acknowledged that in our modern time the meaning of that crucial death is widely

misconceived. The term “cross” is yet commonly used as a synonym for the manner of Christ’s mortal dying; as if that were all. Men think of it as did the disciples, and the multitudes who turned away from the cross “beating upon their breasts.” They have seen a tragedy such as Rubens, or Van Dyck painted.

Now there was indeed a tragedy, and the impressional power of it, since sin would perpetrate the outrage, was measureless. The endurance of the ignominy of it on the divine part as marking the length to which redemptive love would go, was a part of the atoning sufferings; but the crucial profanation of the sanctuary of the Saviour’s flesh by the Jews and Romans in itself considered, was not the reconciliation set forth in the New Testament. To preach the physical anguish of Jesus on the tree stops far short of preaching the atonement. The witness of the Oberammergau drama may read the atonement into the play, provided it is first in one’s self, but the presentation made in the play is not the atonement. The event of Calvary never emerged into the reality of the atonement preached by the early Church, until the vision of the resurrection broke upon the apostles. It was in that vision that these divinely-chosen witnesses saw that the Christ who appeared to have lost Himself on Calvary found Himself in the exit from Joseph’s tomb.

In the reference to the transfiguration which the Apostle Peter gives us in his second epistle, the apostle uses two striking Greek words which we are sure are not inadvertently employed. These words are *dunamis* and *parousia*. In the first word the writer refers to his own prospective death, which he describes as an “exodus,”—the same word which in Luke’s account of the transfiguration is used to describe the death which Jesus was “to accomplish at Jerusalem.” This word in inspired thought marks the going out of life—whether Peter’s or that of Jesus. Then in setting forth the glory manifested by Christ’s person in the mount, the apostle describes that by the term *parousia*, the word uniformly applied to the “return,” “presence,” “arrival,” or “second coming” of the Saviour. Would this then imply that the transfiguration of Jesus—as an appearance, an apocalypse, is generically in line with other forms of the “second coming,” a sort of foreview of the finally-manifested Christ? We so believe.

But all this has an important bearing upon the apostolic idea of the death of Christ as a form of death, which places it *in a class by itself*. In the Apostle Peter’s thought the death was a form of exit which had its correlative in a reappearance—really in manifold forms of reappearance, or “returns.” Note Peter’s language: “When we made known unto you the power and coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty when we were with Him in the holy mount.” Thus the death of Christ was but a transit to a higher form of life, and the guarantee of a presence higher and more intimate than was possible before.

Now it was such a vision generically, of Christ as alive and present, that filled all the apostles from Pentecost till John on Patmos, that constituted the Christian Church, and has kept it alive till this day. To the apostolic church the term “the cross” was the synonym for that glorious two-sided reality which Peter was describing in the two terms to which we have just adverted. Paul also, in the sixth chapter of Romans, under the varying terms for dying and living again with Christ, gives the strongest accent to this same truth.

The apostles then adopted “the death” and “the cross” synonymously for a watchword, when, decades after the crucifixion, from Paul to John, they wrote of it for the New Testament. They so used the term, in high divine derision, in keeping with the language of the second Psalm, which indeed is a prophetic anticipation of the historic irony that must overtake in judgment all who plot against God and against His anointed, “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.” As the term “the cross” was thus used in apostolic times, it expressed the very opposite of all that the crucifiers intended when they drove the nails, and plaited the crown of thorns.

The cross takes into view who it was that hung upon that tree, even God-in-the-flesh; how He came there, both on the human and divine sides; what sort of sufferings those were; the exceeding turpitude of the sin which placed Christ there—really deicide,—and yet how, after all, the redemptive purpose planned to answer for even that sin and by grace to overcome it. To preach that cross implies the discernment of the point at which God came into voluntary relation to the whole sin-problem, to the contemned sufferer, and to His persecuting tormentors. It means to grasp the spiritual antinomies involved with which the Father-in-the-Son, yea the whole Deity, was dealing. To perceive and to express these in such terms and spirit as are adapted to command the moral reason, to awaken repentance and faith towards the crucified One and His Father; this it is to preach the atonement.

But say some, and more think, if they do not say it: “This cross is an offense to me! It savors of the shambles!” “And surely he who would preach in the ears of aesthetic hearers of our day cannot be expected to deal much with the tragic terms of the cross. It is too vulgar!” I answer partly in the thought of another:¹ “Never, indeed, was there anything so vulgar in human history as the cross of Jesus! But where is the vulgarity? It is in the sin that mauled Him and put Him there. It is your vulgarity. It is my vulgarity. It is the vulgarity that lies and cheats that is impure, the vulgarity that has lost its sense of the high throne of God, and the white purity of His heaven. That is the vulgarity that lifted the cross!”

Continues this same writer, “Disease is vulgar, but the mother and the nurse who touch it to heal it are not vulgar. Contact with it in order to heal it is not vulgar. I come to the cross to bow my head in shame, and smite my breast with remorse. Sin is so vulgar that it can only be dealt with by that which violates the essential life of God. The cross; yea, verily; but the rough, brutal Roman gibbet was only the expression in time of something far more terrible. Those two pieces of timber and a dying Man! Awful, terrible; but infinitely worse was the pain of God, which was invisible save through that cross. In His rich grace He took hold upon sin and expressed, in the suffering of His only Son, its vulgarity. Vulgar cross; but that in it which is vulgar is my sin. Shining through it is the light that comes from the throne; and flowing through it is the great river of His grace.”

In “The Scarlet Letter” of Nathaniel Hawthorne, this literary artist has pictured with consummate skill the outworking of the principle of sin. There is scarcely a winding possible to it which he has not traced in the guilty lives of those connected with his tragic story. The symbolic letter which in the Puritan mind was connected with the sin of a fallen maiden was stamped in colors of blood upon her garment.

But more, this scarlet letter was pricked, as it were, into the very conscience of the originator of the wrong, who had overtaken and blighted, not one life but two. But this part of the story having been sketched with great genius, Hawthorne has no provision in reserve for the recovery of the erring. The story closes with a highly dramatic form of public confession on the part of the minister, Arthur Dimmesdale, of the profanation of his high office as a minister, and this office renounced there follows—death!

The story in its moral leaves no outlook of hope for either party in the tragedy. The end is Nemesis. Sin means to Hawthorne a form of repentance indeed, but no real cure of the sin.

Probably the gifted author intended to teach the adequacy of confession as such, when a guilty secret can no longer be kept. But Hawthorne gives no evidence that his notion of repentance has any appreciation whatever of the atonement of Jesus Christ. And the teaching of “The Scarlet Letter” has in it no gospel for the one who has transgressed. Its issue must logically be remorseless, hopeless, irremediable retribution, social and spiritual, for the sinner. This teaching certainly is not the teaching of the New Testament.

It confuses one result of atonement, namely its subjective operation within the soul, with the atonement itself, which must primarily always be regarded as wrought within Deity itself. The grace of God is grounded in a reconciled antinomy in God alone. Simply to feel the poignancy of sin, and to confess it in dramatic self-destruction before the populace, most of whom had better never hear the confession at all, is no cure of sin. A true repentance is always the human correlative of the divine atonement.

To stop short of this is a morbid result of the action and place of self-reproach. God never intended that such reproach should stand in its own intrinsic quality; but rather that it should issue in a changed moral attitude, one that would respect the bearing of the sinner's sin upon the suffering authority against whom the sin had been committed. True evangelical repentance always terminates on God, on God as revealed in the suffering Christ, who in Himself is the standard of the final ethical order of the universe. Hence the propriety of that cry of the heart-broken David: "Against Thee, Thee only have

I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight, that Thou mayest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." The fact that this propriety exists is the only basis in the universe on which hope can be grounded and sin can be cured. Sin must be taken in hand by one who is distinctly its master, who has acquired rights *both against it, and for its victim*. And the possibility of cure even by its Master is in God's own sacrificial suffering. This is the one hope of sin's undoing. But it is a real hope. The dying thief was forgiven and reconstructed. Saul of Tarsus, and Augustine, and John Bunyan discovered that their sins were atoned for, and by union with Christ they became inwardly renewed. Jerry McAuley and Delia, the "Bluebird" of Mrs. Whittemore's story, and S. H. Hadley of Water Street, were cleansed and remade in Jesus Christ. And so may be every guilty human being on earth who will abandon himself to Christ and to the work of His cross truly apprehended. "The Scarlet Letter," therefore, needs to have a companion work by some hand more masterly than Hawthorne's; and it might be entitled "The White Letter; A Study in Transformation." The proper denouement of every sinful life which Hawthorne missed is *not* spectacular confession, *but redemption* in Christ's cross blood. There is a blood,—of course not material blood—which by its subtle alchemy can wash clean even Lady Macbeth's red hand. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and stamps in place thereof in the bosom of its confessor, not abiding red guilt, not even the traditional outlines of the crucifix said to have been found at death ingrained on the person of Saint Francis, but the glorious signet of the resurrection life of the Son of God.

