

## THE INCARNATION AND ATONEMENT

## ARTICLE II

*Of the Word, or Son of God,  
Which was made very Man*

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

This Article dates from 1553 and is based on the Lutheran Confession of Augsburg, through the medium of the 13 Articles. In 1563 the words 'begotten . . . Father' were added from the Confession of Württemberg. Its object was to oppose the revival of ancient heresies on the Person of Christ by Anabaptists.

§ 1. *The Son took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin.*—The Church's teaching on the Incarnation, as on the Trinity, was gradually formulated by struggle with error. Once again her aim has always been to be faithful to all the facts, not in any way to speculate for the sake of speculation, but to guard the truth in all its fulness. From time to time explanations were put forward, most attractive from their simplicity and their harmony with popular ideas, but the Church was compelled to say 'no', because their attractiveness was gained at the cost of ignoring or explaining away certain of the facts. So the Church was driven to think out and state, in the best language that she could find, all that she understood by the Incarnation.

(a) When we turn to Scripture and study the Person of our Lord we are confronted with three main facts.

(i) Our Lord lived as true man. His contemporaries, friends and

*De Verbo, sive Filio Dei, qui  
verus homo factus est*

Filius, qui est verbum Patris, ab aeterno a Patre genitus, verus et aeternus Deus, ac Patri consubstantialis, in utero beatae virginis, ex illius substantia naturam humanam assumpsit: ita ut duae naturae, divina et humana, integre atque perfecte in unitate personae fuerint inseparabiliter junctae, ex quibus est unus Christus, verus Deus et verus homo, qui vere passus est, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, ut Patrem nobis reconciliaret, essetque hostia, non tantum pro culpa originis, verum etiam pro omnibus actualibus hominum peccatis.

enemies alike, had no doubt of His humanity. He grew, not only in body, but in mind and soul (Lk 2<sup>40</sup> and <sup>52</sup>, Heb 5<sup>7-9</sup>). He displayed human needs, hunger, thirst, weariness and the like (Mt 4<sup>2</sup>, Mk 4<sup>38</sup>, Jn 4<sup>6-7</sup>, etc.), and human emotions, anger, wonder, sorrow, sympathy, etc. (Mk 3<sup>6</sup>, 6<sup>6</sup>, 14<sup>33-34</sup>, Lk 7<sup>9</sup>, Jn 11<sup>33-34</sup>, etc.). He prayed and exhibited a true human faith in the Father (Mk 1<sup>35</sup>, 14<sup>33</sup>, Lk 9<sup>28</sup>, Jn 11<sup>41-42</sup>, 17, Heb 5<sup>7</sup>, etc.). He was tempted and experienced the trials of uncertainty (Mk 14<sup>33</sup>, etc., Mt 4<sup>1</sup>, etc., Lk 12<sup>50</sup>, Heb 2<sup>18</sup>, etc.). He won a real conquest over temptations. He displayed a true human obedience to the will of God as made known in the Law. He attended the public worship of the Synagogue and Temple and submitted to the Baptism of John (Mt 3<sup>15</sup>, Mk 1<sup>21</sup>, Lk 2<sup>42-49</sup>, etc.). He could be disappointed and disobeyed (Mk 1<sup>45</sup>, 4<sup>40</sup>, etc.). He asked questions for the sake of information and confessed to ignorance on one point at least (Mk 9<sup>21</sup>, cp. 11<sup>13</sup>, Jn 11<sup>34</sup>, Mk 13<sup>32</sup>, etc.). In short, though our Lord lived a perfect human life, perfect at each stage of its growth, still it was a human life: there was real development, real dependence upon His fellow-men, above all, real submission and self-surrender to the Father.

(ii) On the other hand, as we have seen, the impression made by our Lord on those who knew Him was of one who was more than man. He made a divine claim, and His claim was proved true by the Resurrection.

(iii) Yet, most certainly He was one Person. His life was in all ways a unity, far more so, indeed, than our own lives, which are broken and distracted by conflicting aims and desires, and by the struggle between a higher and lower self.†

(b) When the question of the true divinity of our Lord had been settled, controversy shifted to His Person. The point at issue was no longer whether He was 'of one substance with the Father'—all parties were agreed on that—but the relation between His divinity and His humanity. How could Jesus Christ be both the Eternal Son and Word of the Father, and also truly man?

