

# The Racial Theory of Our Lord's Redemptive Work

by Olin Alfred Curtis

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*The sermon presents a racial theory of redemption, arguing that God's primary purpose is to obtain a race of holy persons through the atonement of Christ.*

**Scripture:** Romans 4:25, Romans 8:34, Revelation 21:3

**Topics:** "Atonement Theory", "Redemptive Work"

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## Description

Olin Alfred Curtis delves into the intricate theories of atonement, expressing a deep dissatisfaction with existing theories and proposing a new 'racial theory' that emphasizes the importance of understanding the redemptive work of Jesus Christ in the context of building a new race of holy individuals. He highlights the necessity of atonement as an absolute requirement rooted in God's holiness and moral concern, culminating in the death of Christ as a racial event bearing the penalty for human sin. Curtis explores the dynamic center of the new race, focusing on the unique role of Jesus Christ as the racial center and the significance of his suffering in establishing a new redeemed humanity.

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## Transcript

It may be helpful, as an introduction, to indicate the steps by which this racial theory was reached.

1. For twelve years I had a double attitude toward the three great historic theories of the atonement: On the one side, I was sure that they all were alike untrue to both the biblical data and the deepest Christian feeling. On the other side, I was just as sure that every one of the theories had a quality, if not a definite point, which should be preserved at any cost.
2. For six years I tried to preserve these three important qualities by the method of eclectic synthesis; but the result was so mechanical that I was at last obliged to throw it away.
3. I had become hopeless, when there suddenly came to me a vision of the full Christian meaning of the human race. This vision not only vitalized, but actually transformed, my entire theological situation. I saw not merely the atonement, but every doctrine, and the total combination of doctrine, in a new light. From that supreme hour (on one of the hills near Marburg) my one aim has been to get that racial vision into living expression.

4. My main work, after the vision, was to study the Bible more profoundly; and the consequence of this study was threefold: First, a realization of our Lord's bearing toward the one event of his bodily death. Second, a realization of the tremendous emphasis which the Bible places upon physical death as an abnormal human experience. Third, a realization that Saint Paul has in his teaching the very backbone of a racial view of our Saviour's redemptive work.

5. Then I took the old theories in hand to see how much could be saved. And, to my astonishment, I found that the three qualities which had appealed to me could be preserved by a larger treatment from the racial standpoint. The satisfaction theory required that the attribute of justice should be exchanged for holiness, and that the idea of automatic necessity should be exchanged for the idea of a personal need of structural expression. The governmental theory required that there should be a profounder conception of the moral law, making it reach into the structure of the divine nature; and that the moral government should be granted a racial goal; and that penalty should be made a means of holy movement toward the racial goal. The moral influence theory required that its conception of love should be so united to moral concern as to furnish a new atmosphere of divine holiness. If I understand the underlying intention of such men as Anselm, Grotius, and Abelard, as Hodge, Miley, and Bushnell, the racial theory has caught the soul of all the theories. And, if I understand the New Testament, the racial theory has caught not only its formal teaching, but even its inner life.

The Purpose of God in Redemption. At the very beginning we need to clear the way by answering the simple question, F, What was God's primary purpose -- what was he trying to do in redemption? There is, I am satisfied, only one final answer possible: To obtain a race of holy persons. He was not trying to get, here and yonder, a separate moral person ready to enjoy the divine glory. No, God wanted an entangled race -- a personal organism of holy men -- that was God's aim. In other words, God's purpose was the same in redemption that it had been in creation. The first plan, the ideal plan, failed because of sin; but this failure is now, in redemption, to be made over into a triumph. Out of the Adamic race, broken in organism, and doomed to destruction as a race, the work of Christ is to secure a new race completely personal, completely organic, and completely holy. Thus, the distinctive note in all we do must be racial. We do not drop the note of the moral person at all, but our outcome must be emphatically a racial redemption. This insistence is not a matter of mere words, it is the very core of the case. With this outcome in full view, a certain change of emphasis naturally takes place. The atonement itself, as a means to a large racial result, is to be treated as only one necessary feature of the entire redemptive work of our Lord. Such a connective treatment does not, in reality, minimize the doctrine of the atonement, but it does prevent the extreme and isolated emphasis which is found in theological works of a certain type.

