

Paper 188 — The Time of the Tomb

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Most endnotes and Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

Sources for Paper 188, in the order in which they appear

- (1) Daniel A. Poling, *Between Two Worlds: The Romance of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1931)
- (2) David Smith, M.A., D.D., *Our Lord's Earthly Life* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1925)

Note: This source is coded Smith2.

- (3) David Smith, M.A., D.D., *The Days of His Flesh: The Earthly Life of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, Eighth Edition, Revised (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1910)

Note: This source is coded Smith1.

- (4) Rev. Alfred Edersheim, M.A.Oxon, D.D., Ph.D., *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Volume Two) (New York: Longman, Green, & Co., Eighth Edition, Revised, 1899)
- (5) Wm. Arnold Stevens and Ernest Dewitt Burton, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study: An Analytical Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904, 1932)
- (6) John Baillie, M.A., D.Litt., *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929)

Key

- (a) Green indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) Yellow highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) Tan highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.

- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable. The highlights are tentative.)

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PAPER 188 — THE TIME OF THE TOMB

188:0.1 The day and a half that Jesus' mortal body lay in the tomb of Joseph, the period between his death on the cross and his resurrection, is a chapter in the earth career of Michael which is little known to us. We can narrate the burial of the Son of Man and put in this record the events associated with his resurrection, but we cannot supply much information of an authentic nature about what really transpired during this epoch of about thirty-six hours, from three o'clock Friday afternoon to three o'clock Sunday morning.

This period in the Master's career began shortly before he was taken down from the cross by the Roman soldiers. He hung upon the cross about one hour after his death. He would have been taken down sooner but for the delay in dispatching the two brigands.

XXXVIII: "MOTHER O' MINE" (Poling 213)

Knowing that it was the purpose of the High Priest to have the body of the Wonder-Worker thrown into the pit which was reserved for common criminals

[... Gehenna, "the Valley of Hinnom," that loathsome den outside the southern wall of Jerusalem, the repository of the city's refuse (Smith2 80).

The rule was that the mangled bodies of crucified criminals should be cast into the loathsome pit of Gehenna, the public refuse-depôt (Smith2 464).]

188:0.2 The rulers of the Jews had planned to have Jesus' body thrown in the open burial pits

of Gehenna, south of the city;

it was the custom thus to dispose of the victims of crucifixion.

and to which **wild beasts** had access,

they hurried secretly to Pilate and boldly asked for the right to bury “the King of the Jews” (P 214).

[It was **common for the friends of the crucified** to purchase their bodies and inter them decently, and Joseph was rich and could easily pay the price (Smith 507).]

[The unhappy procurator had earned himself an evil reputation for greed of gold, ... yet so great was his agitation that he refused the price which Joseph offered, and made him a free gift of the body of Jesus (Smith 507).]

If this plan had been followed,

the body of the Master would have been exposed to the **wild beasts**.

188:0.3 In the meantime, Joseph of Arimathea, accompanied by Nicodemus, had gone to Pilate and asked that the body of Jesus be turned over to them for proper burial.

It was **not uncommon for friends of crucified** persons to offer bribes to the Roman authorities for the privilege of gaining possession of such bodies.

Joseph went before Pilate with a large sum of money, in case it became necessary to pay for permission to remove Jesus’ body to a private burial tomb.

But Pilate would not take money for this.

When he heard the request, he quickly signed the order which authorized Joseph to proceed to Golgotha and take immediate and full possession of the Master’s body.

In the meantime, the sandstorm having considerably abated, a group of Jews representing the Sanhedrin had gone out to Golgotha for the purpose of making sure that Jesus’ body accompanied those of the brigands to the open public burial pits.

1. THE BURIAL OF JESUS

188:1.1 When Joseph and Nicodemus arrived at Golgotha, they found the soldiers taking Jesus down from the cross and the representatives of the Sanhedrin standing by to see that none of Jesus' followers prevented his body from going to the criminal burial pits.

And so when Caiaphas and his personal representatives prepared to remove the body of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea blocked their way. "The seal of the Proconsul," he said, **holding up the legal order.**

The Temple company made a great **clamor** and Caiaphas lost his head entirely:

"I refuse to accept this insult," he shouted. "It is an outrage. He goes into the hole with the others. You are a traitor to the Temple." And he rushed toward the silent but determined man of Arimathea.

When Joseph **presented Pilate's order** for the Master's body to the centurion,

the Jews raised a tumult and **clamored** for its possession.