(i) Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea, had been a vigorous opponent of the Arians. Possibly it was in opposition to their Christological teaching that he was led to construct his theory of the relation between the divine and human natures in Christ, which came into prominence between A.D. 370 and 380. More probably he wished to correct some current theories of the Incarnation which appeared to him either to reduce our Lord to a highly-inspired man or to introduce a dangerous duality into the Incarnate life. He held that, if the Lord's humanity were complete, we should have to suppose that He possessed two wills, one divine and infallible, the other human and essentially 'free' to sin. There could be no union between two such wills without the violation of the nature of one of them, and since the rational will is the directing principle in a person, the possession

of two wills would destroy the unity of the Incarnate. Christ therefore had no human mind (*νοῦς*), to be the seat of rational deliberation and choice; His mind and will were those of the divine Word, who took to Himself in the Incarnation only a human body and an animal soul or animating principle. The divine Word Himself was the sole mind and will of the Incarnate Christ. Only so, Apollinarius believed, could the unity of His Person and the redemptive sinlessness of His will be understood. Christ was *οὔτε ἄνθρωπος ὅλος οὔτε θεός ἀλλὰ θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπου μίξις*. The Church saw that this theory contradicted many of the facts of our Lord's earthly life.<sup>1</sup> It left no room for growth in mind or soul or for the building up of a human character. It abolished the possibility not only of sin but of temptation. Further, such a view lowers human nature by regarding it as unable to become the means of God's self-revelation. Not only does it regard the higher part of human nature as intrinsically sinful, but it leaves it unredeemed, and it is just this higher part which is most truly human, as being that which differentiates man from the animals. All that Christ assumed was the animal side of man. If, as was constantly urged against Apollinarius, 'what was not assumed was not redeemed', man's will, the ultimate seat of his sinfulness, was left unredeemed by Christ. To our modern minds the theory of Apollinarius is wholly repugnant. We know that all human consciousness, such as acts of thought, will and desire, are conditioned by functions of the body. What purpose could a body serve when there were no real processes of human thought or will to be realized through it?†

(ii) As a reaction from Apollinarianism there arose the explanation of the facts known as Nestorianism. Nestorius was Bishop of Constantinople. Whether he himself was at any time, or at all times, a 'Nestorian' is a question for ecclesiastical history. It is enough to state here that he was condemned for the views that bear his name, and that, undoubtedly, there were those who held them. The School of Antioch had come to represent theology of a marked type. This school represented what we should call to-day historical theology. Its first aim was to discover the literal and grammatical meaning of Scripture; to ask, What did the authors mean to say? In dealing with the earthly life of our Lord it started, like the Synoptic Gospels, with the human and natural elements of that life, and then went on to see the divine and supernatural shining through them. The most famous representative of this school was Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia. Approaching the problem of the Person of Christ from the human side, he laid stress, in opposition to Apollinarianism, on the complete humanity of our Lord. He taught that each of the two natures of Christ was personal. An impersonal nature was an absurdity. How

<sup>1</sup> The 'heresy of the Apollinarians' was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381. Apollinarius and one of his followers had been previously condemned at Rome in 377.

then did God indwell in Christ? The answer given was, through moral union, through unity of will. He postulated a divine agent and a human agent, united completely and yet freely. Each remained distinct and unconfused. 'We say that the person (*πρόσωπον*) of the Man was perfect, and perfect also the person of the Godhead.'<sup>1</sup> Thus, God dwelt in Jesus of Nazareth as in a temple, or as in saints or prophets. Theodore speaks of it as madness to compare the indwelling of God in Christ with His indwelling in the Saints. But it was different—ininitely different—in degree only: it was the same in kind. So he prefers to speak of the conjunction (*συνάφεια*) of the two natures in Christ, not of their union. This conjunction is compared to the union between man and wife, who are made one flesh. So the human life of Jesus Christ was the life of a man selected by God's fore-knowledge, to be taken from the mother's womb into the most intimate and indissoluble union with the divine Word. He was *ἄνθρωπος θεοφόρος*. All through His life He revealed a complete moral sympathy with the divine will, so that men could see God perfectly in Him. Through the co-operation of the divine Word with the unfaltering loyalty of His human will He advanced to the most perfect holiness, which was consummated at the Ascension. Theodore claimed thus to preserve the unity of Christ's Person and yet leave room for free moral development. Nestorius did little more than repeat his teaching. As so often happens, the controversy centred round a catchword, in this case the use of *θεοτόκος*<sup>2</sup> to denote the mother of Jesus Christ. Nestorius denied her the title on the ground that it suggested the divine nature of her Son was derived from her. His opponents defended its use as witnessing to the truth that He, whom she bore, was none other than the eternal Son of God.