The Dynamic Center of the New Race. It is not necessary to repeat what was said, in another discussion, concerning the racial peculiarity of the Son of man. Nor is it necessary again to affirm that the Incarnation was an abnormal event entirely due to man's sin, and in definite preparation for the atonement by the death of Christ. But what I said before was fragmentary. The Incarnation was more than a preparation for the 'atonement; it was also the provision of a dynamic center for the new race. Allow me to go back for a moment to the principle of individual supplement or complement ("The Racial Organism"). When all the saints have done their utmost to render every member of the race complete, the completion is not entirely effected. Men are made absolutely complete only through each other, and in Christ. The finishing dynamic help comes only from the racial center, and that center is our Lord. We cannot now dwell upon this wonderful point; but we need the mention of it that we may appreciate the significance of the suffering of Jesus. The experience of Jesus Christ cannot be fully understood from the standpoint of the single fact of

the atonement; to that single fact must be added the further fact that is, in all and through all, preparing himself by suffering to be the everlasting race center, the everlasting racial dynamic, the everlasting moral influence. By means of his humiliation, our Lord obtains that exhaustive human experience which perfects his racial efficiency. As the reservoir of supplement, so to speak, he has after the resurrection not only the power of God, but that sympathetic comprehension of the need of every man which could come to him only by suffering for men, with men, and as God become man.

The Absolute Necessity of Atonement. The ultimate purpose of Jesus Christ is to secure a new race of holy men; but before he can found this race he must make atonement for human sin. Is such an atonement an absolute necessity? or is it a relative expedient, either to protect moral government or to create a moral influence sufficient to move the sinner? The last two views I place together because philosophically they belong together. Practically they are not in the least alike. But philosophically they are alike; for in each theory the atonement is an expedient to produce influence, in one case an influence to act upon the saint, or upon the saint and the sinner; and in the other case an influence to act upon the sinner alone. Thus both views are essentially utilitarian. And because they are utilitarian I must regard them as superficial. The atonement for sin was an absolute necessity -- absolute in the sense that the primary demand for it is in God's own nature: is not in God merely as he is out there, in relation to man; but is in God as he is in there, without any objective relations whatever.

More definitely, my view of the necessity of atonement is just as rigid as that held in the satisfaction theory. The pure satisfactionist holds that the satisfaction of justice, by the full expression of it, is absolutely necessary in the very constitution of the Divine Being. I hold that the satisfaction of holiness, by the full expression of it, is absolutely necessary in the very constitution of the Divine Being personalized. The further question whether the self-sacrifice of the Son of God was so absolutely necessary that nothing else could have taken its place is to be answered without hesitation in the affirmative. For it is inconceivable that a method so costly would have been chosen could God have entirely expressed his holiness in any other way.

Now we can come a little closer to our pivotal contention. With sin a fact, the situation is abnormal, rendering the complete expression of holiness, that is, the expression of moral love, for the time impossible. In such a situation God's holiness is expressed, but it is expressed by the most tremendous emphasis upon moral concern. The love of God cannot appear without an ethical bottom firmly fixed. This emphasis upon moral concern is precisely what we find before the atonement is made. The destruction of the Adamic race by the abnormal method of death is the expression of God's moral concern, or of his eternal hatred of sin. In bodily death, considered alone, God does not say, "I love men" -- he says only, "I hate sin."

The pivotal point can now be given. It is this: In establishing a new race, in a situation still abnormal with sin, the holiness of God must be as fully expressed in moral concern as it was expressed by the destruction of the old race. There must be complete ethical continuity between the two racial events. Not one step can be taken toward the final expression of moral love until there is as much hatred of sin manifested as was manifested before'. This is only saying that in all situations God must be true to the law of holiness.