In their raving they sought violently to take possession of the body, and when they did this, the centurion ordered four of his soldiers to his side, and with drawn swords they stood astride the Master's body as it lay there on the ground. The centurion ordered the other soldiers to leave the two thieves while they drove back this angry mob of infuriated Jews. When order had been restored, the centurion read the permit from Pilate to the Jews and, stepping aside, said to Joseph:

But the captain shoved the High Priest aside:

“No, you don’t,” he said. “You were saying like that a little while yourself. Now get gone. The body belongs to this man. You have seen the document. You know the seal. He can bury where he chooses” (P 214-15).

“This body is yours to do with as you see fit.

I and my soldiers will stand by to see that no man interferes.”

[[C]emeteries, or common burying-places, appear in earliest times to have been used only for the poor, or for strangers. In Jerusalem there were also two places where executed criminals were buried (Edersheim2 316).]

188:1.2 A crucified person could not be buried in a Jewish cemetery;

there was a strict law against such a procedure.

V, XV: ‘CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED’ (Edersheim2 582)

Joseph and Nicodemus knew this law, and on the way out to Golgotha they had decided to

The proximity of the holy Sabbath, and the consequent need of haste, may have suggested or determined the proposal of Joseph to lay the Body of Jesus in his own rock-hewn new tomb, where no one has yet been laid (E2 617).

bury Jesus in Joseph’s new family tomb, hewn out of solid rock,

The Arimathæa of Joseph is probably the modern Er-Ram, two hours north of Jerusalem, on a conical hill,

located a short distance north of Golgotha

somewhat east of the road that leads from Jerusalem to Nablus (*Jos. Ant. vii. 12. 3*)—the Armathaim of the LXX (E2 616, fn).

and across the road leading to Samaria.

No one had ever lain in this tomb, and they thought it appropriate that the Master should rest there.

[Joseph of Arimathæa], whom fear of the Jews had restrained from making open avowal of discipleship during the life-time of Jesus,

[See 168:3.3.]

not only professed such of the Crucified Christ, but took the most bold and decided step before Jews and Gentiles in connection with it (E2 616).

Joseph, with those who attended him, 'wrapped' the Sacred Body 'in a clean linen cloth,'

and rapidly carried It to the rock-hewn tomb in the garden close by (E2 617).

[Luke 23:[55] And the women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after,]

Joseph really believed that Jesus would rise from the dead, but Nicodemus was very doubtful.

These former members of the Sanhedrin had kept their faith in Jesus more or less of a secret,

although their fellow Sanhedrists had long suspected them,¹

even before they withdrew from the council.

From now on they were the most outspoken disciples of Jesus in all Jerusalem.

188:1.3 At about half past four o'clock the burial procession of Jesus of Nazareth started from Golgotha for Joseph's tomb across the way.

The body was wrapped in a linen sheet

as the four men carried it,

followed by the faithful women watchers from Galilee.

The mortals who bore the material body of Jesus to the tomb were: Joseph, Nicodemus, John, and the Roman centurion.

It will be remembered, that at the entrance to ‘the tomb’—and within ‘the rock’—there was ‘a court,’ **nine feet square**, where ordinarily the bier was deposited ... (E2 617).

It was in ‘the court’ of the tomb that the hasty **embalmmment**—if such it may be called—took place (E2 617).

[John 19:39 And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

40 So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.]

... the Head being wrapped in a **napkin**.

And so they laid Him to rest in the niche of the rock-hewn new tomb (E2 618).

And as they went out, they rolled, as was the custom, a ‘great stone’—the *Golel*—to close the entrance to the tomb, [*contd* 188:2.3] (E2 618)

188:1.4 They carried the body into the tomb,

a chamber **about ten feet square**,

where they hurriedly prepared it for burial.

The Jews did not really bury their dead;² they actually **embalmed** them.

Joseph and Nicodemus had brought with them large quantities of myrrh and aloes,

and they now wrapped the body with bandages saturated with these solutions.

When the embalming was completed,

they tied a **napkin** about the face,

wrapped the body in a linen sheet,

and reverently placed it on a shelf in the tomb.

188:1.5 After placing the body in the tomb, the centurion signaled for his soldiers to help

roll the doorstone up before the entrance to the tomb.

The soldiers then departed for Gehenna with the bodies of the thieves while the others returned to Jerusalem, in sorrow, to observe the Passover feast according to the laws of Moses.

[Luke 23:54 And it was the day of the Preparation, and the sabbath drew on.]

Only a few faithful ones, notably among them Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the mother of Joses, stood over against the tomb, watching at some distance where and how the Body of Jesus was laid.

It would scarcely have been in accordance with Jewish manners, if these women had mingled more closely with the two Sanhedrists and their attendants.

From where they stood they could only have had a dim view of what passed within the court, and this may explain how, on their return, they 'prepared spices and ointments' for the more full honours which they hoped to pay the Dead after the Sabbath was past (E2 618).

