

A word of explanation is in order concerning the Philippians passage. Some see no example of Christ here at all.⁴ But the Lord's death does seem to be used here as an example. I suggest that the exemplary theme of Christ's work functions in two ways in this passage. It is an example of humility (linked with the preceding context, Phil 2:1-4), and it is an example of obedience (in relation to the verses which follow).

Several conclusions may be drawn from this study. The sheer number of NT passages which present an exemplary view of the work of Christ is significant. It suggests that some portions of the Church have neglected a significant NT motif. It proves wrong such statements as the following: "an exemplary theory of atonement takes from the Cross its objective and saving character."⁵ For the writers of the NT the exemplary theme did not detract from the Cross. The Cross certainly had objective force in their eyes; and yet they witness to a subjective view of Christ's work at the same time. Proper methodology would dictate going to the NT to see what atonement concepts were deemed proper by the apostles.

In every exemplarist passage believers in Christ are addressed; not one is directed to the unsaved. Thus the context is always the Christian life. In none of the ten passages was one's following the Lord's example presented as the way to obtain the forgiveness of sins. The *exemplum Christi* always occurred in a context of sanctification rather than that of justification. The idea of following Jesus' example as a way to salvation (as seen in R. S. Franks's work *The Atonement*) has no biblical basis.⁶

In many of the exemplarist passages there is language which speaks of the saving efficacy of the cross. Redemption came easily to the NT writers' minds when they wrote of the Lord's death. In Eph 5:1-2 (NASB) after Paul tells his readers to "be imitators of God and walk in love just as Christ also loved you" he goes on to say, "and gave Himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

1 John 4:9 speaks of God manifesting his love towards us and in v11 John exhorts his readers, "Beloved if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (NASB). In between he tells us how God has shown His love for us: in sending "His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10 NASB)

The classic exemplarist passage is 1 Pet 2: 21-25. Here too Peter, after portraying Christ as an example of bearing up patiently under unjust suffering, also speaks in redemptive terms: "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Pet 2:24 NASB)

Surely here is a rich source for Christian preaching and teaching which has been too long neglected in evangelical circles. We strongly affirm with the biblical writers that Christ is first of all Savior. Yet He is secondly Example by the witness of the same NT writers. We dare not neglect the Savior's example. The exemplary theme of the work of Christ should feature more prominently in our exposition of Sacred Scripture.