The Death of Christ. On the surface we have the physical fact of our Lord's death. In this bodily death he bore the precise racial penalty. Many contend that there could be nothing penal in the death of Jesus simply because he was not guilty. "Nor was Jesus punished for man's sin, he suffered for it. He could not

be punished, for he was not guilty." Such a contention is properly made; but it lacks in discrimination, and it also lacks in any full understanding of the apostle Paul. Jesus Christ was not personally a sinner, and was not personally punished; that is certain. But, on the other hand, his suffering was not ordinary individual suffering>t was official, representative suffering. He suffered, as the Race-Man, for the whole race. He carried the race in his consciousness. Thus, Christ's death is a racial event from the double fact that he bears the racial penalty against the old race and that he is the racial center of the new race. And whether we consider the dying Saviour a sinner or not, depends entirely upon our point of view. From the Arminian standpoint of personal sin, he surely was not a sinner. Nor was he a sinner from the standpoint of depravity. But from the racial standpoint he was a sinner, because he stood for the race, and allowed himself to be shut into its category, and actually bore the racial penalty, actually died, and was broken off from the race like any son of Adam. It matters not so much about the words you use, though, if you only catch and firmly hold the idea that our Lord's death was a racial event through and through.

But this surface fact of physical death has also with our Lord a personal feature involved. By death he was not only separated from men, but also thrust into personal isolation. He, like any sinner, experienced the awful loneliness of death. He, too, entered the "chamber of silence" companionless. "But Christ was too strong, too regnant in personal resources, to feel such loneliness." My reply is not merely that our Lord had all natural capacity for human feelings, and not merely that the objection implies a misunderstanding of the nature of personality -- my reply is that our Lord had, before his death, manifested an intense sensitiveness to personal loneliness: "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

With our Saviour, however, this personal isolation would not have been actual had he been able to find fellowship with his Father, but his Father had forsaken him. I dare not be ingenious and accommodating here -- I must take these words to mean that God the Father was literally absent from the consciousness of his only Son. And, further, I think that the Christian consciousness will never allow the critical mangling of the text. The utterance, just as it stands, answers to the intuitive demand of the profoundest Christian experience. A sinner saved by grace shrinks back from the awful words, but in his heart he is certain that his redemption cost all that. The Eternal Father abandoned his own Son and allowed him to pass through death all alone.

There has been in theology a long discussion as to whether this divine abandonment was real, or only apparent -- whether it shows the Father's personal attitude toward his Son, or shows a confusion of mind in the Saviour resulting from his terrible experience. But the entire discussion is on the surface. Under pressure, the two views amount practically to the same thing. The psychology of the terrible abandonment has no Christian, no redemptional import whatever. Suppose there was the mental confusion, and Jesus simply could not find his Father -- then the Father allowed that confusion; the fact of the dreadful isolation was secured in the plan for it, and so the abandonment does express the Father's attitude toward his dying Son. In such a dire situation we are unwilling to spin our fine distinction between a bearing of sufferance and 'a bearing of exertion, for both bearings express, and equally express, intention. Do you see it? Do you feel it?

Suppose (to inflame the point) that a strong man and his child are standing on the brink of a precipice. The child is confused, cannot find the father's hand, and in an instant will fall over into the abyss. The father, standing there in his power, sees everything, and yet does not reach out and grasp the child's groping hand -- the illustration is exceedingly inadequate, but it does suggest a situation where no one would be allowed to urge the difference between a bearing of sufferance and a bearing of actual exertion. The plain fact is that God the Father intended that his Son should pass through this awful experience of isolation,

and had insisted upon it in the garden. With his Son he was ever well pleased; but now his Son does not stand in his own single selfhood. His Son is the Redeemer, the representative Race-Man, standing in death for a race of sinners, and the Father's attitude is an attitude of holiness toward the entangled entirety of the atoning situation. I am, after long, shrinking hesitation, unable to escape the conclusion that the Son of God as the racial Mediator, met in the beginning of the isolation of his death the whole shock of the wrath of God against sin, that he was treated precisely as any sinner is treated. His death was more than the tearing apart of body and soul; his death had in its experience. the extreme ethical content of personal isolation.