This is more than the mere negating of sin. It is the just and appropriate cure of sin: its root in personality is changed. Instead thereof, Jesus Christ, "the new man" is therein engrafted, and its fruit is new, spontaneous conformity to Christ and joy in the Holy Ghost. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a *new creature*; old things have passed away: behold, all things have become new."

7 Superabundance of Grace

But redemption can do even more. In a preceding paragraph we maintained that redemption in its larger meaning implied much more than the recovery from sin—that it contemplated in addition the re-creation of man in the image of Jesus Christ.

This requires a further development if we would grasp the reconciling achievement in its greatness. A central teaching on this subject is that contained in the fifth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. There we have worked out in striking forms the antithesis between the first Adam and the second. Doubtless, as commonly read, the general meaning is apprehended. The passage obviously teaches that the sin and death derived from the first Adam are offset by the gift of life derived from Christ, the new head of the race. And yet the reader is in danger of overlooking the high degree in which this grace transcends the mere cancelling of sin. Probably no careful reader of the passage as it stands in the Authorized Version would fail to see that repeatedly, in verses nine, ten, fifteen, seventeen and twenty, it is said that the grace derived from Christ "*more than*" meets the need of man as fallen and corrupt (however that fall may be construed). The full meaning of Paul, however, is not grasped until we perceive that the benefits received from Christ, the second Adam, are in *inverse ratio* to the disaster entailed by the first Adam. It is the *surplusage* of this grace that in Paul's presentation is commonly overlooked. For example, when the apostle says in verse fifteen, "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift," he is emphasizing the fact that the free gift set over against the trespass is *out of all proportion* to the trespass. So greatly does it exceed it that it is of the nature of an *endowment* for all the future, and for every member of the race for whom it is held in trust. Suppose, for example, a bank to have disastrously failed. It would be much if that bank could realize on its securities so as to meet the demands of its creditors. Suppose, however, some rich friend of the institution were to come forward with enough resources to endow it for all time, against all possible future failure. That would be vastly more than to render the bank solvent. In such measureless proportion as this, Paul teaches, we are dealt with in the grace of Christ. We are not only justified but "*much more*," we are saved from wrath—not only reconciled, but we may be *kept saved* by Christ's life: we not only have sin cancelled, but the grace of an *abounding and endless life*; and that even though through repeated infractions of the law of God our transgressions ruinously abound in our consciousness, yet the grace treasured in Christ for us abounds *yet much more exceedingly*. The apostle here uses the strongest expression for superlativeness which the Greek language affords, implying *an over and above* measure.

Mr. Arthur S. Way, in his translation of the letters of Saint Paul, thus renders verses fifteen to eighteen of this chapter, "This First Man of the Old Life prefigures the destined First Man of the new life: each gave a gift to humanity—the former the death-fraught transgression, the latter the free gift of Life. But note that transgression and this free gift are in *inverse proportion*. Through that one man's trespass the myriads of humanity died, I grant you: yet the disproportion is as nothing to the *measureless overflowings to the myriads of humanity of the fountain of the grace of God, and of His bounty conveyed by the grace embodied in this one man, Jesus the Messiah*. No! the bounty now bestowed is not commensurate with the mischief that came from that one man's sin. On that one man's sin followed a sentence that meant humanity's condemnation, but here on all its countless sins follows a free gift of God that means humanity's acquittal. If, in consequence of that single first transgression, death became king of men's lives, through the one man's demerit, all this will be *far more than compensated* when those who receive the *measureless wealth* of God's grace and God's gift of righteousness shall be kings in the New Life through the merit of the One, Jesus the Messiah."

All this is to say that grace in Christ not only meets the defect in the transgression but the grace is in *inverse ratio* to it: it *immeasurably* transcends the evil derived from the first man; it is an *indefinitely plus quantity*. In verse fourteen, Paul declares that the first Adam, from whom we

derive our racial corruption, represents only the *figure* or *shadow* of the *real Adam*, our eternally purposed new Head. In this new Head all shadows become realities. Indeed without the second Adam, the first had never appeared at all.

In verse twenty-two of the sixth chapter this same apostle draws a similar contrast in *inverse proportion*. He uses these words: "The *wages* of sin is death, but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here he undoubtedly is using a military metaphor. The term "wages," as Way in a note upon the passage has suggested, refers to the *pittance dole*, the *ration-wage*, which in the ancient army was usually so small as to keep the soldier on the point of mutiny or desertion, whereas the gift of God in the mind of the apostle represented the *largesse* of an oriental monarch, who sometimes after a campaign rewarded a faithful commander with a whole province, expressive of his royal bounty. In this way, as we know, the feudal states and the titled nobles of the middle ages arose.

In some such ratio, the apostle teaches, the grace in Christ, the second Adam, stands over against the loss entailed upon us in the racial defect of the first. Thus a real insight into Paul's thought in this great presentment in Romans affords us an estimate, unequalled elsewhere even in all the Scriptures, of what comes to us through "the word of the cross." That Paul meant to set forth, in *inverse proportion* to the damage of racial sin, the transcendence of this grace in Christ, is further evident from the objection which he anticipates would be raised by some who would make a perverse use of a grace so abounding. Paul saw that some might reason, "Well, then, if grace takes occasion from sin, so to transcend it, why not *go on in* sin, so as to *give opportunity* for the grace to go on abounding more and more? Why not through the very processes of sin invite grace to load new largesses upon us?" In reply to this presumptuous inference, the apostle breaks out upon the querist with this reply, to use Way's rendering, "Out upon the suggestion!

How is the case possible? We have passed out of sin as truly as the dead man has passed out of life: can we, when thus dead to it, still go on living in it? Or if you fail to grasp this inference, look at it thus: do you not comprehend that all of us who passed by baptism symbolically into union with Messiah Jesus were by baptism symbolically made sharers in His death? Well, then, if that baptism made us share His death, it must have made us share His burial too. It must follow that, as Messiah was raised from among the dead by means of the descent of His Father's glory, so we, too, who rose with Him, are to be employed wholly in the activities of the new life. For if by having died like Him, we have entered into union with Him, most certainly we shall not be less so in consequence of having risen with Him."

In yet another form Paul teaches that the relation of the believer to the new Adamhood is similar to that of one married to a second husband, the first husband having died. The marital relation to that husband expired when he expired. It is no more to be entertained in thought. The new relation having come into being, the former one is completely transcended, that having perished wherein the wife was formerly held. Hence Paul says: the objection raised has no propriety. How shall the soul that constructively has died to the old Adamhood be considered as alive any longer to the former relation? There has been a resurrection from the dead; and the soul henceforth in God's regard, and in its own proper regard, has become joined to the new man, even to the glorified Jesus Christ. Thus in the divine thought there is no provision whatever made for the indulgence of a sin so presumptuous.

In this light how evident it is that redemption is more than restoration to the unfallen state of the rudimental man of Eden; more than the mere negating of sin. How evident that the word "redemption" in the Scriptures is a term of large, transcendent, all-glorious content. How also in preaching, this content needs to be brought out, and have given to it full and inspiring significance; for this work concerns not merely the destroying of the works of the devil, but the bringing of "many sons into glory."