Nestorius' solution has its merits. It preserves the reality of Christ's human example and sympathy. But for all his protests, it reduces our Lord to a superlatively inspired man, the chief of the saints. He is man side by side with God, not God in and through man. There is not the oneness of a single personal life, but the concord of two persons. Nestorianism is fatally inconsistent both with facts of the Gospel and of Christian experience. The Christ of Nestorius could have no right to make the unbounded personal claims for Himself that our Lord made. In the saints there is no confusion of personality between themselves and God. They are always conscious that their message is other and greater than themselves. They point men away from themselves to God. Jesus Christ drew men to Himself. The Nestorian Christ cannot rightly be worshipped: at most we can assign to him that reverence that we pay to holy men. Further, Nes-

<sup>1</sup> It is however by no means simple to determine what Theodore, and later Nestorius, meant by the term here translated 'person'.

<sup>2</sup> 'Mother of God' is not quite a fair translation of this Greek word. It means rather 'she who gave birth to Him who was God.' The emphasis in the Greek word is on the deity of the child rather than on the motherhood of Mary.

torianism undermines the whole basis of redemption; it rests content with a conception of salvation that has fallen below the level of the New Testament. Christ becomes at most an example and a teacher. But He can bestow on us no power to realize in ourselves His example. By His unique closeness of union with the divine Word He can save only Himself. He cannot impart to us a share in that union. It is just because Christ is more than a single human individual that His perfect humanity can be the source of new life to us. His death is not an act outside us, like, say, the death of Socrates or any other good man, only because it is not simply one of our fellow-men who died. What we need, and what Christ has proved Himself to be, is a redeemer, one who restores and quickens the soul from within, and one who can save from sin. Nestorius was rightly condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431.<sup>1†</sup>

(iii) At the opposite pole of thought is Monophysitism or Euty-  
chianism. The school of Alexandria had come to represent a theology in many ways opposed to that of Antioch. Their method was that of 'dogmatic' as contrasted with 'historical' theology. Like the Gospel of S. John, they started from the divine side, our Lord's pre-existence as the Word of God, and went on to regard His human life as a self-manifestation of God in time. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, had been the great opponent of Nestorius. In his anxiety to safeguard the unity of Christ's Person he used the phrase, *μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη.*<sup>2</sup> By this he meant that the Word of God in all the fulness of His divine nature had become personally Incarnate. There was only one centre of personality in Christ, namely, the personality of the Word, which gave personality to the human nature. The human nature had not a separate personality of its own. Cyril expressed this unity of the two natures in a single person by phrases such as *ἕνωσις κατ' οὐσίαν καὶ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ὅτι ἐκ δύο φύσεων εἰς.* Such language was easily misunderstood. After Cyril's death, Eutyches, an abbot at Constantinople, and a follower of Cyril, taught that our Lord was of two natures before the union between them, but after the union only of one nature. This could only be taken to mean that at the Incarnation the human nature was absorbed in the divine and did not exist in the Incarnate in its proper characteristics. The later developments of Monophysitism<sup>3</sup> showed to what lengths

<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of the Christological teaching of Theodore and Nestorius remains a disputed question. Some modern estimates would be more favourable than that given in the text above. Undoubtedly Theodore and Nestorius believed themselves to be maintaining the unity of Christ's person as well as the fulness of His two natures.

<sup>2</sup> Cyril believed the phrase to come from a writing of Athanasius. Unhappily, the writing is really a work of Apollinarius passing itself off under the name of Athanasius.

<sup>3</sup> Those later known as Monophysites were united in rejecting the formula of Chalcedon ('two natures'). Some of them merely maintained Cyril's terminology ('one nature') and were as orthodox in the substance of their teaching as he was; others developed views of our Lord's humanity which denied it all forms of corruptibility and passibility (See Tixeront, vol. iii, c. iv.)

this theory might go in the direction of 'docetism'. Our Lord's humanity is reduced to a mere outward appearance, the veil of His divine glory. All the facts of our Lord's earthly life that make Apollinarianism impossible, make Eutychnianism impossible.

(c) The teaching of Eutyches won a temporary triumph at the Robber Council of Ephesus (449), but the decision was finally reversed at the Council of Chalcedon (451). There a dogmatic epistle from Leo, Bishop of Rome, known as the 'tome of Leo', was read and recognized as the expression of orthodoxy. Eutyches was in it directly refuted, Nestorius indirectly. Leo was a Western, with all the Western impatience of philosophical subtleties and disputes about the precise difference between 'nature' and 'person'. He dealt with the whole question from a practical point of view. All that he was concerned to secure was a full recognition, both of the true divinity and true humanity of our Lord. As a pastor, he was quite clear that what men needed was a mediator between God and man, who Himself remained both. The influence of Leo was ultimately decisive, and the witness of the Council of Chalcedon to the Church's faith was set forth in the following definition:

'Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all, with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and the same truly man, of a rational soul and body, of one substance with the Father according to His Godhead and of one substance with us according to His Manhood, in all things like to us except sin, begotten from the Father before the ages according to His Godhead and in the last days born of Mary the virgin, the *theotokos* for us and our salvation, according to His manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, being made known in two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without division, never to be separated (*ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀχωρίστως*), the distinction of natures having been in no way abolished through the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved and meeting in one person and one hypostasis (*πρόσωπον καὶ ὑπόστασιν*).'