188:1.6 There was considerable hurry and haste about the burial of Jesus because

this was preparation day and the Sabbath was drawing on apace.

The men hurried back to the city, but the women lingered near the tomb until it was very dark.

188:1.7 While all this was going on, the women were hiding near at hand

so that they saw it all and observed where the Master had been laid.

They thus secreted themselves because

it was not permissible for women to associate with men at such a time.

These women did not think Jesus had been properly prepared for burial, and they agreed among themselves to go back to the home of Joseph, rest over the Sabbath,

make ready spices and ointments, and return on Sunday morning properly to prepare the Master's body for the death rest.

[See 187:3.2; see also 122:3.3, re Mary's two sisters.]

V, XVI: ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST FROM THE DEAD. (Edersheim2 621)

What thoughts concerning the Dead Christ filled the minds of Joseph of Arimathæa, of Nicodemus, and of the other disciples of Jesus, as well as of the Apostles and of the pious women? They believed Him to be dead, and they did not expect Him to rise again from the dead—at least, in our accepted sense of it. Of this there is abundant evidence from the moment of His Death, ... indeed in the express statement: 'For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.'

And the notice in St. Matthew's Gospel, that the Sanhedrists ... knew of such a prediction, and took it in the literal sense—would give only more emphasis to the opposite bearing of the disciples and their manifest non-expectancy of a literal Resurrection (E2 623).

The women who thus tarried by the tomb on this Friday evening were:

Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Clopas, Martha another sister of Jesus' mother, and Rebecca of Sepphoris.

188:1.8 Aside from David Zebedee and Joseph of Arimathea,

very few of Jesus' disciples really believed or understood that he was due to arise from the tomb on the third day.

2. SAFEGUARDING THE TOMB

188:2.1 If Jesus' followers were unmindful of his promise to rise from the grave on the third day, his enemies were not.

The chief priests, Pharisees, and Sadducees recalled that they had received reports of his saying he would rise from the dead.

188:2.2 This Friday night, after the Passover supper, about midnight a group of the Jewish leaders gathered at the home of Caiaphas, where they discussed their fears concerning the Master's assertions that he would rise from the dead on the third day. This meeting ended with the appointment of a committee of Sanhedrists who were to visit Pilate early the next day, bearing the official request of the Sanhedrin that a Roman guard be stationed before Jesus' tomb to prevent his friends from tampering with it.

XXXIII: SATURDAY—THE DAY IN THE TOMB. (*A Harmony of the Gospels* 234)

§142. THE WATCH AT THE SEPULCHRE.
Matt. 27:62-66.

62 Now on the morrow, which is *the day* after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, 63 saying,

Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive,

After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure

until the third day,

lest haply his disciples come and steal him away,

and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead:

Said the spokesman of this committee to Pilate:

“Sir, we remember that this deceiver, Jesus of Nazareth, said, while he was yet alive,

‘After three days I will rise again.’

We have, therefore, come before you to request that you

issue such orders as will make the sepulchre secure against his followers,

at least until after the third day.

We greatly fear lest his disciples come and steal him away by night

and then proclaim to the people that he has risen from the dead.

and the last error will be worst than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them,

Ye have a guard:

go your way, make it as sure *as* ye can.

66 So they went,

and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.

XV: 'CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED'
(Edersheim2 582)

[*contd from 188:1.5*] probably leaning against it for support, as was the practice, a **smaller stone**—the so-called *Dopheq*. It would be where the one stone was laid against the other, that on the next day, **Sabbath though it was**, the Jewish authorities would have **affixed the seal**,

so that the slightest disturbance might become apparent (E2 618).

If we should permit this to happen,

this mistake would be far worse than to have allowed him to live.”

188:2.3 When Pilate heard this request of the Sanhedrists,

he said:

“I will give you a guard

of ten soldiers.

Go your way and make the tomb secure.”

They went

back to the temple, secured ten of their own guards, and then marched out to Joseph’s tomb with these ten Jewish guards and ten Roman soldiers, **even on this Sabbath morning**, to set them as watchmen before the tomb.

These men rolled yet **another stone** before the tomb

and **set the seal** of Pilate on and around these stones,

lest they be disturbed without their knowledge.

And these twenty men remained on watch up to the hour of the resurrection, the Jews carrying them their food and drink.

3. DURING THE SABBATH DAY

188:3.1 Throughout this Sabbath day the disciples and the apostles remained in hiding, while all Jerusalem discussed the death of Jesus on the cross.

[Compare 121:6.9.]

There were almost one and one-half million Jews present in Jerusalem at this time, hailing from all parts of the Roman Empire and from Mesopotamia.

This was the beginning of the Passover week, and all these pilgrims would be in the city to learn of the resurrection of Jesus and to carry the report back to their homes.