8 The Moral and Forensic One

There are two ways of approaching in thought the problem of sin: we may consider it as primarily wrong done to the person of God, and then in New Testament thought, sin has for its correlative personal *forgiveness*, a vital reconciliation with God. Or we may consider sin as condemnable under a standard of objectified law (as epitomized in the Mosaic decalogue) in which case sin has for its correlative the *justification* by faith with which as to form Paul particularly deals in his Epistle to the Romans. This latter form of the truth because in legal terms is called forensic. But because the forensic is a form of expression pertaining to a legal economy, some leap to the conclusion that as Mosaism is superseded by Christianity, therefore all that was embraced in the forensic went with it.

But while the forensic *form* of things may pass, the *principles* illustrated may be and are as eternal as God Himself.

Forensic terms, while not ends in themselves, are employed as a means to an end which endures. The ritual of the atonement as employed, for example, in Leviticus, was in itself only provisional, but the principles foreshadowed by it are eternal. It is the object of the Epistle to the Hebrews to show this.

The forensic terms which describe justification are illustrative; they render only more objective and concrete that which is immanent in God as the embodiment of law and grace. The forensic conception, however, is never fictitious, nor is there any incongruity between forgiveness and justification; they are not exclusive of each other; they are only different ways of saying the same thing, descriptive of methods of bringing the soul home to God.

A certain class of very earnest Bible-loving interpreters present Christ upon His cross as meeting and removing the sentence of our sin as expressed in the Mosaic legal indictment, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The historic Jesus as hanging on that tree for us removed the curse which belonged to us. There is, of course, a very real and precious truth contained in this, but it is only a way of expressing the underlying reality dealt with in the earlier pages of this discussion in which we have spoken of the reconciliation of that antinomy in God as between holy and love polarities. The essential principle is this, that God in one aspect of His being *demand*s expiation for sin and in another aspect He Himself *provides* the expiation. That which was immanent in God's being as an atoning Deity He visually expressed in the suffering Christ upon the tree. The propitiation is the self-propitiation of God-in-Christ.¹

The forgiveness of the Father in the parable of the prodigal son and Paul's doctrine of justification are entirely consonant with each other. The father, in the parable, represents not abstract Deity, but God-in-Christ.

Justification, indeed, is expressed in forensic terms, that is in terms drawn from the realm of jurisprudence, to enable us to grasp the principles involved. But jurisprudence is not a fiction; it is what it is because God is what He is, and also because man on his part is what he is. Law, as Jeremy Taylor said, has its "home in the bosom of God." it is only when the forensic is conceived as in lieu of the moral that it becomes fictitious. A *mock* court is always a fiction. But such a court as in principle exists, in the moral nature both of God and of man, with a lawgiver on the throne, a prosecutor, an advocate, and a final judge to impose sentence or to declare pardon, is never a fiction. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

But some one will ask, "Cannot God forgive without suffering—forgive by a mere act of will?" He certainly cannot, if the verdict of our moral natures is trustworthy. Even we, if our character be

true, cannot do so except as we resolve to take the burden of the wrong-doing upon ourselves and in suffering vicariously bear it.

And then even if we could, it does not mean the same for us to forgive that it does for God, for the reason that we are private individuals, and the wrongs done us are mere personal wrongs. But God is not “a magnified individual.” He is the very ground and centre of the ethical order of the universe, as we are not (although our natures reflect that order); and as such everything depends on Him as it does not on us. As Dr. Dale says, “In God the law is alive.” The connection between evil and its due judgment—two things which Plato said are riveted together—cannot be abrogated without bringing ethical disorder and chaos into a world which in God is a morally-constituted world.

For God to forgive without regard to the sanctions of such a constitution would be to involve the world in moral anarchy. The prayer which we put up when we say, “Thy kingdom come,” is a petition that we may be governed in harmony with the highest moral order of the universe. When, therefore, any one teaches, as some theologians of high repute do, that this matter of forgiveness is not a matter of relation to law and government at all, but a matter of relations between *persons*, God and man (meaning private individuals without responsibility for public moral order); and that this personal relation is the only relation to be set right, the distinction is misleading and fictitious. It quite ignores the deep principle at the root of everything moral, namely that God Himself, in His own person, is the *One in whom all ethical order inheres*.

God Himself, as Carnegie Simpson in his book, “The Fact of Christ,” has so strongly shown, “is the moral law, *is the ethical order*”, in a sense that no man, no earthly father is. While among men, and particularly men as forgiven sinners, “forgiveness to others is the first and simplest of duties, with God it is the *profoundest of problems*.” If He as the world’s moral Governor, even with the profoundest fatherly love, forgives, He must do it in a way that will *not legitimize sin* on the one hand, and as will *win the heart* to penitence and faith on the other. And this He can do only as He convinces us that He cares, that as He cares He suffers for and with us, makes measureless cost to Himself, and that He has always done so. It is not a question of mere willingness or unwillingness—least of all of personal vindictiveness. It is a question of the fundamental ethical order of the universe which is at stake; and as such it is, as Chalmers called it, “a problem fit for a God.” The matter of personal *at-one-ment* of ourselves with God is no problem: it is but a corollary. The basic question is not, whether He is a forgiving God, but *how* can He be such? The answer is *through judgment-bearing suffering*, whether in Himself as the ageless God-in-Christ, or as historically consummated and visualized on Calvary’s tree.

When, therefore, we pass in thought from forensic representations of the Gospel to the more personal and immediate relations in which, as moral beings, we vitally stand to God, we do not get rid of the realities implied in the juridical forms of the truth. We simply gather them up into the divine person. If also God on one side of His being is the embodiment of law, on another side of it He is the personification of the Gospel. Law is no more a transcript of the divine Being than is the redeeming principle in Him. Both are equally such transcripts and constitutional in Him, and their exercise towards fallen man is legitimized through His age-long sacrificial sufferings which culminated in visualized self-forsakenness on Calvary. This, intrinsically, is the objective atonement, however the forms of its presentation may vary. That father in the parable, who had waited in anguish during all those weary years of the son’s absence from home in rioting, was ever a suffering, atoning father in precisely the spirit of Him who on the more dramatic cross exclaimed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

I once knew a promising and cherished son, who at sixteen years of age cruelly ran away from home, and who, after long search by his crushed parents for any clue to his whereabouts, was given up as dead by all but his father. And sixteen years after, the boy came home. During all that period his father had been in charge of a station on a Western railroad. The day the prodigal

stepped out of the train on to the platform of the station with which as a boy he had been familiar, he inquired of one standing near if Mr. S— was still living and in charge of the station. “Yes,” replied the stranger, “there he comes now down the long platform.” The father had grown old, his hair and flowing beard as white as snow. The two met *vis-à-vis*. “Father!” spoke the son. “Frank!” replied the father. “How did you know me, father?” inquired the son. “Know you?” answered the father. “Not a train has drawn up at this station during all the sixteen years since you went away, that I have not scrutinized the face of every man of about your age expecting to see you step off the train any day. Let’s go over and see mother who has always believed you dead.” Of course the son was instantly forgiven: he always had been except in the form in which it took effect.

But were there no qualities suggestive at least of atonement in all those years of heartache and yearning that had whitened the locks of that anguished old man? Aye, indeed I That sort of vicarious suffering is, by analogue, atonement in this universe.

And what is repentance, real evangelical repentance, but the correlative of atoning sacrificial love? It is a *change of care*, of care of conscience, heart and will, respecting the sorrow inflicted upon rightful authority, suffering authority, by a hitherto irresponsible course; a sense of horror of the judgment brought on God, during the years of prodigalhood. When that son in my story met and embraced that well-nigh worn-out old father, and heard him say, “Expecting to see you step off the train any day,” did the son reply, “What do I care for that?” assuming that he had license for the past wrongdoing? Not he! He fell upon the father’s neck in broken-heartedness that he had thus afflicted his father. He saw the moral bearing of his fault on the venerable father-authority which he had grieved and filled with woe; *he repented of that*.

He confessed also this feature of his sin, namely: his assumed name: his *long denial of his proper identity* and the *repudiation of that father’s name*. Those sixteen years of truancy had been one long intentional, rebellious, sacrilegious lie against a divinely constituted parental authority, and a suffering authority besides. And he made haste to correct it. He took the legal steps necessary, and that publicly, before his associates in the offices of a great government department in Washington, D.C., where he was employed, to *regain his true name*—the father’s name which he had repudiated; and in that name he lived out his days, providing for that father in his dependent years, and thus caring he made amends for his wrongs.

