

*The following is part of a letter written by Bro. Rene Growcott to
Bro. Roy Styles on April 2, 1980*

I tend to shy away from the expression "offering for sin nature" for several reasons, of which some are--

1. It connotes Andrewism to many, or rather, today, it connotes Unamendedism in general: that which Dick is most anxious to avoid. It's a point which he would feel he had to fight inch-by-inch.
2. It has the tendency of leading the mind into ritual rather than reality, just as if "offering for sin nature" is some magic way of putting things right. This I feel is its major danger. Instead of "offering for sin nature," I would rather say "Sin nature is the root of, and an inseparable part of, the problem that Christ's life-and-death offering solved, of the barrier that that offering removed, of the condition that that offering corrected, of the uncleanness that that offering cleansed." We have to have "catch-phrases" to express involved ideas, but we must not let the phrase displace the idea, and become a mere ritualistic formula.

I believe we must keep coming back to the preparation Christ did in and to himself first (I avoid "for" here as to some misleadingly implying motive)--the preparation Christ did to himself so that he could then be the Savior of mankind. This is not separating him from us. ~~It is putting the steps of the work (which was all "for us") in~~ chronological order: "First for himself, and then for the people." Meaning:

First to and upon and within himself, for the purpose of being able to redeem the people. Am I here suggesting that the sacrificial part was exclusively for himself, and the subsequent mediatorial part for the people? No. Very much No. Because the verse is speaking of the sacrifice itself all thru.

The shed blood purifies him first in God's justice and righteousness, and to the honor and establishment and declaration of God's holiness and majesty. And because it has thus purified him, and has fulfilled and manifested the requirements of God's holiness, therefore it is able to purify us in God's mercy and forgiveness and long-suffering. Overall, in both aspects, the underlying element is God's love. And it's all the same sacrifice, but there is an order-- "Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's . . ."

Because the whole transaction is the supreme manifestation of God's love, I prefer to see the crucifixion as saying, "This is the medicine needed for your cure" rather than "This is the penalty deserved as your punishment."

God in love is calling to pitiful hopeless ignorant sinners. He's not concerned with punishment, much less with torture. The whole approach is beneficent and therapeutic. Of course man must recognize that his life is forfeit because of sin, that he has no standing, that all is of God's mercy.

God did not "punish" Job, nor demonstrate any punishment thru him. He said in effect: "I have a great work for this wonderful man. He is going to demonstrate the power and value and beauty of faith and love in the face of every form of affliction. It is for My glory, and his ultimate benefit and honor. It is necessary to demonstrate to skepticism and small-minded, calculating selfishness and meanness the beauty and power and incomparable superiority of Faith and Love: to establish a principle, and to provide an eternal example."

I believe the sacrifice of Christ is very similar, but much higher and deeper and more vital. It was the once-for-all breaking the way from death to life.

3. It tends to artificially separate the Sin Nature from Sin, as: "We need an offering for our sins, AND for our sin nature." Rather: "We need something to deliver us from Sin in its totality: both its impulses and the evil that inevitably flows from those impulses." True, our personal relationship and responsibility comes into the picture exclusively in relation to the actions, the fruits. Those, we have to confront and attack right now. The nature we cannot do anything about. It will be taken care of for us, if worthy, at the end. But really, in confronting the sins, we are confronting the nature: repudiating it as a master, binding it, subduing it, in a figure, crucifying it and putting it to death ("mortifying" it).

Sin and sin nature are not separated in Christ. It is still the same unity of Root and Fruit. But in his case there just isn't any Fruit. It's just barren, totally constrained Root with no Fruit at all. But this is not reached by separation, but by reduction and elimination: the unity of the concept remains.

("Elimination" is not an ideal word, because it tends to imply that something had been there, but had been taken away. I do not of course mean to imply this as to Christ. The Root is held sterile and impotent, perfectly, and right from the beginning).

I believe the essence of the matter is 1) to keep Christ and his people as one unit: Christ and the Race as one unit, but to see the order and development of the work of redemption: All "for" the people, but first in himself, and then in the people. And 2) to keep the concept of the Sin Root and the Sin Fruit as one unit, while recognizing the fact that the first can exist without the second (and did in Christ) without "separating" them as a concept. It's just the difference between a tree bearing fruit and a tree held totally dormant. We can see this in nature: temperature, climate, season can hold a tree dormant. But bearing fruit or dormant, it is exactly the same tree. And if it is an evil tree, then the tree itself is the main basic problem, tho the fruit may be the immediate practical problem.

Personal sins: I believe my concept of, and consciousness of, sin is wider than most: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Whenever we are not totally and perfectly in harmony with God in thought and action--consciously aware of God and perfectly tuned to God--we are sinning, for it is the flesh. We must be constantly aware of our falling short of perfection, constantly striving toward perfection, constantly being re-washed in the blood of the Lamb. It's an endless battle and continuous process, right to the moment of death.