The language of our Article is in large part identical with this, and is so framed as to exclude all the ancient heresies. *The Son . . . of one substance with the Father* excludes Arianism. *Man's nature . . . two whole and perfect natures* excludes Apollinarianism. *In one person, never to be divided* excludes Nestorianism. *Two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and the Manhood . . . very God and very Man* excludes Monophysitism.<sup>1†</sup>

The question still remains, What is the value of the formal theological definitions of these Councils to-day? The language used by the

<sup>1</sup> The decisions of the four great Councils may be summed up in the four adverbs, *ἀληθῶς, τελῶς, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀσυγχύτως.* Our Lord was 'truly' God as against Arius, 'completely' man as against Apollinarius, 'indivisibly' One Person as against Nestorius, both God and man 'without confusion' as against Eutyches (Hooker, v. 54, § 10).

Church in her attempt to state the doctrine of the Trinity, 'One substance, Three Persons,' and still more, the language used at Chalcedon about our Lord's Incarnation, 'Two natures and One Person,' is often attacked as useless or worse than useless to-day—a mere encumbrance, due to the Hellenization of Christianity.

In reply, let us begin by reminding ourselves that the primary object of such language was not to speculate, but to rule out speculations that were seen to be destructive of the purity and completeness of the faith. The formulas have a lasting value. The ancient heresies all represent certain permanent tendencies of the human mind. In every age men, when faced with the mystery of the Incarnation, have inclined towards a line of solution that leads ultimately to Nestorianism or Monophysitism. We naturally pay greater attention to those facts that interest us and are disposed to ignore others that make a less forcible appeal. Here, as elsewhere, our personal leanings need to be corrected by the more complete experience of the Church. The average healthy Englishman has an Antiochene mind. What attracts him is our Lord's character. He admires His life of doing good, His courage in facing death for the sake of duty, His self-sacrifice and the like. He regards our Lord as an inspiring example, a leader in the life of faith, but little more. Accordingly, the English mind is easily satisfied with the conception of our Lord as a good man, with whom God dwelt. The need of something deeper, of inward renewal and salvation, is hardly realized. So, teaching that is practically Nestorian is quite common among us.

On the other hand, a view of our Lord that is practically Apollinarian or Monophysite tends to prevail wherever devotion to our Lord as the divine Saviour is not balanced by a study of the Gospels. It is the typical danger of a theology based upon worship divorced from the moral life. If Nestorianism appeals to the masculine independence of the respectable Englishman, Monophysitism appeals to the emotions of the devout worshipper. It is to be found in our hymns and, e.g. in the cult of the Sacred Heart. In England to-day we are living in a reaction from teaching about our Lord that was practically Monophysite. Protestant piety no less than Catholic devotion had come to lay such exclusive stress on our Lord's divine work as practically to ignore His humanity. Now, the reality of His humanity, His human growth and sympathies, have been, as it were, rediscovered. His human life has been made to live before our eyes. In the joy of realizing afresh our Lord's humanity, men have been tempted to lose hold of His divinity. But we must not live in reactions. The Church's duty is to hold together both sides of the truth, as essential for the completeness of the Christian life. The formula of Chalcedon at least rules out one-sided presentations of the truth that would impoverish the Christian life. 'Of one substance with us according to His manhood' secures for us all that Nestorianism can offer. 'Of one substance

with the Father according to His Godhead' secures all that Monophysitism can offer. The primary object of the Council's decision was pastoral, to warn men off paths that must lead astray and to send them back to study the Gospels for themselves with the right presuppositions.

Still the fact remains that in modern theology the formula of Chalcedon is often criticized and set on one side as valueless or even a hindrance to Christian faith. Before we examine its permanent value let us remember that it is the facts that are of supreme importance; not the formula that expresses them. If to-day, in the light of modern knowledge, we can express all the facts more adequately in some new formula, we are at liberty to do so. If, for instance, in view of modern psychology, we come to hold that 'person' and 'nature' are indistinguishable, that is not being disloyal to the Catholic faith. The objection to nearly all, if not all, modern attempts hitherto made to restate the truth about the Person of Christ, is not that they are modern, but they ignore or explain away some of the facts. Often, indeed, they are only the old heresies in a new guise, and to-day as of old the Christian consciousness feels their inadequacy. In attempting to restate the truth, part of it is allowed to escape.