“Without suffering,” says Bushnell, “the Holiest cannot forgive.” Not by a mere act of will can He do it. He must suffer in doing it. Nor can a man repent at pleasure by a mere resolution. In order to repent well one must see the *moral agony his sin has caused to the suffering authority* against whom it has raised its hand. Hence the enormous impressional power of an innocent, concrete, historical Jesus on the cross, revealing even in tragic form just what sin intrinsically is,—viz: deicide, as well as the murder of one’s brother man, and to what length redemptive love will go. All this was necessary in God’s plan of the whole to show forth both His severity and tenderness, and to win an apostate world back to care for its true moral being and to identify all that care with that of the living God Himself.

This sort of contrition, characteristic of Christianity, says Dr. Stalker, “has been produced in sinners by looking on Him whom they have pierced and which cannot be produced in any other way. It is not by depleting the death of Christ of its mystery and solemnity, but by preaching it as a revelation of the nature of sin, as well as a power of redeeming love, that hard hearts are broken, and sinful men and women are led to abhor their evil past, and to climb with alacrity and hope the white heights of holiness.” If any one anywhere in this world is forgiven, it is on the basis of divine judgment-bearing love.

The forgiveness of the Gospel is no anomaly and no artifice. “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

Says Dr. Du Bose, "All the reality in the universe can be no gospel to us so long as it remains objective, or until it enters with living relations into ourselves." With this we agree, if by the insufficiency of the objective Dr. DuBose means the *exclusively* objective.

In apostolic thought, however, the subjective operation of Christ within the soul and His objective work without the soul are entirely correlative; the one stands or falls with the other.

The atonement, then, was never built on any "forensic fiction" as it is often assumed that all vicariousness implies.

Whatever form of appeal God uses, it is to the end "that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us"—us as justified, us also as forgiven—"who (also impliedly) walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." This "law of the spirit of life" has its seat in the risen Christ Jesus, who comes into so vital union with us that in a profound sense we are risen with Him and organically one with Him.

Says Lacordaire, "The Church was born crucified." Yes, provided it was born *spiritually risen* also. The two factors, the dying Christ and His living again compose the binal principle which in a composite action makes us anew in Him. In the renewing of all life, even the physical, there is a constant "dying and behold we live." Hence, while our identity is retained, yet in another aspect of our new life in Christ there is no hiatus between the Christ of Palestine, nineteen centuries ago, and ourselves of the present, for in our new life we are vitally conjoined with the risen, present, timeless Christ, not isolated from Him; and He ever liveth to perpetuate our union with Himself, and to empower us by the Spirit to express and make manifest our new life in Him, "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled shall we be saved—'be kept saved'—by His life."

9 The Evangelical Principle

That the evangelical gospel, the real equivalent of Paul's "word (or Logos) of the cross," however imperfectly understood and preached in the past, has yet proved itself the supreme agency for the renewal of man, is beyond question. The apostolic church started with it, and for three hundred years this transcendent sign overcame Judaism and heathenism.

The achievements of the Reformation in Continental Europe and the British Isles were wrought by its means. In the New World, what but the Christ-justifying evangel on the lips and in the lives of the Pilgrims, of Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, and the long line of their evangelical successors, has proved the spiritual nerve-centre of America's best life? And in the sphere of foreign missionary enterprise from Schwartz and Carey to Paton and Ashmore, it can be truly said that where emphasis on this "word of the cross" and its evangelical import have been wanting, there have been practically no foreign missions.

But what is the evangelical principle coupled with the cross? Is it not this? *that on the ground of what God-in-Christ has effected through His age-long sacrificial work, mankind has been adjudged to a new, redeemed moral status:* that this world is a potentially redeemed and forgiven world, though largely unaware of it, and deeply indifferent to it; and that if so, the final character of men will be determined, not by any standard of legal merit, but by one's penitent and believing attitude to the Christ,—that "light which lighteth every man coming into the world,"—in whatever form that light may have appeared. Far back of all historic time was that earnest of this gospel existent in the eternal "Word" of John and of Paul. This eternal "Word" (or ideal, *rhema*, Rom. 10:8), immanent in God looked forward to the final founding of man's ideal and holy relation to God on the principle of faith,—that faith which President Mark Hopkins used to call "the one necessity of a moral being."

It was at that point centrally—where faith failed—that the race went down; and it is at this same point—where faith is reawakened through the operation of the divine Spirit— that the fundamental sin-principle is potentially undone, and the race is recovered. Hence the profundity of the evangelical idea. It is the amazingness of the matter—so entirely undeserved and unexpected—that when historically disclosed to us in revelation as a possibility makes it "news", "glad tidings."

Great, however, as have been the past triumphs of evangelicalism, and central as is its idea in the Scriptures, whenever for a considerable period there has been a confused understanding of its meaning, there has been a corresponding decline in pulpit power. A noted British preacher upon being asked not long since, before a company of ministers in this country, wherein he thought the chief defect in American preaching lay, replied, "In its lack of passion, and that lack due to an underlying lack, namely, the weakness of grasp on the cross."

I need not affirm or deny this impeachment. Enough to say that from my point of view, and in all charity, the suspension of preaching interest in the atonement as a whole is largely due to a half-conscious misunderstanding, at least, of the cross, as the New Testament would have it understood. It is in the hope of contributing something to that better understanding that these pages have been written.

Possibly no sermon preached in modern times since Whitefield was more powerful in its way than that on "The Cross" by the distinguished Richard Fuller, of Baltimore, a discourse repeated throughout the country scores of times. The effectiveness of that discourse, however, was largely due to its powerful dramatic appeal to the intuitions and emotions of Christian people, for whom indeed it was prepared. It presented mainly the tragedy; and what the hearers read into it helped greatly to give it effect. That form of preaching, however, on less skillful tongues than

Fuller's and lacking his deep insight and responsiveness to divine pain, would repel the moral sense of many, it would appear to them non-ethical like an undue playing upon the feelings.

So real evangelicals appear often to take this form of Roman execution of Jesus— crime against God though it was—to be the equivalent of the atonement, or at least as

forming the major element in it. Otherwise, why, when men would reproach the evangelical idea, are designations like “a blood theology,” “the theology of the shambles” and kindred epithets flung at it? To repeat references I have elsewhere used,² the Rev. Minot J. Savage, of New York, himself reputed once to have been an evangelical minister, in a discourse a few years since, exclaimed: “What does atonement mean to the world? It means that the eternal Father either will not or cannot receive back His own erring children unless the only-begotten Son of God is slaughtered.”

The late Li Hung Chang, of China, in an impatient mood declared to a missionary that “No Jesus who came to His end on a scaffold would ever win China.” Lord Beaconsfield, Premier of Great Britain, once remarked, “If the Jews had not prevailed upon the Romans to crucify our Lord, what would have become of the atonement? The immolators were preordained, like the victim; and the holy race supplied both. Could that be a crime which secured for all mankind eternal joy?” But we inquire, how came any of these remarkable men quoted, after long contact with Christianity, to have the idea that the death on which Christ's claim to the moral rulership of the world was based began and ended in expiring on a Roman gibbet? Was it because the preaching which they had known was without sufficient discrimination as between tragedy and atonement? The saving death rather began with the suffering, eternal Logos, and will only end when the last ransomed soul shall have been brought home to God. Besides the “immolators” of Jesus were *foreknown* apart from any such design on the part of Deity as relieved them of responsibility for their crime.

Back of all the phenomena and outrage of the crucifixion there was a divine freewill at work on the part of the crucified, voluntarily assuming the guilt of an otherwise doomed race, which, while it was synchronous with the crucifying act of the Roman soldiers,

expressed principles at the, very antipodes of that act itself. Jesus was not the helpless victim supposed. He was all the time master of Himself and of the entire situation. All that prevented His coming down from the cross, as He was derisively bidden to do, was His fidelity to His Father's and His own age-long purpose, to meet the needs of the race by His appalling self-sacrifice. It is doubtful if any who stood about the cross except the dying, model penitent,—the man of heaven-anointed vision—perceived the absolute voluntariness and moral majesty of Christ's dying achievement.