188:3.2 Late Saturday night, John Mark summoned the eleven apostles secretly to come to the home of his father, where, just before midnight, they all assembled in the same upper chamber where they had partaken of the Last Supper with their Master two nights previously.

188:3.3 Mary the mother of Jesus, with Ruth and Jude, returned to Bethany to join their family this Saturday evening just before sunset. David Zebedee remained at the home of Nicodemus, where he had arranged for his messengers to assemble early Sunday morning. The women of Galilee, who prepared spices for the further embalming of Jesus' body, tarried at the home of Joseph of Arimathea.

188:3.4 We are not able fully to explain just what happened to Jesus of Nazareth during this period of a day and a half when he was supposed to be resting in Joseph's new tomb. Apparently he died the same natural death on the cross as would any other mortal in the same circumstances. We heard him say, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." We do not fully understand the meaning of such a statement inasmuch as his Thought Adjuster had long since been personalized and so maintained an existence apart from Jesus' mortal being. The Master's Personalized Adjuster could in no sense be affected by his physical death on the cross. That which Jesus put in the Father's hands for the time being must have been the spirit counterpart of the Adjuster's early work in spiritizing the mortal mind so as to provide for the transfer of the transcript of the human experience to the mansion worlds. There must have been some spiritual reality in the experience of Jesus which was analogous to the spirit nature, or soul, of the faith-growing mortals of the spheres. But this is merely our opinion—we do not really know what Jesus commended to his Father.

188:3.5 We know that the physical form of the Master rested there in Joseph's tomb until about three o'clock Sunday morning, but we are wholly uncertain regarding the status of the personality of Jesus during that period of thirty-six hours. We have sometimes dared to explain these things to ourselves somewhat as follows:

188:3.6 1. The Creator consciousness of Michael must have been at large and wholly free from its associated mortal mind of the physical incarnation.

188:3.7 2. The former Thought Adjuster of Jesus we know to have been present on earth during this period and in personal command of the assembled celestial hosts.

188:3.8 3. The acquired spirit identity of the man of Nazareth which was built up during his lifetime in the flesh, first, by the direct efforts of his Thought Adjuster, and later, by his own perfect adjustment between the physical necessities and the spiritual requirements of the ideal mortal existence, as it was effected by his never-ceasing choice of the Father's will, must have been consigned to the custody of the Paradise Father. Whether or not this spirit reality returned to become a part of the resurrected personality, we do not know, but we believe it did. But there are those in the universe who hold that this soul-identity of Jesus now reposes in

[No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).]

the "bosom of the Father,"

[Compare 55:10.9-11.]

to be subsequently released for leadership of the Nebadon Corps of the Finality in their undisclosed destiny in connection with the uncreated universes of the unorganized realms of outer space.

188:3.9 4. We think the human or mortal consciousness of Jesus slept during these thirty-six hours. We have reason to believe that the human Jesus knew nothing of what transpired in the universe during this period. To the mortal consciousness there appeared no lapse of time; the resurrection of life followed the sleep of death as of the same instant.

188:3.10 And this is about all we can place on record regarding the status of Jesus during this period of the tomb. There are a number of correlated facts to which we can allude, although we are hardly competent to undertake their interpretation.

188:3.11 In the vast court of the resurrection halls of the first mansion world of Satania, there may now be observed a magnificent material-morontia structure known as the “Michael Memorial,” now bearing the seal of Gabriel. This memorial was created shortly after Michael departed from this world, and it bears this inscription: “In commemoration of the mortal transit of Jesus of Nazareth on Urantia.”

188:3.12 There are records extant which show that during this period the supreme council of Salvington, numbering one hundred, held an executive meeting on Urantia under the presidency of Gabriel. There are also records showing that the Ancients of Days of Uversa communicated with Michael regarding the status of the universe of Nebadon during this time.

188:3.13 We know that at least one message passed between Michael and Immanuel on Salvington while the Master’s body lay in the tomb.

188:3.14 There is good reason for believing that some personality sat in the seat of Caligastia in the system council of the Planetary Princes on Jerusem which convened while the body of Jesus rested in the tomb.

188:3.15 The records of Edentia indicate that the Constellation Father of Norlatiadek was on Urantia, and that he received instructions from Michael during this time of the tomb.

188:3.16 And there is much other evidence which suggests that not all of the personality of Jesus was asleep and unconscious during this time of apparent physical death.

4. MEANING OF THE DEATH ON THE CROSS

188:4.1 Although Jesus did not die this death on the cross to atone for the racial guilt of mortal man nor to provide some sort of effective approach to an otherwise offended and unforgiving God; even though the Son of Man did not offer himself as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God and to open the way for sinful man to obtain salvation; notwithstanding that these ideas of atonement and propitiation are erroneous, nonetheless, there are significances attached to this death of Jesus on the cross which should not be overlooked. It is a fact that Urantia has become known among other neighboring inhabited planets as the "World of the Cross."