The complaint is made that 'the formula merely stated the facts which constituted the problem; it did not attempt a solution. It was therefore unscientific; and as theology is the science of religion, it represented the breakdown of theology.'<sup>1</sup> We may fairly reply that if the first part of this assertion is true, it is really the highest praise. The function of a council is not to strike out a new line in theology. Its primary duty is to witness to the faith once for all delivered, and to decide whether a particular teaching is in accordance with it or not. If the Council 'stated the facts which constituted the problem' so as to rule out once for all attempted solutions that did not cover all the facts, it performed precisely the service that a Council exists to perform. It is the place of theologians, not councils, to frame a theology. All that the Council could declare is that hitherto their efforts had not proved successful. In the interests of the Gospel the Church was obliged, not indeed to explain the problem of the unity of God and man in Christ, but to insist positively that there was the problem to be solved.

Again, the formula of Chalcedon was of necessity expressed in terms of the philosophy of the day. There was at that time a single dominant philosophy. This philosophy viewed the world and experience 'statically'. It thought out questions in terms of 'nature' and 'being'. It asked what a thing was in its essential nature. Our minds to-day view the world 'dynamically'. We think in terms of 'life' and

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations*, p. 231. Cp. p. 230. 'Their formula had the right devotional value; it excluded what was known to be fatal to the faith; but it explained nothing.' (W. Temple). But see his later work, *Christus Veritas*, cc. vii and viii.

'movement'. We ask not simply what a thing is in itself, but what it does and how it acts. Hence modern theologians often complain that the formula of Chalcedon throws no light on the problems that the Incarnation raises for our minds to-day.<sup>1</sup> It leaves us with a divine nature and a human nature side by side, without any attempt to show how they were united in a single life. To us the 'divine nature' is not something stationary, but the sum total of divine energies and activities that constitute the divine life. God is God not simply by what He is but by what He does. So, too, we think of human nature not as something that exists ready-made, but as something that is progressively realized through acts of choice, in a human life. So we ask, if Jesus Christ is God, how could His divine powers and activities leave room for a truly human life, for that mental growth and development, and for that building up of a human character of which Scripture speaks? Or again, How if He was divine could He possess a true human consciousness? For us the problem is in large part a moral problem, a problem of will. To speak of a 'divine nature' and a 'human nature' as if they were fixed quantities ignores the whole question of the will. Such terms are, indeed, not necessarily moral at all.

We cannot deny that these objections are well-founded: but what do they show? Simply that Greek theology inevitably approached the whole question from a different standpoint from our own. Our own approach tends to be dominated by psychology. Psychology discusses and explains the manner in which I come to feel and know. It investigates my states of consciousness and the processes by which I attain knowledge and perform acts of choice. But psychology has its limitations, though it sometimes forgets them. It cannot explain ultimate realities. It can describe what I do and how I do it, but it is unable to tell me what I am. That is a question not for psychology but for metaphysics. If my feelings and thoughts are not a mere series of passing illusions, they imply behind them an 'I', which, indeed, has no consciousness apart from them, but is yet not identical with all or any of them. The words 'life' and 'movement' imply that there is an abiding something that lives and moves. Accordingly, we must assert that the questions that have been raised about the life and person of Jesus Christ are not simply psychological but also metaphysical. There is, for instance, such a question as that of His pre-existence. It is unreasonable to blame the formula of Chalcedon because it gives to these metaphysical questions a metaphysical answer. In effect it says, 'If we assume the life and redeeming power of Jesus Christ as

<sup>1</sup> This is the main point of the criticisms of Dr Harnack which are repeated by Dr Temple in *Foundations*, e.g. 'The spiritual cannot be expressed in terms of substance at all.' 'The "substance" of the Greek Fathers, whether divine or human, has the material, not the spiritual characteristics.' 'Substance theology inevitably ignores the will and with it the moral problem,' etc. (pp. 231-233). For criticism of this position see *C.Q.R.* Oct. 1915, p. 1.

true, if we grant that He has made men one with God, what do these experiences presuppose as a necessary condition of their truth? They presuppose that He was in the full sense God and in the full sense man. If you deny either that He was perfect God or that He was perfect man, then Christianity falls to the ground.' The vocabulary of metaphysics must be static: to condemn it for being static is to condemn metaphysics for being itself.<sup>2</sup> But it is not necessarily either unspiritual or materialistic. Greek philosophy was not so incompetent as is sometimes assumed. *oὐσία* is not unspiritual at all. The formula does not attempt to define either the 'divine nature' or the 'human nature'. It only asserts that, whatever they are, Jesus Christ possessed them. Nor does it attempt to explain how it was psychologically possible for our Lord to unite the two in the living out of His earthly life. It leaves the field open for modern philosophers to do this if they can.