John Calvin taught that our Saviour in his soul experienced the anguish of the damned ("\*quod diros in antma crucriatus damnati ac perditu hominis pertulerit\*"). This view is to us impossible if held, as it was held by Calvin and others, under the terms of the satisfaction theory. Nor can we hold the view as an explanation of our Lord's "descent into hell." But Calvin's primary feeling here, if not his theological insight, was profoundly Christian. Indeed, the day is sure to come when all of Calvin's deep Christian vitalities will be sharply separated from his formal contentions. John Calvin himself was much greater than his scheme of theology. I am convinced that Jesus Christ in his death actually suffered infinite anguish. Toward this conviction I was started by Calvin, but not alone by him. For a long time before reading Calvin I had been growing dissatisfied with all the little things which modern theologians are saying about the death of Christ. {It is the death of the Son of God. It must be lifted totally out of the world of humanitarian mitigation. It must be made a boundless agony in the experience of God himself. It must be made such a finality in awful self-sacrifice that no Christian man, and no saint in all eternity, can ever think of it without suffering.

But we are told that Christ, inasmuch as he had no consciousness of guilt, could not suffer even as much as one unrepentant sinner will suffer. At first this seemed to me to be a point beyond question; but a larger contact with the facts of life .has led me to doubt the point. Even among men, it is not the guilty man who suffers the most, but rather the innocent friend who loves him and wants to save him. Surely the friend cannot feel guilty himself, but he can, in love and self-sacrifice and full contact with the sinner, have something which the sinner cannot have -purity's complete realization of the condition and penalty and endless ruin of sin. This, however, is but a suggestion to prepare us to look more closely, and to appreciate more thoroughly our Lord's openness to anguish over human sin. Let us carefully note the combination of qualities and relations. As God, our Lord had a capacity constantly available for the intuitive seizure and mental comprehension of all reality and all possibility. As God become man, he was absolutely sinless and absolutely sensitive to even the faintest touch of evil. As the Race-Man, he gathered up into his consciousness the whole human race, so that mankind was almost a part of his very being. As Redeemer, he had come, with infinite love and at infinite cost, to save men from sin. And now, with this combination of qualities and relations -- divine, human, racial, and redemptional -- our Lord, without the fellowship of his Father, is by his death brought into empiric contact with the penalty and meaning of sin. Are we ourselves, with the intuitions of grace, not able, in some small degree of apprehension, to lay hold of the inner event? The Son of God, as Redeemer making atonement for sin, and as the Founder of a new race of redeemed men, will fully exhaust the possibilities of suffering, not merely the suffering possible to finite men, but even the suffering possible to the infinite God in human limitation. And so, there alone, our Lord opens his mind, his heart, his personal consciousness, to the whole inflow of the horror of sin the endless history of it, from the first choice of selfishness on, on to the eternity of hell; the boundless ocean of its isolation and desolation he allows, wave upon wave, to overwhelm his soul.

The Complete Expression of the Holiness of God. When we remember who our Lord is, the only-begotten Son of God the Father; when we realize that the Father "spared not" his own Son, but delivered him up to this awful experience in death, surely we can begin to feel the ethical intensity of the entire redemptional deed. By this sacrifice of his Son God's relentless hatred of sin is expressed as it could not be expressed by the total annihilation of a universe of sinners. The death of Christ does not, could not, express justice of any kind, or in any degree whatsoever. Never can you understand the death of Christ if you cling to that vitiating idea of justice. But the death of our Lord does express moral concern, does show that God cares tremendously about sin. It is not a single item, but the combination -- the absolute deity of our Saviour; his personal preexistence in the eternal glory of the Godhead his personal obedience in giving up that divine estate; his continued obedience even while shrinking back from the rending and isolation and divine abandonment and infinite anguish of death; the Father's exhaustless love for his only Son; the Father's profound need of his Son for full personal fellowship; and yet the Father's unremitting insistence that redemption shall be accomplished only by this measureless humiliation of his Son and sacrifice of himself -- it is this combination which steeps the whole deed with intense ethical quality. One drop of humanitarianism; one drop of unitarianism, any form of unitarianism; one drop of agnostic Ritschlianism; one drop of even vagueness as to full self-consciousness in the persons of the Trinity, and the ethical quality is almost sure to vanish instantly. In one sentence, we may say that it is the divine tenacity in holding fast to the total penal event of death at such infinite cost in self-conscious self-sacrifice -- it is this tenacity of God so expensive personally which reveals his moral concern.