188:4.2 Jesus desired to live a full mortal life in the flesh on Urantia. Death is, ordinarily, a part of life. Death is the last act in the mortal drama.

VIII: THE ATONEMENT (Baillie 150)

I. Introductory (Baillie 150)

[Compare B 150.]

[T]he type of doctrine of atonement which prevailed in the Western Church ... came, during the Middle Ages, to be definitely repudiated by all the Church's most responsible spokesmen, so that it is not now necessary to argue against it. This was what is known as the 'ransom theory,' its interpretation of the Christian redemption being that the death and three-days' descent into hell of Jesus Christ the Son of God was a ransom paid to the devil for the release from hell of mankind, which, through the sin of Adam, had become his inalienable property (B 151).

For the thought of Christ's death as the payment of a ransom to the devil, Anselm substituted the thought of it as the payment of a debt to God; but the lapse of another eight centuries has made this change, vitally significant as it undoubtedly was, seem almost a small thing in comparison with the large area of doctrine which the two theories held in common (B 152).

In your well-meant efforts to escape the superstitious errors of the false interpretation of the meaning of the death on the cross, you should be careful not to make the great mistake of failing to perceive the true significance and the genuine import of the Master's death.

188:4.3 Mortal man was never the property of the archdeceivers.

Jesus did not die to ransom man from the clutch of the apostate rulers and fallen princes of the spheres.

The Father in heaven never conceived of such crass injustice as damning a mortal soul because of the evil-doing of his ancestors.

Neither was the Master's death on the cross a sacrifice which consisted in an effort to pay God a debt which the race of mankind had come to owe him.

188:4.4 Before Jesus lived on earth, you might possibly have been justified in believing in such a God, but not since the Master lived and died among your fellow mortals.

II. The traditional view sketched (Baillie 153)

[contd] Setting out from the proposition that “God upholds nothing more **justly** than He doth the honour of His own **dignity**,” Anselm begins by pointing out that God cannot do this unless He sees to it *either* that all debts owed to Him should be duly paid *or*, if they fail to be paid, that the debtors should be duly punished.

Moses taught the **dignity** and **justice** of a Creator God;

but Jesus portrayed the love and mercy of a heavenly Father.

188:4.5 The animal nature—the tendency toward evil-doing—may be **hereditary**, but sin is not transmitted from parent to child.

He then proceeds to argue that since “the whole **will of a rational creature** ought to be subject to the **will of God**,” obedience to God’s will is “a debt which angels and men owe to God . . . and everyone who does not pay it does **sin**.”

Sin is the act of conscious and deliberate **rebellion** against the **Father’s will** and the Sons’ laws by an individual **will creature**.

All such disobedience must therefore be punished.... But now “all have sinned”; each man has not only sinned for himself but is already implicated by **heredity** in the guilt of Adam’s transgression; and so the whole human race must suffer an eternal banishment to hell, unless something can be done to repay the debt it owes. [Etc.] (B 153-54)

188:4.6 Jesus lived and died for a whole universe, not just for the races of this one world. While the mortals of the realms had salvation even before Jesus lived and died on Urantia, it is nevertheless a fact that his bestowal on this world greatly illuminated the way of salvation; his death did much to make forever plain the certainty of mortal survival after death in the flesh.

188:4.7 Though it is hardly proper to speak of Jesus as a sacrificer, a ransomer, or a redeemer, it is wholly correct to refer to him as a *savior*. He forever made the way of salvation (survival) more clear and certain; he did better and more surely show the way of salvation for all the mortals of all the worlds of the universe of Nebadon.

III. The difficulties we find in it (Baillie 156)

First, and casting its sinister shadow over everything else, there is Anselm's view of God as being in His most ultimate nature, not a loving father,

but a monarch and taskmaster,

whose first concern is for His own dignity and prestige ... (B 156).

188:4.8 When once you grasp the idea of God as

a true and loving Father,

the only concept which Jesus ever taught,

you must forthwith, in all consistency, utterly abandon all those primitive notions about God as

an offended monarch, a stern and all-powerful ruler

whose chief delight

is to detect his subjects in wrongdoing and to see that they are adequately punished,

Yet, as Dean Rashdall rightly says, “A God who really thought that His honour was increased by millions of men suffering eternal torments, or that it was a satisfactory compensation to Himself that in lieu thereof an innocent God-man should **suffer** upon the cross, would not be the God whom Anselm in his heart of hearts really worshipped” (*The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, p. 356) (B 157, fn 1).