What we may fairly criticize is not so much the decisions of Chalcedon in themselves, as the *Tome of Leo* and other theological writings that prepared the way for those decisions. These do attempt to deal with our Lord's life and person psychologically.<sup>3</sup> We must admit that the predominant theology of the Church did not do full justice to the complete humanity of our Lord or to the facts of the Gospel narrative that attest His complete humanity. As we have seen, a vital part of the humanness of human nature is that it comes to completion through growth. On its moral and spiritual side this growth is conditioned by acts of will and choice.<sup>4</sup> In our study of our Lord's human life we must leave room for real mental and moral effort, for spiritual progress and development of character. He was able to sympathize from within with the doubts and difficulties of our finite minds and with our moral struggles. This is where Alexandrian theology tended to fail.<sup>4</sup> Even in the writings of S. Leo, our Lord's conduct and His conquests over temptation are in danger of being viewed solely as an exercise of divine power. The full humanity of our Lord's bodily needs and actions only receives unreserved recognition. The activity of His human reason and will, of just that part of our human nature which is distinctively human, and by which we transcend

<sup>2</sup> The metaphysician, as it were, takes a section of experience, abstracting life and movement. In abstracting these he necessarily abstracts the activity of the will. His language, therefore, is bound to appear non-ethical and static.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Weston, *The One Christ*, pp. 70 ff.

<sup>4</sup> It is customary to speak of our Lord's human nature as 'impersonal'. The phrase is unsatisfactory, but it was intended to guard the truth that the humanity which our Lord assumed had no independent personality. The Word did not unite Himself to an individual man but gave personality to the human nature that He assumed. Hence our Lord's manhood as assumed by Him and as progressively realized in His human life was most truly personal. For a valuable note on *hypostasis*, 'person' and 'personality', see *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, p. 392.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Westcott's criticism of Cyril. 'Under his treatment the divine history seems to be dissolved into a docetic drama' (*S. John*, p. xc).

animal life, is practically ignored.<sup>1</sup> Hence, our Lord's moral life tends to become a mere appearance. But human goodness, as we know it, can only be attained by real effort of will. If our Lord's human life was exempt from this moral struggle, if His obedience to the Father's will was achieved by the automatic employment of divine power, then so far our Lord's life was not human at all. But the Gospels lend no support to any such suggestion.

Again, Greek theology treats of the actual living out of our Lord's life in a way that breaks up its unity. It is one thing to insist that He was and is both God and Man. We must equally insist that He is 'one Christ'. Our mind revolts against any attempt to parcel out His activities among His two natures,<sup>2</sup> to say that He did this as God, that as Man. Such an attempt leaves us with no continuous human life at all.<sup>3</sup> The Gospels give us no hint of any such double consciousness. In all His conduct our Lord was fundamentally one. The view criticized ignores the mutual kinship between the divine and the human. Man was created in the image of God. Thus God could express Himself in and through a human life without any contradiction of the divine nature. Our Lord's divinity and humanity were not, as it were, placed side by side. He was not only God and Man, but God in Man and Man in God. Probably when we think of God our imagination dwells too much on what we may call His physical attributes, omnipotence, omniscience and the like, and we tend to make them independent of the love and righteousness which constitute His inmost being. Greek theology was greatly hampered by the dogma that God cannot in any way suffer. Cyril and Nestorius were at one in their desire to insist that in the Incarnation our Lord's Godhead was exempt from all suffering. No doubt there is a true and important sense in which God is 'without passions'. But we may

<sup>1</sup> For the manner in which theologians explained away clear statements, e.g. of our Lord's ignorance, as man, see Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 130 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Leo can write: "To hunger, to thirst, to be weary, and to sleep is evidently human. But to satisfy five thousand men with five loaves and to give to the Samaritan woman living water, . . . to walk on the surface of the sea with feet not sinking, and to allay the swelling waves by rebuking the tempest, this, without doubt, is divine." "It belongs not to the same nature to say "I and the Father are one", and to say "the Father is greater than I". Leo is attempting to safeguard the reality of the divine and human natures, each with its distinct operation, but the result is strangely different from the impression made on us by Scripture. We notice how all the human acts quoted belong only to the body. There is no adequate recognition of the activity of the reason and will. (For a more favourable view of Leo's meaning as interpreted by another of his treatises, see R. V. Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies*, p. 249.)