Jesus Himself expressed His position thus: “Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I *lay down* My life that I may take it again. No one taketh it from Me, but I *lay it down of Myself*. I have right to *lay it down*, and I have right to *take it again*. This commandment received I from My Father.” It was that voluntary, self-incurred woe which Jesus (representing also God the Father) tasted for us that was the atonement. It was God-wrought, albeit in union with our race, and therefore efficacious. Then the Jews were not the “preordained immolators” although their act was foreknown as certain, nor was

He their “victim” as Disraeli said. “*Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin.*” This is the *self-immolation of God-in-Christ*. The idea of Christ as a humiliated being is the humiliation of God-in-Christ. Such a death is truly moral and unspeakably more moving than the representation which makes God and Christ practically outside of each other.

The death of Christ, then, was no closed incident, as we conceive the mortal end of a mere martyr like Huss or Ridley to be. It was rather a “living death,” composite in character, singular and far-reaching. This death gathers up in itself and includes the very act of His coming

incarnate into the world, the sacrificial expression of Himself in His entire pre-crucifixion life, the act of His self-forsakenness upon the accursed tree, the persistence of His life as risen, mediatorially reigning on high, and communicating Himself through the Spirit, who “with groanings that cannot be uttered” ever works in us and for us. As “the Lamb foreknown from the foundation of the world,” Deity as sacrificial has ever been laying down His life and taking it again in our behalf.

This death so utterly transcended all mortal, human death that it rose to its very opposite: it became “the death of death and hell’s destruction.” Sometimes this conquest is set forth as if it were a work of violence, *e.g.*, Richard Fuller in his celebrated sermon referred to, and with high dramatic color pictures Christ in His death as “bursting the bands which held Him, grappling with the tyrant, tearing the black diadem from his brow, wrenching from him his cruel sceptre, shivering at a blow his skeleton empire, planting His bruised heel in disdain upon the head of the prostrate monster, and then standing a mighty conqueror over the tomb, graving as with sunbeams the truth of His doctrines, and stamping upon them the broad, bright signet of Deity confessed.” While the victory was complete, we conceive, however, that it was wrought without signs of violence, in a way utterly surprising to death’s prince, as silently but as effectively as the force of gravitation works.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it thus: “That through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

This death, then, instead of being a negative thing, and a mere episode, is the composite energy of the gracious God in vicariously effecting the reconstruction of the race and the cosmos through His self-incurred suffering. Springing in God, it sweeps from eternity to eternity and returns to God, bringing us home with it on its reflux tide: it is the sublimest movement in the moral history of God.

And so in the practical preaching of this gospel what is needed is the avoidance of presentations which suggest the artificial or fictitious in God, or in His method of saving men. Every feature in the Christian Gospel is expressive of some moral reality, of something ultimate in God. Every such reality has its correspondence also in something deep in our own moral natures, because we are made in God’s image. Probably we need to discard some of the current analogies or figures of speech for truer ones that will not caricature God nor mislead our hearers. It is at this point, in the forms of our interpretation, that there is ever a demand that “things new” as well as “old” be brought forth out of our treasures of divine truth if we are to prove scribes “well-instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.”

¹By the philosophy implied in this discussion is meant—not science mingled with crude deductions

based on doubtful hypotheses,—but the search for *causality* of all that phenomenal manifestation

which science observes and registers, with its *meanings* for the rational moral soul.

10 Faith and Philosophy Congruous

Thus far in our discussion we have sought to clear the evangelical idea of artificial features which have frequently attached to it, and embarrassed its value. We, however, are not to be understood as content to rest in a mere idea, that is as intellectual content.

Truth, in order to have any reality for man's whole being, must pass into life, action, character, inasmuch as Christianity is more than thought, more than dogma: it is Christ recreated and extended in us.

The postulate underlying this whole discussion is this: that the atonement, cosmically viewed, which is the deepest thing in God, is the ground of the best thought, and so of the true philosophy—is the very rationale—of our world. As the Logos is “the intelligible expression of the Deity,” so the Logos (or wisdom) of the cross is the divine *raison d'être* of our universe certain to be blighted by sin, yet redeemable in and by Christ. The converse of this is also true. A valid philosophy must consist with such wisdom; for no philosophy can ever transcend a process of thinking God's thoughts over again after Him; and these thoughts are harmonious in every realm. The principles organic in the atonement, that atonement being immanent in the nature of both God and man, furnish the norm of all sound reason for sinful but redeemable man.

It is a common objection urged against the traditional evangelical view of the atonement that it is not sufficiently ethical. And it is generally felt by the Christian mind that philosophy is too speculative. It is believed in many quarters, agnostic and Christian, that there is an impassable chasm between faith and philosophy. But is not the apparent schism due to unclear views of both realms? Certainly as God sees things, there must be perfect agreement. And even from the human view-point, does not the chasm lessen as ideas of both faith and philosophy become truer? To the degree that faith on the one hand becomes enlarged from emphasis on mere speculative beliefs to that of full-orbed moral attitude to truth; and as one's working philosophy,¹ on the other hand, passes from mere intellectualism to a cordial obedience to one's highest light, it will turn out that between the two realms there is no necessary disagreement.

As concerns the atonement, it is thought by many that any view which recognizes the substitutionary idea at all cannot consist with the deepest character. And this would be true, if only a hard and fast substitution were implied. But the substitution implied is not of the mechanical sort. The substitutional element is there. But there is corporately linked with it a new vital energy working in the soul, making the whole process profoundly ethical. Christ's work is vicarious, not in the sense of providing release from obligation to moral standards, but of committing us to them as never before, and also as providing a dynamic enabling to the realization of that ideal. A new and efficient voluntariness is begotten in the soul. This proceeds from the indwelling Christ. He alone is equal to it. He becomes the vital centre of a new character for us. The atonement in the wholeness of it is more than vicarious: it is *vicario-vital*.

In a true philosophic process also, something corresponding to the subjective principle in the atonement is involved. The final philosophy—the true idea of things as they stand to God's mind, the ontological situation—is not a mere intellectualism however scintillating. The true philosopher is more than a self-acting box of brains, be it never so nimble in mental antics. The real philosopher is always a personal and moral being, and so must *live* his view of the universe, in order really to know it. To begin with, he primarily and necessarily knows before he begins to reason. He knows his self-conscious ego, the external world, and the God above in whom both cohere. The academic idea that a man is to believe only what he can prove is a myth.

Every one is born with a stock of primary intuitions, first principles of rationality, out of which as an infant, first by the movements of hands and then by speech, he begins to act soul-wise,

rationally, and even to modify the anatomy of its own brain-mechanism. Every one of these first principles of rationality is beyond proof, because above it: is the

expression of the divine rationality within one. Every child is constitutionally a believer, and remains so until some one lies to it or deceives it.

The soul cannot prove its own existence, its freedom, or immortality, the external world, or the existence of God. It must assume them as the Scriptures do, in order to take a single step forward. The starting-point in thought with every rational being is the self-conscious ego, the self-affirming self. All the axioms of mathematics shine in their own light: they are essential to rationality. It is only the idiot who is not some kind of a mathematician, because the normal mind is so made. To deny these first principles of the mind is to pull up by the roots all the mathematical or other science that Kepler, Newton, Copernicus or Darwin ever knew: is to reduce the cosmos to chaos. The elements embraced in the deductive side of philosophy are at the basis of everything valid in the conclusions of the inductive sciences, even of such so-called "sciences" as threaten the legitimacy of the deductive side of things. The science of chemistry, for example, cannot proceed at all to anything of practical worth as wrought out in the laboratory, without the mathematics in the theorem which gives the proportions in which simple elements are to be combined, say to form water or common air. The only chemist in the world who becomes an expert,—one really experienced,—is the man who lives the life of the laboratory; who gets the science into himself in his own conduct and habit of life. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned—the practiced, the *expert*—that I might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa. 50:4).