Second, there is the fact, following from this, that when the **love of God** is introduced, it appears as a **secondary** element in His nature, which is in conflict with His justice or desire for honour.

Third, there is the tendency which is subtly present throughout, and which is no doubt closely bound up with the two points already mentioned, to make **one’s own salvation**,

rather than the **service of one’s fellows**, the object of first importance for our thoughts.

unless some being almost equal to himself should volunteer to **suffer** for them, to die as a substitute and in their stead.

The whole idea of ransom and atonement is incompatible with the concept of God as it was taught and exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth.

The infinite **love of God** is not **secondary** to anything in the divine nature.

188:4.9 All this concept of atonement and sacrificial salvation is rooted and grounded in selfishness. Jesus taught that *service* to one’s fellows is the highest concept of the brotherhood of spirit believers. Salvation should be taken for granted by those who believe in the fatherhood of God.

The believer’s chief concern should not be the selfish desire for **personal salvation**

but rather the unselfish urge to love and, therefore, **serve one’s fellows** even as Jesus loved and served mortal men.

Fourth, there is the tendency to be more troubled about the future punishment of sin

than about the present estrangement from God which it entails.

Fifth, there is the whole conception of punishment as inflicted by God in retributive anger and in spite of His love for us, as against the higher conception that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” and that, if we are punished, it is because God dealeth with us “as with sons” (B 157-58).

Eighth, ... an act of substitution of one for many and of guiltless for guilty which, however beautiful it may be when regarded as an act of love, cannot be held to satisfy the demands of strict justice in the sense necessary for Anselm’s theory (B 158-59).

Tenth, there is the fact that what is here held to be effective for our redemption is not what direct experience proclaims it to be, namely the spirit in which Jesus faced His death, but is rather the mere fact that He was slain.

188:4.10 Neither do genuine believers trouble themselves so much about the future punishment of sin.

The real believer is only concerned about present separation from God.

True, wise fathers may chasten their sons, but they do all this in love and for corrective purposes.

They do not punish in anger, neither do they chastise in retribution.

188:4.11 Even if God were the stern and legal monarch of a universe in which justice ruled supreme, he certainly would not be satisfied with

the childish scheme of substituting an innocent sufferer for a guilty offender.

188:4.12 The great thing about the death of Jesus, as it is related to the enrichment of human experience and the enlargement of the way of salvation,

is not the fact of his death but rather the superb manner and the matchless spirit in which he met death.

Eleventh, there is the fact, as troublesome to our minds as any I have mentioned, that the way by which the love of God is here allowed to be effective for the forgiveness of wrongs committed against Him seems to bear no relation to the way in which our human love is often effective for the forgiveness of wrongs committed against ourselves. The air of **unreality**, and of remoteness from direct spiritual experience, which is thus given to Anselm's theory

188:4.13 This entire idea of the ransom of the atonement places salvation upon a plane of **unreality**; such a concept is purely philosophic.

Human salvation is *real*; it is based on two realities which may be grasped by the creature's faith and thereby become incorporated into individual human experience: the fact of the fatherhood of God and its correlated truth, the brotherhood of man.

It is true, after all, that you are to be

would have been avoided, had he brought his mind to bear more fixedly on the saying, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (B 159-60).

"forgiven your debts, even as you forgive your debtors."

5. LESSONS FROM THE CROSS

IV. The great truths embedded in it (Baillie 160)

188:5.1 The cross of Jesus portrays the full measure of

(i) Regarded from our human end, the foundation of the whole tradition of Christianity as a religion of redemption lies (as we need hardly again remind ourselves) in the love of the Man of Nazareth for the **lost sheep of His native land** (B 161).

the supreme devotion of the true shepherd for even the **unworthy members of his flock**.

It forever places all relations between God and man upon the family basis. God is the Father; man is his son. Love, the love of a father for his son, becomes the central truth in the universe relations of Creator and creature—not the justice of a king which seeks satisfaction in the sufferings and punishment of the evil-doing subject.

188:5.2 The cross forever shows that the attitude of Jesus toward sinners was

The Pharisees thought that there were only two attitudes to take to sinners—**condemnation** and **condonation**.

It was the great discovery of Jesus that there was another—redemption (B 161).

[contd] How then did Jesus succeed in redeeming them? How did He **win men back to goodness**? (B 161)

He won them through the sheer power of His own pure love to **awaken an answering love in their hearts**.

Now in the love which Jesus thus brought to bear on sin we can distinguish two aspects. *First* it appears as a love which, by the power of its own superior loveliness, **swallows up** wrongs already committed (B 161).

neither **condemnation** nor **condonation**,

but rather eternal and loving salvation.

Jesus is truly a savior in the sense that his life and death do

win men over to goodness and righteous survival.

Jesus loves men so much that

his love **awakens the response of love in the human heart**.