<sup>3</sup> A certain attempt at unity was made by the theological device known as the *communicatio idiomatum*, by which, owing to the union of the two natures in a single Person, it was held possible to transfer names and titles appropriate to one nature to the other in virtue of this unity of Person, to say, e.g. 'God died for men' instead of 'He who was God died for men'. So long as it is simply a question of titles such a practice is harmless, but it has proved theologically dangerous. It has come to suggest that the divine and human natures were fused into something neither divine nor human, but a strange compound of the two, that the Godhead was converted into flesh, as the Athanasian Creed expresses it.

question whether the unqualified denial that God can suffer is not a pagan rather than a Christian dogma: a legacy from heathen philosophy taken over by theologians without due scrutiny, and needing to be corrected by the bold anthropomorphisms of Scripture. We must distinguish between physical and moral suffering. If God is love, love must be capable of moral suffering. So we can hold that our Lord, in all the humiliation of His Cross and Passion, was active in His divine no less than His human nature. We can see God there as truly as in His acts of power. For where were love and righteousness more perfectly and more victoriously love and righteousness than in the Crucified? If God is love and holiness, then on the Cross we see God most truly, though He be self-restrained under the limitations and infirmities of manhood. Let us remember that God's omnipotence in all its forms is not the omnipotence of bare power, but the omnipotence of love. It is to be seen in the fulness of self-sacrifice as truly as in the unspeakable majesty of a theophany.

So, too, Man is most truly man in so far as He lives in that union with God for which He was created. The truest human life is the work both of God and Man. The more intimate the union, the more perfect the human life. The divine does not annihilate or supplant or curtail the human: rather it raises it to its highest perfection. In our Lord we see this perfection of human life. That life was the work of God in Man and Man in God. God could be most really God under the conditions of and within the sphere of the human. Man could be most completely man in perfect union with the divine. We cannot, therefore, draw hard and fast distinctions within the unity of our Lord's earthly life. 'In all things He acts personally; and so far as it is revealed to us, His greatest works during His earthly life are wrought by the help of the Father through the energy of a humanity enabled to do all things in fellowship with God.'<sup>1</sup> To sum up, the Fathers' psychology was crude and unsatisfying, even though their metaphysics were sound.<sup>2</sup>

The objection, however, still remains, that even though some static and metaphysical language has a right and necessary place in any formal statement of the Church's belief, still the phrases, both of the Creed of Nicaea and of the formula of Chalcedon, are Greek metaphysics. It was, indeed, inevitable that the Greek Fathers should employ the categories of their own day, but why should we be bound to them? Let us frankly admit that we are not tied down to any particular metaphysical system. But it is very doubtful whether, even if we put aside all historical associations, a change is either possible or

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> We may compare the criticism of Dr Moberly (*Atonement and Personality*, pp. 96-97).

The phrase "God and man" is, of course, perfectly true. But it is easy to lay undue emphasis on the "and". . . . In His human life on earth, as Incarnate, He is not sometimes, but consistently, always, in every act and in every detail, human. The Incarnate



desirable. After all, there are certain fundamental ideas that are common to all thought. 'The ideas of substance or thing, of personality, of nature, are permanent ideas, we cannot get rid of them; no better words could be suggested to express the same facts.'<sup>1</sup> The ideas of the Fathers need not be the less permanent because they are Greek. They are not limited to any particular type of metaphysics. Indeed, they are largely ideas that common sense demands. Some such ideas as 'divine nature' and 'human nature' are implied in the very notion of an Incarnation.

Further, we are coming increasingly to see how, not only in broad outline but in detail, the divine providence had been preparing the world for the coming of Christ. This preparation was religious, social and intellectual, the work of the Jew, the Roman, and the Greek. We cannot but suppose that the forms of thought as 'Christ' or 'Son of Man' under which Christ revealed Himself to His contemporaries were part of the divine scheme. He took them and filled them with a new and richer content. We may equally believe that the thought-forms of Greek philosophy were no less providentially designed that through them the Church might express to the world the wealth of her new life, filling them with a new and richer content. We cannot, therefore, lightly let them go.<sup>2</sup>

Lastly, the dogmatic language of the Church is confessedly inadequate. We know little about our own life, still less about the life of God. Even psychology cannot help us here. If we throw over the language of Chalcedon, we must find some substitute. Where is it to be found? To which school of modern philosophy are we to turn? For they are many. To choose any one would be to identify Christianity deliberately with one particular philosophy—the very charge that their critics bring against the Greek Fathers. The men who agree in their contempt for Greek theology as a rule agree in little else. The Church has to deal with practical needs. If the formula of Chalcedon has the right value for Christian devotion and leaves full scope for all modern investigations the Church may well claim to hold fast to it

never leaves His Incarnation. God, as man, is always, in all things, God as man. . . . Whatever the reverence of their motive may be, men do harm to consistency and to truth, by keeping open, as it were, a sort of non-human sphere or aspect of the Incarnation. This opening we should unreservedly desire to close. There are not two existences either of, or within, the Incarnate, side by side with one another. If it is all Divine, it is all human too. We are to study the Divine in and through the human. By looking for the Divine side by side with the human, instead of discerning the Divine within the human, we miss the significance of them both.

