

in their teaching regarding the significance of the death of Christ as is John's Gospel and the statements of the apostle in his epistles. For example, what can be the significance of "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matth. 20:28), unless it be to the sacrificial death of Christ as the ransom for sin? The apostolic interpretation of the death of Jesus as necessary, vicarious, and propitiatory was recorded chronologically long before the record of the Gospel. This interpretation therefore of the death of Jesus is not a later addition, but is the earliest interpretation we have.

In A. D. 53, that is, twenty years after the crucifixion, Paul writes:

"For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. 5: 6-10).

To the Corinthian church he writes:

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, therefore all died;"

And again,

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself * * * him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him."