So also he, who, proceeding upon the facts and inductions of science, goes on to form a philosophy of the universe, must like the Christian *do the truth* in order to know most deeply: must bring his moral and volitional nature into action, in order to reach any conclusions which earnest moral natures, including his own, can deeply respect. Who has made this clearer than Prof. William James, in his discussion on "The Will to Believe"? And what saner conclusion was ever reached than that of Prof. George Romanes when he, discovering that a complete study of nature involved also a study of human nature, of metaphysics, of anthropology and comparative religion,² saw also that this human nature as moral and responsible must assume right moral attitude on all questions that concern it in order deeply to know the universe at all. In other words, it is forever true that the philosopher, if he is to enter into the secret of any kingdom in this theistic world, must have the spirit of a little child.

Metaphysicians of highest rank in our time are coming to see the utter inutility, even the misleading character of mere abstractions in thought. These abstractions are often purely illusory shadows of the mind; and it is only as under some general law they are reduced to a form of concrete activity, that reality appears. Professor Bowne, for example, an accomplished pupil of Lotze's, in the opening chapter of his great work on metaphysics, starts out with showing the unreality of such an abstraction as "pure being," for which the sense philosophy has always stood. That only is being which has dynamic, a law of action within it and which expresses itself concretely. So also, there is no such thing as that which we term "the nature of things," except as certain laws of activity operate within these things. The chemical elements, *e.g.*, are not "dead matter," but are charged with energy—many say with God as immanent. Things apart from a law of action are thus a pure mental concept, and only imaginary. They can be known only as the law of their action is known, however the mind may trick itself to believe in its knowledge of their reality apart from what the mind itself brings to its object.

It was the distinction of Immanuel Kant that he discovered that all thought respecting things was active and not passive. The mind always brings its own contribution to that which can be known: it is not like a photographic plate on which objects automatically print themselves. That which the mind knows is a composite something—a "reconstruct," a composite of the thinking

mind and the object taken together. In other words, it is only a personality who thinks and knows, and what is known is a thought-product: as in telegraphy there is an intelligence at both ends of the line. The knowing person has will also, who concretely acts on all his knowing. This being so, no philosophy of the universe which is of any worth can ever be reached, except in large part it be the resultant of some personality in relation to the subject of his thought. This universe is, as Professor Royce says, "the world of the Logos": that is, it is a reason-product, a personality-product; and it makes itself apprehensible only to a personality. In true cosmic thought, this apprehensible product has been mediated to us as a created result through the personal Christ, who is the Logos; and without His relation to it as entire personality, our composite understanding could not really know it at all. Thus our rational understanding is made, not only by Christ, but through Him, and for Him.

Says Lotze in one of his flashes of insight: "The true beginning of metaphysics lies in ethics." "I seek in that which *should* be the ground of that which *is*." In other words, "the will to do gives the wit to know," even in metaphysics.

This deep principle also lies at the root of Froebel's method in all primary education. The child is concretely to *create* the form of that which he seeks to know. Or, as F.W. Robertson puts it, "Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge." Where Kant, who had made the remarkable discovery above referred to, also, in his "Critique of Pure Reason," alas! lost himself, and thus allowed a foundation for the Agnosticism of the last hundred years, was wherein he seemed to forget that "this is the world of the Logos," and that the mind of man is in His image. As Dr. Samuel Harris says: Kant "split the mind"—the self-conscious ego—he gave to a mere mental category a false emphasis (for no mental category—a mere logical form—ever has any reality except as it is employed in concrete thinking, after which it vanishes). Then, with this category or shadow of the mind, Kant shut up his followers by inductive logic—always at best a secondary process in philosophy—to believe that the universe cannot be known at all as it is in itself, but only in a phenomenal, an illusory or masked way. Of course this sort of knowledge is a fiction. And so, according to Kant, we must believe that God has wrought a lie into our very mental constitution: that we are so made as not to know things as they are, but as they are not,—a manifest absurdity.

Had Kant taught that we cannot know things *exhaustively*, as God knows them, while indeed our knowledge is *partial* because finite, we could agree, but what he really taught was that we cannot, *even in part*, know things as they are in themselves. At this point many since have gone astray in their thinking, and made shipwreck both of philosophy and faith, as the way was left wide open to the agnostic error which culminated in Hegel, Herbert Spencer and the widespread subjective idealism of our time. Thus the principle of obedience is as essential to righteous and fruitful thinking as is the obedience of faith to Christian living.

And now turning explicitly to the side of religion, let us see what elements there are in the cross of Christ as understood in this discussion which constitute it when subjectively realized a powerful dynamic in the distinctive realm of the moral and spiritual.

And first, observe that in the cross, even in its tragic and criminal aspect, there is afforded a revelation of the nature of sin nowhere else afforded in all history. And this reacts upon us to produce conviction of our own sin. The crucifiers of Jesus were the representatives of the human race, considered on its lower plane as self-centred and averse to God. It was not the Jews alone that crucified Jesus. Nay, rather, the Romans perpetrated the deed although Jewish unbelief delivered Him over for the purpose. The proud agnostic Greek philosophy, which failed to appreciate the wisdom of Christ, also furnished much of the disdain which was content to see Jesus thus disposed of on the tree. The inscription upon the cross indeed, in Hebrew, and Greek and Latin, was the index of the fact that this was humanity's deed that the human race constructively killed the Prince of Life. The natural man could not abide the life of Christ and all

the deep paradoxes in His teaching. His own acceptance of the cross if He was divine was wholly beyond their philosophy. And so the cry: "Away with Him: let Him be crucified," was the expression of human nature as apart from God. It really meant not only the suppression of that nobler side of humanity, which was to be perfected in second Adamhood, but it was virtually *deicide* as well. "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death"; and death in every sense.

Peter did not hesitate at Pentecost and after to charge home upon the crucifiers of Jesus that in executing Him they had "killed the Lord of Glory." Jesus was the manifestation of God in terms of ideal humanity. Nay more, He was an actual incarnation of Deity. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, full of grace and truth." Yet the world would not have this Man to rule over them. When He appeared, the keepers of the vineyard said, to employ Christ's own words, "This is the heir, come let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours." So they cast Him out and the god of this world usurped His place. This is sin *per se*. Thus sin at the cross has been rendered personally concrete and visual. Sin here also was at its maximum. It was the one sin of which this world has not yet repented. This sin not only dethroned God but enthroned man, and man as self-centred and reprobate; for to put man above God, or even as separate from God, is to violate the first, law of the creature as a dependent and subject being.

In pondering Calvary, in this aspect of the case, every human being may see what he potentially is, and what he must remain unless he rouses himself to the crisis necessary for every sinner to repudiate *in toto* the principles and the spirit of an act which could place the world's Redeemer upon that cruel cross.

To every one, therefore, who thinks deeply enough to see himself and his fellow men as consenting to that death until all complicity with it is repented of and repudiated, the vision of that cross becomes a powerful dynamic to awaken revolt against the world's racial sin, and one's own personal sin.

Thus in its objective and historic aspect the cross, when understood in its criminal implications, is the greatest external potency known to our world to awaken reaction against sin. It is an incitement to the deepest ethic in revolt from sin. Moreover, all thought of an ethic of a mere natural sort is vain which ignores the event of Calvary for a race conditioned as ours is. Racially we have fallen into sin however it be explained.

Moreover we enhance sin by ignoring and resisting God's own remedy for it. We "count the blood of the covenant (not a sacred but) a *common*, or *profane*, thing;" we were long unwilling to meet the crisis in repentance and faith whereby only both racial and personal sin could be put away in the new birth. The sin of resisting this crisis is represented in the Bible as the damning sin, because it not only makes the sacrifice of God-in-Christ of none effect, but the unbeliever deliberately remains on the side of those who perpetrated this blackest crime in history. Sin of this sort impliedly "crucifies the Son of God afresh": it "treads underfoot the Son of God" and "does despite to the spirit of grace." If this be the case, good reason there is for that Scripture: "There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sin"—no more provision in the divine thought or in the moral universe for man's recovery from sin.