This supreme revelation of bare moral concern is what we find when we consider the death of Christ out of its teleological connection, or when we consider it as merely an atonement for human sin. But the atonement itself is not an end, but a means to an end. The end is the expression of the moral love of God, or the expression of the fullness of the divine holiness in a race of redeemed men. Jesus Christ does not die to satisfy moral concern, he dies to satisfy moral concern in order that he may be the organizer of a new race. His death is an actual movement in penalty toward the racial goal. In treatment of this penal movement toward the goal, one can immediately make use of important features of the governmental theory and the moral influence theory; but these features should be torn out of their utilitarian setting of expediency. God's only aim and only method is to express all he himself is in holiness. Utility is never planned, and yet utility is necessarily involved. Every movement toward perfect manifestation of holiness is as resultant of more practical utility as every larger shining of the sun is resultant of more heat. What we need is simply God, God out, God entirely manifest in our sky. Such a manifestation means necessarily all moral potency, all moral support, all practical interests. God is not like a finite Ruler ever balancing efficiencies, ever pondering expedients. His life is one harmonious intuitional experience crowded with complex deposits of related attributes; and his one perpetual purpose is to satisfy himself by expressing all that he is. In a situation abnormal because of man's freedom and sin, such a complete divine expression may become temporarily unfeasible or impossible; in such case God's immediate aim is to move toward the complete goal by expressing his fundamental holiness in moral concern. The history of redemption, in its sweep of divine action, may be conceived in this manner: First, there is an ethical start in racial death. Second, there is an effective ethical movement in the death of Christ. Third, there is a racial start in the resurrection and ascension and session of our Lord. Fourth, there is an effective racial movement in the actual formation of the new race by the conversion of moral persons. Fifth, the holy racial goal is reached when the redeemed race, expressing the moral love of God, is completed in organism at the final resurrection of the body.

The Atonement. The atonement is precisely in the death of Christ, because it is the death of Christ which ethically meets and covers the obstacle of human sin. Thus, we may truly say that the death of Christ propitiates God, or reconciles God to mankind or is a moral satisfaction rendered unto God's holy nature. Or, we can state the matter thus: Because God is holy he hates sin. Because he hates sin, the expression of that hatred is fundamental to any expression of God whatsoever. The death of Christ is the fundamental and exhaustive expression of God's hatred of sin. But, as I have intimated in several places, the death of Christ does not satisfy God, or reconcile God, or propitiate God, as an isolated expression of the divine hatred of sin. To grant that point would, as you can readily see, imply that there was an atoning efficiency in the inauguration of racial death; for racial death also expresses God's intense hatred of sin. The death of Christ satisfies God because it is an emphasis upon moral concern unto the actual salvation of the human race as a race. The event of racial death could not satisfy God, and simply because it lacked the tremendous redemptional potencies and racial connections which belong to the death of our Lord. Racial death is a start in moral emphasis, but it has no speed, no possibility of ever touching the goal. The death of Christ is, on the contrary, a swift, urgent movement toward the actual expression of moral love in a race of redeemed men. Thus, the divine satisfaction is not in the pure moral stress of the atonement, but rather in the total content and bearing of the atonement as a potent ethical emphasis rapidly provisional for the ultimate manifestation of all God is.

#### Definition

Jesus Christ, as the representative Race-Man, endured in his death the precise racial penalty for human sin; and by the total event and experience' under that penalty so expressed God's hatred of sin as to render possible the immediate foundation and gradual formation of a new race of men which shall at last perfectly manifest the moral love of God. The atonement is exactly in the death of Christ, if regarded in this comprehensive racial way.