Love is truly contagious and eternally creative.

Jesus' death on the cross exemplifies

a love which is sufficiently strong and divine to forgive sin and **swallow up** all evil-doing.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 188

The discovery so richly embodied in the life and teaching of Jesus is that there is a higher kind of goodness than justice,

Jesus disclosed to this world a higher quality of righteousness than justice—

and that this higher kind of goodness does not merely set itself over against wrongs that have been committed against it

mere technical right and wrong.

Divine love does not merely forgive wrongs;

but swallows them up into itself. This higher kind of goodness is love, and this first exercise of love is what we mean by forgiveness.

it absorbs and actually destroys them.

The forgiveness of love utterly transcends the forgiveness of mercy. Mercy sets the guilt of evil-doing to one side; but love destroys forever the sin and all weakness resulting therefrom.

Jesus brought a new method of living to Urantia.

It is undoubtedly this better way of facing evil that is the most remarkable and original feature of our Lord's conduct of His life—how it was His practice to “resist not evil” but to forgive it “until seventy times seven” and “when He was reviled” to “revile not again.”

He taught us not to resist evil

but to find through him a goodness which effectually destroys evil.

Yet no attentive observer could suppose that this forgiveness is mere condonation.

The forgiveness of Jesus is not condonation;

it is salvation from condemnation.

It does not amount merely to saying lightly about the wrong which has been done “It does not matter” or “let by-gones be by-gones”.

It amounts not to less but to more than that; it amounts to *making* by-gones be by-gones and even, in some true sense, to *making* the wrong not matter (B 162).

It is this ability which love has, not merely to stand opposed to evil, but in a real sense to *destroy* it, that makes it the strongest thing in the world (B 163).

[contd] But the *love of Jesus was not satisfied* when it had cast the mantle of its forgetfulness over the sins of a man’s past; it was not satisfied until it had met the problem of the man’s future too.

And so we come to the *second* exercise to which the love of Jesus was always put—the exercise of *redemption*.

When our Lord found a man in the bonds of sin, the deepest feeling aroused in His soul was, quite apparently, not anger, not blame, not a desire to punish, not a scandalized shrinking, not a comfortable sense of His own moral superiority, but an ache to redeem. He must, by the countervailing *power of His love*, *break the hold which sin has* over the man’s will. He must get the man back for goodness and for God.

Salvation does not slight wrongs;

it makes them right.

True love does not compromise nor condone hate; it *destroys* it.

The *love of Jesus is never satisfied* with mere forgiveness.

The Master’s love implies rehabilitation, eternal survival.

It is altogether proper to speak of salvation as *redemption* if you mean this eternal rehabilitation.

188:5.3 Jesus, by the *power of his personal love* for men, could *break the hold of sin* and evil.

He thereby set men free to choose better ways of living.

But now it is to be noticed that this second exercise of love is not independent of the former. For it is precisely the miracle of forgiveness that has in it the power to redeem. It is the turning of the other cheek that wins the sinner's heart. It is the transference of his attention from his own sin to the love wherewith it has been met that lifts him from his despair and gives him heart to make a new beginning. It is the triumph over the past that makes possible a better future.

It is his absorption in the loveliness of love that kills the power of sin in his soul (B 164).

But what now, it may be asked, of the particular redemptive efficacy that has been ascribed to our Lord's death on the cross? The answer is, surely, that we have here to do, not with any new kind of efficacy, but with the culminating embodiment of the very same efficacy of which we have been speaking. "It is a mistake," says the Sadhu Sundar Singh, "to think of the suffering of Christ as being confined to the Crucifixion."

Christ was thirty-three years upon the Cross."

So the final passion of Christ exercised a redeeming influence on the lives of the men about Him just because it was the supreme expression of His love (B 165).

Jesus portrayed a deliverance from the past which in itself promised a triumph for the future.

Forgiveness thus provided salvation.

The beauty of divine love, once fully admitted to the human heart, forever destroys the charm of sin and the power of evil.

188:5.4 The sufferings of Jesus were not confined to the crucifixion.

In reality, Jesus of Nazareth spent upward of twenty-five years on the cross of a real and intense mortal existence.

The real value of the cross consists in the fact that

it was the supreme and final expression of his love, the completed revelation of his mercy.

188:5.5 On millions of inhabited worlds, tens of trillions of evolving creatures

And we may remember how once George Tyrrell wrote, “Again and again I have been tempted to give up the struggle,

who may have been tempted to give up the moral struggle

and abandon the good fight of faith,

but always the figure of that strange man hanging on the cross sends me back to my work again” (B 166).

have taken one more look at Jesus on the cross and then have forged on ahead,

inspired by the sight of God’s laying down his incarnate life in devotion to the unselfish service of man.