Now looking at the matter from another point of view: remembering that the cross stands for more than crucifixion, even atonement on God's part, we find another dynamic element of great power: namely, this; that the deepest gratitude towards God is awakened in view of the atonement which was consummated on the part of God, even simultaneously with man's greatest sin. There is a point at which the criminality of man in nailing Jesus to the wood is met by the outgoing of God's own voluntary dying for the world in Christ. Man was there at his worst, but God at His sublimest. It was this voluntary delivery of Himself up to endure the ignominy of the cross and unspeakably more than mere crucifixion, which constitutes the atonement. It was the voluntary heartbreak occasioned by God's adequate dealing with sin

including even that of the crucifiers which was the atonement. And it is the sense of this which prompts to penitence. We discover to our horror the judgments which we have brought on Christ; we see the meaning of our sin.

Sheer gratitude then for an altruistic devotion like that shown in the divine sacrifice on our behalf becomes creative of a new penitent and believing passion in the soul. This ought and does secure a deep response to God, and here is added ground for a deep ethic for the holiest living. Says Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

It is this aspect of the ethical energy of the cross—gratitude for sacrificial love—which Professor Denny in his book on "The Death of Christ" has brought out so powerfully.

China's ethical response to our country's recent act in respect to the indemnity for mischief done us during the Boxer troubles of 1900 was of this sort. China showed gratitude for the generosity of our act, a generosity so unlike the usual conduct of nations respecting issues of a similar kind. That response represented the moral instincts of a great people, though pagan, towards our nation which dared to walk in the Christian pathway outlined for us by the late Secretary Hay. And China's action affords an illustration on the largest scale of the power of generous sacrificial action to beget its like ethically in others. China seemed to say respecting America: "Who loved me and gave herself for me."

There were high-minded people in China, and among them missionaries, who deplored the proposed action on the part of our government: they said China would consider the relinquishment of the indemnity the mark of a weak nation, and some subsequent Boxer uprising would be made easier. And besides the money released would never reach the Imperial exchequer: it would be used to line the pockets of corrupt officials, bred as they are to the graft system. But did China thus do? Far from it. She responded precisely in the manner of a Christian penitent who wakes to find himself forgiven before he even asks, through the grace of the Gospel. She grasped not at one dollar of the twelve millions for her selfish use; she rather proposed to expend the entire amount on the education of her select sons under the aegis of the colleges of a land which could treat her in so Christian a fashion. So for the next forty years we have the privilege of training a body of influential men for China's well-being. The results potential in that are such as ought to put all America on her moral mettle to see that China is not disappointed.

The ethical power of awakened gratitude, the real dynamic for moral exaltation over wrongdoing, is without an equal in the moral universe.

The ascriptions of the redeemed throughout the Apocalypse declare this to be the potency which animates the saints in the endless future. The key-note of all the songs of the redeemed is this: "Unto Him that hath loved us and hath washed us from our sins, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and our Father, to Him be the glory and dominion for ever and ever, amen."

But there is a third element that enters into the dynamic of the cross as it takes effect on those who really apprehend it, and have been brought under its spell. That element is the mystical energy of the Christ who died, is risen again and now dwells within us. This indwelling of Christ is the presupposition on which the atonement as objective is posited.

"That the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." While in the first instance Christ vicariously died for us—preferring to lay down His life in the way He did, rather than let us perish—yet the implication in the apostolic writings always is that we also are to die with Him to sin and self—to the life of mere impulse and self-gratification and so live in Him by the power of the Spirit, "We who died to sin how shall we any longer live therein?" "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."

It is this element that in our time more than in any previous one calls for emphasis for the sake of those who stumble at anything which resembles a mechanically substitutionary view of the atonement. Even Professor Denny in his work above referred to, otherwise great, and purporting to deal with the modern mind, has left the most serious defect in his presentation of the Death of Christ. For some reason he notably fails to give due place to the subjective side of the atonement; at all events to that element in it which springs out of the union of the believer with his Lord. It may be that in the interests of his metaphysics Professor Denny has become very shy of everything mystical. He certainly makes too little of the Christ formed within us, with whom our very being stands in solidarity the moment we own Him as Lord. And in doing so he leaves the atonement devoid of the supreme ethical potency. This is surely a great loss, if we would save the modern mind to its best self.

While we hold no brief for *mysticism as a system* in philosophy, we can never reach the heart of things in our universe, in any department of it, if we ignore the mystical element, however puzzling it may be to our metaphysics. The deepest things in life, in marriage, in a mother's love, in nature, in poetry and in all else are mystical. They are beyond exact definition, simply because they are vital. And so is the atonement on one side of it. The mystical is the thing in us nearest to God.

The reason why Ritschlianism has had such vogue in Europe and America in the last generation, despite its false metaphysics and its agnostic philosophical tendencies, is that it has seized upon the deep experiential side of Christian truth. It has appealed to aspiration, to life, to love and yearnings of soul too deep for mental analysis.

True, some of its adherents are weakly falling back upon mechanical natural ethics—as if that were better than a mechanical substitution. They have become oblivious of objective realities in Christ's person and work, and missed the vision of the subjective reality as dynamically grounded in the objective. They have supposed that doctrine and experience are antithetical to each other, whereas they are complementary. The objective and the subjective are correlative to each other as are substance and shadow; they each imply the other. And when so seen and realized, there results a Christianity vastly more ethical than any mere morality—a morality which is exalted at the expense of both objective fact and subjective experience.

Moreover, this mystic experience of the indwelling Christ is intended in the light and under the quickening influence of the cross, to be the regular and growing habit, even the second nature of the believer. Paul said, "I die daily," "Always bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh."

And he relates all this subjective experience to the cross of Christ, saying, "But far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world, for neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision but a new creature (or creation)."

These passages imply that the risen Christ, exalted as the correlative of the sacrificial dying, waits by the power of His own Spirit to come and create Himself and habitually dwell as ethic within the renewed heart, hour by hour, so energizing the soul afresh that it will really live the resurrection life of the Son of God.

And let it not be overlooked, as the Church has sometimes done, that Jesus was really human, albeit uniquely divine. Jesus was "the Son of Man," "the last Adam"; and as such, the life He lived on earth was the human life of faith, although energized to the *n*th power by the divine Spirit. His life on earth—all proleptic to His resurrection life—was precisely of a kind with the life of faith we are expected to live as empowered by the Spirit, differing from ours only in strength and degree. Christ's earthly life was lived not magically, not even by miracle: it was lived by faith in His Father and ours. "As the living Father hath sent Me and I live because of the

Father, so he that eateth Me he also shall live because of Me.” Godet commenting on this passage says, “Jesus derived the nourishment of His life from the Father who had sent Him, and He lived by Him.

Doubtless every time Christ had to act or speak, He first effaced Himself, then left it to the Father to will, to think, to act, to be everything in Him.” “The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do.”

We suppose that in the ongoing life of Jesus there was a momentary and perpetual process of the crucifixion of His self-life of impulse as a human being, and that correlatively to this, anticipations of His coming resurrection life took the place in His character of the self-life. And so in the purpose of God it was intended to be with us, however miserably we come short of it.

This type of life was the new-Adamic life, which the first Adam failed to realize. In principle these momentary stages of Christ’s life upon earth are called in the Gospel of Matthew “days of the Son of Man.” And these days had their repeated climacterics; as in the Baptism, the Temptation, the Transfiguration, the Resurrection—such climacterics as Dr. G. Campbell Morgan treats in his “Crises of the Christ.” The final one is described by Matthew as “*His day*,”—“the Son of Man in His day.” This means that Christ was the type of man whose being as God incarnate was habitually given up to the self-crucifixion of all that which in us inclines to be separate from God; and so by the Spirit, it rose again to a constant renewal of the founts of life.

The entire conscious human perfection of Jesus was realized on this principle; and so ours is to be. And what potency of ethic there is in it, let the sainthood of the Christian ages testify. This is a very different thing from a life of mere *imitation* of Jesus as a perfect model, such as Thomas a Kempis emphasized. It has in it an element which Rev.

Henry Clark, in his book on “The Method of Christian Ethics,” has described as “automatic,” although I should prefer to say is a new spontaneous activity of the Christ Himself dwelling within us. The same eternal Spirit which kept Jesus in constant “newness of life” keeps us also, if we are kept at all. Christ is the archetype and energy of such life—not its mere model.