Founding the New Race. The resurrection of our Lord has a racial significance of much larger Christian consequence than its bearing upon the doctrine of personal immortality. Indeed, the idea of personal immortality is but a small item in the Christian conception of the future life. The racial significance of Christ's resurrection lies in two things: First, our Lord in his resurrection completed that human experience which prepared him to be the dynamic center of the new race. Second, our Lord in his resurrection obtained that "body of glory" which is the type-model for the spiritual body of every member of the new race. Thus, by our Saviour's resurrection the racial center of organism becomes a finished fact.

Saint Paul is constantly inclined to relate the resurrection of Christ to our justification. For instance, in Rom. 4.25 we read: "Who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." This fits into what I have said about the connective import of the death of Christ. "His death reaches into the resurrection to obtain its redemptive feasibility. The racial center must be finished by our Lord's resurrection before it is feasible to justify men and thus constitute them members of the redemptive organism.

The ascension of our Lord is sometimes considered as the culmination of the resurrection; but it is better to regard it as the formal historic induction into the racial office of session. All such formal historic events (the session, final judgment, etc.) are out of harmony with the present drift in theology, but they must be recognized, I believe, as real objective crises in the process of salvation. Even if the Scripture language is panoramic, it is panoramic of actual formal history. The session of our Lord is as truly outward history as is his birth or death. In the New Testament, and especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, reference is often

made to the session of our Lord; but it is Saint Paul who brings out clearly the intercessory nature of the office. His words are (Rom. 8 34): "Who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." By this I understand that Christ is become the perpetual Mediator between God and mankind. As he has redeemed the race, and is now the center and head of the redeemed race, it is through him -- he is the standpoint from which all human affairs are viewed. Before this, all was tentative and provisional; but now every human person and every human action and every human experience -all are tested squarely and completely by their relation to the person and work of Jesus Christ. The whole world is now other to God because of what Christ has done and because of what Christ is. Thus, Christ is "seated at the right hand of God," that is, exalted to the throne of divine power; thus, we are forgiven for Christ's sake; and thus, prayer is made in Christ's name.

We have, then, in the redemptive work of our Lord a' connected series of racial deeds:

1. The Incarnation, by which the Son of God becomes 'the Race-Man.
2. The Death of Christ, by which he bears the racial penalty and makes atonement for sin.
3. The Resurrection, by which our Lord founds the new race of redemption.
4. The Ascension, by which our Lord is inducted into the racial office of mediation.
5. The Session, by which our Lord is the mediatorial authority in the actual building of the new race and the final judge in determining the destiny of every human being.

Building the New Race. An atonement has been made for man's sin; the new race has been founded; and Jesus Christ is established in his mediatorial office. With all this done, there now begins the actual building of the new race, by saving men one by one through Jesus Christ. In a sense precise and full there was no Christian experience before the. ascension of our Lord; also in a sense precise and full there is now and never can be any Christian experience where there is no faith in Christ as a personal Saviour from sin. Remember, though, I say no precise and full Christian experience; I do not say religious experience; and I am not here thinking of the question of ultimate salvation. I simply mean that the direct and positive building of the new race into Christ Jesus, with all the consequent personal experience, did not begin and could not begin until all his redemptive work, all his great racial deeds, were finished. In any fitting place, I am ready and eager to make essential connection between Christianity and the most worthy religious life; but I am not willing to becloud the splendor of peculiarity which belongs only to a man's experience in Jesus Christ.

