

**Paper 188 — The Time of the Tomb**  
**Sections 4 and 5 (“Meaning of the Death on the Cross” and “Lessons from the Cross”)**

© 2011 Matthew Block

*This chart is revision of the one posted on June 22, 2011.*

**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.)

**Source for 188:4-5**

- (1) John **Baillie**, M.A., D.Litt., *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1929)

Matthew Block  
11 December 2011

Work-in-progress Version 22 juni 2011  
© 2011, 2013 Matthew Block  
*Revised 11 December 2011*  
*Second Revision 6 Oct. 2013*

---

---

## **PAPER 188 — THE TIME OF THE TOMB**

---

---

### **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.]

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.

[T]here is no 'orthodox' doctrine of atonement. Indeed the type of doctrine of atonement which prevailed in the Western Church throughout the centuries when the doctrine of incarnation was being given its final definition by the councils is one whose characteristic features 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).

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, though these are not presented as bearing any necessary relation to the proper good of His creatures (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

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, footnote 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.

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

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*, there is the difficulty that even in that one case it is allowed to be operative only by means of a legal artifice—

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.

188:4.13 This entire idea of the ransom of the atonement places salvation

*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

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 the supreme devotion of the true shepherd

(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).

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 neither

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

condemnation nor condonation,

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

but rather eternal and loving salvation.

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

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

win men over to goodness and righteous survival.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 188

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

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

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).

and swallow up all evil-doing.

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—

mere technical right and wrong.

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

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.”

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

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.

He taught us not to resist evil

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

The forgiveness of Jesus is not condonation;

it is salvation from condemnation.

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.

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.

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 give him heart to make a new beginning. It is the triumph over the past that makes possible a better future.

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

Forgiveness thus provided salvation.

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

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

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).

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

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

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 who may

have been tempted to give up the moral struggle

and abandon the good fight of faith,

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.

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,

"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 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.

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—

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

["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).]

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 truly

(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).

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.

[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, footnote)]

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.