Then the atonement was *vicario-vital*: it is substitutionary and it is life-giving. And both principles are essential in order to the whole truth; it is radio-active. Leave out the substitutionary objective and you have lost the chief potency for securing the subjective experience. Omit the subjective, the very point in experience where the substitutional work passes into personal, transforming power, and you have vitiated the composite death-resurrection energy of Christ mid-process: you have destroyed the copulating principle.

And this doubly-mediated result issues in *character*, which no term less vital than “new-creation” can express. This is something unspeakably deeper than imitative conformity to some outer standard: it is spontaneously energetic with the divine force of the Holy Spirit within us.

The Apostle Paul speaks of it, according to Rotherham’s rendering, in terms like these: “Whereunto I am also *toiling, contending* according to His inward working, which is *inwardly working itself in me with power*.” Such a conception of vicariousness is immeasurably beyond any mechanical or commercial notion, in the revolt from which many have lost the vicarious principle altogether.

Confessedly the whole matter of our being’s reconstitution in Christ is beyond our psychology, though in nowise out of harmony with the best we have. The roots of this new ethic are in the last Adamhood of Christ—even in the preincarnate and yet historic work of the Logos of St. John, in whom the cross was constituted, and the last Adam coheres.

This realization of Christ as formed within is what Dr. P.T. Forsyth has called the “microcosm of his new spiritual universe,” corresponding to the “macrocosm in the historic cross” which embraced all the issues of the last judgment.

Can any other conceivable ethic go to such a depth? Is it indeed ours to herald such a reality as our primal message to every last devil's castaway on earth? Could any other message be so supremely preachable? How any one with an impulse to preach at all can desire a deeper, diviner ethic is entirely beyond me to imagine.

In Dr. Robert Young's translation of the Scriptures, he throws a startling light on the colloquy between God and the prophet Jonah, when he sulked over Nineveh, angered because God, even through his own preaching, showed mercy to that heathen though penitent city. Young renders God's question: "Dost thou well to be angry?" "is doing good (showing mercy) displeasing to thee?" Three times the issue rises. First, when the Lord found the prophet embittered because God, true to His forgiving character, accepted the fasting and repentance of the great city. "Is My shewing mercy displeasing to thee?" "Yes!" replies the surly prophet, "displeasing to me *even unto death.*" That is, "I would rather myself die, than see Thee shew favor to these uncircumcised Gentiles (through whom doubtless the prophet suspected God would yet discipline Israel).

So Jonah begs the Lord to take his life rather than let him live to see it. He would no longer even stay within the city. So he goes forth resentfully outside the walls, and sits under a booth to speculate respecting what may become of the city he now hates. For the sake of the object-lesson in it, God further prepares a gourd tree, which with a fine prophetic insight early commentators called the *Palma Christi*, to mercifully shield the pouting prophet from the pelting tropical sun, hoping that this added favor to Jonah would recover him from his evil mood. Jonah was gratified at this consideration of himself. But when a prepared worm is permitted in a single night to destroy the canopy which had shielded him, he fainted in both body and soul; and again was angry that his protecting gourd was taken away.

The second time God asks: "Is doing good (or shewing mercy) displeasing to thee (in the light of the lesson of the gourd)?" Again Jonah peevishly replies: "Yes! I do well to be angry *even unto death.*" That is, "I would rather die than fail of my indulgence from my precious gourd." And he pouted on careless of the protecting canopy of God's grace prepared for Nineveh. A sad mood this for a prophet, who by this time is supposed from his past discipline to have learned something of divine grace. But the naturalistic ethics of a jealous and obstinate member even of the elect nation is far from beautiful.

For further discussion of the ethical energy of the cross, see my book on "How Does the Death of Christ Save Us," published by the Griffith and Rowland Press, Philadelphia, and also by Hodder and Stoughton, London.

The ethics of God, however, are in reserve, and it speaks its withering rebuke. "Thou Jonah—prophet of Israel though thou art,—hast regard for the sheltering gourd which protected thine own head for a day; and yet for it thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night; and should not I have regard for Nineveh,—a city for which I have labored so long, even created it, preserved it and made it grow—Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than one hundred and twenty thousand irresponsible infants that cannot discern between their right hand and their left had, and also much cattle?"

Thus, in this utterance of the Most High, in this most missionary book, is found one of the tenderest exhibitions of the divine pity afforded by the entire Bible, whether in Old Testament or New.

But I introduce this incident, which otherwise might seem far-fetched, to point the contrast—the absolute antithesis—between the confessed recreancy even of a prophet commissioned to save a city, and the living, gracious God. Jonah is represented as venting his evil spirit in a threefold form. "I *would rather die* than have Thee recognize the city's penitence, though it is in sackcloth

and ashes before Thee.” I *would rather die* than stay within the city, and help on this popular penitential uprising. Meanwhile I sit in judgment even upon my God.

And when the gourd withered, Jonah said, “I *would rather die* than have my sunshade of a day removed from over my selfish pate.” All of which is to say, “I would rather die *than not to have* my own selfish, reprobate and anti-mission way.”

So much for the ethics of a formalist and a selfling, however religious. And what is the spirit of the God of the whole earth in reply to this? Is it not the *very opposite*? God in spirit replies: “But *I would rather die* (as I intend in My only-begotten Son centuries hence to do) *than not to show mercy* to Nineveh, that great city—great in moral possibilities despite its colossal sins.” Could any picture of the divine tenderness towards the heathen world be sublimer?

The contrast between this type of ethics and that of Jonah, who in his human infirmity had pity only on himself, because his withered gourd no longer sheltered him from sunrays, is simply infinite. Talk of any kind of human ethics as compared with this! an ethic grounded in the vicarious sacrificial principle of “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” It is not strange that the Scriptures represent this righteousness as “like the great mountains,” as higher than man’s even as the heavens are high above the earth: as a compassion which “endureth forever”; and is the fitting refrain of the whole Bible revelation. And yet in this Old Testament book,—a book sadly misunderstood and shockingly travestied,—the ethics of the eternal God are described in terms of *vicarious dying* on the part of Deity Himself. He, unlike Jonah, *would die rather than not* prepare a *gracious aegis*—a gourd that withers not,—under which not only Nineveh but the peoples of the whole earth, under whatever degree of light, if penitent and believing, may share His grace. Now these ethics of the Deity expressed in the climacteric thought of the Book of Jonah—that for which the whole story is told—when understood, are seen to be in the precise terms descriptive of the ethics illustrated to perfection in the dying and living again of the Lord Jesus; terms also on which the New Testament declares the new ethics of the redeemed are to be formed.

Higher than this no moral thought can rise:³ it is the very summit of Christianity. It is the source of all Christian and missionary endeavor that is worthy of the name, and represents the only process by which mankind can ever be renewed and elevated to a divine and spontaneous holiness.

Now, as in philosophy, we plead for something much deeper than intellectualism; that thought should be active, complete, personal, purposeful and righteous, involving the action of the whole composite man towards the causative power and ideals of the universe, and thus of a kind with God’s philosophy, so also in religion, we urge that in its central principle, the cosmic atonement, there is implied and actively involved the supreme dynamic for fallen mankind, and for the permanent moral renewal and security of the universe.

A philosophical monism it may be impossible in our present state of knowledge to formulate without falling into serious pan theistic error. But we may see far enough to believe that the atoning cross and the deepest wisdom human and divine are entirely congruous: that they meet below the surface; and in this unity faith may rationally rest until we shall know as we are known.

And if these two, faith and philosophy equally and always reckon on the subjective side of things, without disparagement to the objective in their respective realms, it will turn out that instead of being antithetical to each other, they are complementary, wedded in a divine bond; and they will cooperate in a happy united service to the world’s renewal in thought and being, even after the image of Jesus Christ—the one normal thinker and character in all history, and who Himself is the end and goal of the human race.

“Oh, Thou that from eternity

Upon Thy wounded heart hast borne
Each pang and cry of misery
Wherewith our human hearts are torn,
Thy love upon the grievous cross
Doth glow, the beacon-light of time,
Forever sharing pain and loss
With every man in every clime.
How vast, how vast Thy sacrifice,
As ages come and ages go,
Still waiting till it shall suffice
To draw the last cold heart and slow!”
—Henry N. Dodge.