In the next doctrinal division we are thoroughly to study the new man in Christ, but even now we need to glimpse a few notable points:

1. How God can forgive a sinner. Here you will miss much of the old terminology; but with a little patience you can, I think, adjust yourselves to the racial point of view. By faith in Jesus Christ, a man does, through the work of the Holy Spirit, make entrance into the new race. The man is spiritually joined to Christ, becomes a living part of that peculiar people organized in Christ, and so is a part of that racial movement toward the glory of God. Fundamentally speaking, the atonement is the ground of forgiveness because the atonement purchased the very possibility of such racial union with Christ. But actually the sinner is forgiven as making entrance into Christ, which is precisely the same thing as making entrance into the new race. Now that the race is provided, God can forgive any man who does the full ethical task which is

his side of the act of entrance. This task is a moral faith in Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour, or in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who has made in his death an atonement for all human sin. Because of the peculiarity of our time, I must insist upon the moral quality of the faith, by which I mean that it is a, faith growing out of the profound moral experiences of conviction of sin and Christian repentance. Many a man's faith takes him to Christ, gives him a large appreciation of Christ, leads him to do countless deeds for Christ; but the man's faith has no moral quality, no driving urgency, and so it does not take him into Christ. Personal salvation is realized only in Christ Jesus. This is not rhetoric at all; we must make actual entrance into him, and must actually live in him forever. There is no other way for a sinner to be saved.

But does the faith save the sinner? Even if our answer were Yes, it would not mean that salvation comes by mere human "works," for this moral faith required, is itself a profound synergism, and would be impossible without divine contribution. But our answer to the question is No, positively, No. Faith has no redemptional quality; strictly speaking, faith is nothing but a condition, the conditional act of personal entrance. It is what one must do to enter Christ, but there is no redemption in the bare act, redemption follows the act. It is something like a man crossing the ocean. It is as a condition exceedingly important that he have faith to board the ship, but it is the ship itself which really lands him safely on the other shore.

2. "Peace with God." Often the question is asked, "How is a sinner's peace with God philosophically possible? How can he ever be satisfied with his sinful past?" First, I will say that there is a large amount of false and unwholesome teaching at this point. A sinner saved by and in Jesus Christ is never satisfied with his sinful past in the sense that he is complacent over it. To hear some men talk, you would think that they had a sort of rich rejoicing in the fact that they once were great sinners. Whatever queer thing this may be, I have no interest in discovering -- I know that it has not in it even one pulse-beat of real Christian experience. No Christian is satisfied with his sinful past; he wishes it were not there; he hates it with untold might of hatred. But this hatred is never a moral disturbance, never reaches into conscience. Why not? First of all, because God has forgiven him. But the redemptional psychology here is very profound. It is not an arbitrary divine forgiveness which gives the sinner peace, but a forgiveness based upon the death of the Son of God for his sins. As I have said in another connection: "A typical sinner is not a theologian; he has no theory of the atonement; he does not pretend to know what God requires, or what the moral law requires, or even what he himself requires for abiding peace; but he does believe that, whatever is required, by anybody or anything, the requirement is satisfied, because the person upon that cross is God the Almighty trying to save him." This, though, but leads to another question: How can this peace be kept under a constantly expanding moral ideal? The answer can be given in a word: The redeemed man lives in Christ, and his expanding moral ideal is nothing whatever but his growing conception of what Christ is and what Christ wants him to do. Thus, his life is full of effort to be more and to do more, and yet the more he struggles the deeper is his peace.

The Characteristics of the New Race. The most economical way to conclude our long discussion of our Lord's redemptive work is to gather up into definite points the characteristics of the new race. With these points before us, we can, I think, understand why the holy God is satisfied with such a race, or is satisfied with the death of his Son as rendering such a race possible.

1. The new race is, by the death of Christ, so related to the Adamic race, penally, as to express in perfect continuity God's condemnation of sin.
2. The center of the new race is the Son of God himself, with a human racial experience completed by suffering. And so the new race must forever express the awful ethical cost at which it was obtained.

3. The new race is formed in such fashion that a man can enter it only on the most rigid moral terms. It is a holy race by the very method of its formation.

4. This new race moves through history toward the goal as the one thoroughly reliable servant of the moral concern of God.

5. This new race grants to every moral person the possibility of a holy completion of himself in his brethren and in his Redeemer, and of coming to a perfect service, a perfect rest, and a perfect joy.

6. This new race will, at last, be the victorious realization of God's original design in creation.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/olin-alfred-curtis/the-racial-theory-of-our-lords-redemptive-work/>

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