Christ’s death would long ago have been forgotten by the world, if He had died unforgiving, if the saying “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” had not summed up the spirit in which He faced His slayers—

188:5.6 The triumph of the death on the cross is all summed up in the spirit of Jesus’ attitude toward those who assailed him.

He made the cross an eternal symbol of the triumph of love over hate and the victory of truth over evil when he prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

That devotion of love was contagious throughout a vast universe; the disciples caught it from their Master.

The very first teacher of his gospel who was called upon to lay down his life in this service, said, as they stoned him to death,

just as St. Stephen’s death would have been forgotten if he had not prayed “Lay not this sin to their charge” (B 166).

“Lay not this sin to their charge.”

188:5.7 The cross makes a supreme appeal to the best in man because it discloses one who was willing to lay down his life in the service of his fellow men.

[“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

But Jesus Christ laid down His life for his enemies (Dwight L. Moody, *The Way to God and How to Find It* [1884, 1912], p. 15).]

Greater love no man can have than this: that he would be willing to lay down his life for his friends—

and Jesus had such a love that he was willing to lay down his life for his enemies,

a love greater than any which had hitherto been known on earth.

188:5.8 On other worlds, as well as on Urantia, this sublime spectacle of the death of the human Jesus on the cross of Golgotha has stirred the emotions of mortals, while it has aroused the highest devotion of the angels.

188:5.9 The cross is that high symbol of sacred service, the devotion of one’s life to the welfare and salvation of one’s fellows. The cross is not the symbol of the sacrifice of the innocent Son of God in the place of guilty sinners and in order to appease the wrath of an offended God, but it does stand forever, on earth and throughout a vast universe, as a sacred symbol of the good bestowing themselves upon the evil and thereby saving them by this very devotion of love. The cross does stand as the token of the highest form of unselfish service, the supreme devotion of the full bestowal of a righteous life in the service of wholehearted ministry, even in death, the death of the cross.

And the very sight of this great symbol of the bestowal life of Jesus

(iii) And so we are led directly to our third point—the significance of Christ’s redemptive activity towards those around Him as spurring us on to a like redemptive activity towards those around ourselves (B 170).

truly inspires all of us to want to go and do likewise.

188:5.10 When thinking men and women look upon Jesus as he offers up his life on the cross, they will hardly again permit themselves to complain at even the severest hardships of life, much less at petty harassments and their many purely fictitious grievances. His life was so glorious and his death so triumphant that we are all enticed to a willingness to share both. There is true drawing power in the whole bestowal of Michael, from the days of his youth to this overwhelming spectacle of his death on the cross.

188:5.11 Make sure, then, that when you view the cross as a revelation of God, you do not look with the eyes of the primitive man nor with the viewpoint of the later barbarian, both of whom regarded God as a relentless Sovereign of stern justice and rigid law-enforcement. Rather, make sure that you see in the cross the final manifestation of the love and devotion of Jesus to his life mission of bestowal upon the mortal races of his vast universe.

See in the death of the Son of Man the climax of the unfolding of

(iv) ... And it is this, surely, which is the deepest meaning of the doctrine of atonement—not the love of Christ for the people of Galilee in the brief days of His sojourning with them, nor the love that we ought to have for our brothers to-day, but the love which our Heavenly Father eternally has for us who are His sons (B 172-73).

the Father's divine love for his sons of the mortal spheres.

The cross thus portrays the devotion of willing affection and the bestowal of voluntary salvation upon those who are willing to receive such gifts and devotion. There was nothing in the cross which the Father required—only that which Jesus so willingly gave, and which he refused to avoid.

188:5.12 If man cannot otherwise appreciate Jesus and understand the meaning of his bestowal on earth, he can at least comprehend the fellowship of his mortal sufferings. No man can ever fear that the Creator does not know the nature or extent of his temporal afflictions.

[Compare: I cannot understand the view taken by Professor Dinsmore of Yale in his notable and influential volume, *Atonement in Literature and Life* (1906), that "reconciliation is a larger question than forgiveness." ... If forgiveness is not experienced as a sense of reconciliation, then how is it experienced? (B 179, fn)]

188:5.13 We know that the death on the cross was not to effect man's reconciliation to God

but to stimulate man's *realization* of the Father's eternal love and his Son's unending mercy, and to broadcast these universal truths to a whole universe.

1. *Compare*: [Nicodemus] merely raised a point of order, asking whether it were legal to condemn a man unheard. Did his colleagues suspect his secret inclination? (Smith1 338)
2. According to Edersheim (E2 316-17) poorer Jews and strangers were buried in “common burying-places” or cemeteries. Executed criminals were buried elsewhere. The burial ended by casting earth on the grave.