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Bampton Lectures on the Incarnation*, p. 105. Cp. *The Reconstruction of Belief*, pp. 848 ff.

<sup>2</sup> We must not be too much influenced by the fact that the Church's formularies need to be explained to men to-day. The technical terms of all science can only be understood by those who are ready to take some pains to learn the science. A theology that could be completely understood by the man in the street in five minutes would be very shallow.

until there is at least some possibility of a re-statement that would win general acceptance.

(d) How then can we best conceive of the Incarnation? Perhaps our best starting-point will be some such thought as that expressed in S. Paul's phrase, 'He emptied Himself.' We must beware of language that might suggest that our Lord was God before and after, but ceased to be God during His Incarnate life on earth. He laid aside not His Godhead but His glory. He willed to live a real human life, to know our condition no longer simply by divine intuition from without, but from within by passing through a real human experience. By an act of His divine omnipotence He willed to restrain His divine attributes so as to render this possible.<sup>1</sup> The subject of the whole human experience was the divine Word Himself. In pondering over the mystery of the Incarnation we shall get more assistance by thinking along the lines of love and sympathy than along the lines of abstract logic. The essence of sympathy is putting oneself in another's place: in the case of one less educated or less developed this must involve a deliberate holding back of our wider knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps some such example as this, inadequate as it is, is the nearest that we can get to a real understanding of His self-humiliation. We can dimly conceive that by a single supra-temporal act of choice the Eternal Word willed so to restrain His divine attributes as to render a true human life and experience possible. If we believe that God is love, there is nothing in such a conception that violates the central being of God. Many of the objections that are brought against such an idea are at bottom objections against the possibility of a real Incarnation at all. If we are ready to grant the possibility of an Incarnation, we must also grant that there will inevitably be much in it that we cannot fully understand. The whole question of the relation of time to eternity is involved.<sup>3</sup> We cannot conceive what time means to God or reconcile historical sequence with His eternal consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Our Lord did not part with such essentially divine attributes as, e.g. omnipotence or omniscience; rather, it was His own omnipotent power that restrained His omnipotence, His own almighty wisdom that devised the means for sharing our human ignorance.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 219; Otley, *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, ii. pp. 291-2.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. How could our Lord be at one and the same time living on earth and performing His cosmic functions? Was He, as Proclus, preaching against Nestorius, said, 'In His Father's bosom and in the womb of the Virgin; in His mother's arm and on the wings of the wind; worshipped by the angels in Heaven and supping with publicans on earth?'

<sup>4</sup> Cp. the following statement: 'It is not meant that the Logos was withdrawn from God and occupied by the Incarnation. We err if we think of the Logos as only capable of one activity at a time. The Logos is capable of all the activity of God. God was the same elsewhere as if there had been no incarnation, and the Logos was meanwhile as truly as ever the medium of God's relation with the universe. . . . The Incarnation is not a division of God. The truth is rather this: that the God of infinitely varied activity added to His other self-expressions the act of becoming man—an additional form of activity in which He could engage without withdrawing Himself from any other' (Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 294-295).

Nor can we possibly understand what change the Incarnation made in the life of the Trinity. All we are told is that the 'coming of the Son' corresponded to a sending by the Father, and that He was made man through the power of the Spirit. In the act of divine self-sacrifice the Father and the Spirit had their part no less than the Son.<sup>1†</sup>

(e) Special difficulties arise when we consider (i) Our Lord's human knowledge; (ii) His temptation.

(i) We can only conceive of God's omniscience as a perfect knowledge raised above all the limitations that beset our own, as an infinite and immediate intuition into the inmost being of all that is. But a real human experience includes the possession of human knowledge, attained by human means and able to be contained by the finite capacity of the human mind. It would seem, then, that our Lord, in willing to become man, willed such a restraining of the divine knowledge as would render possible a true human experience. Though our imaginations find it easier to picture a restraint of divine power, so as to allow of need and suffering and opposition and death, than of a restraint of divine knowledge so as to allow of ignorance and perplexity, yet at bottom the problem is the same in each case. Our thoughts must be guided by moral rather than metaphysical considerations. Above all, we must be true to all the facts of the Gospel narrative.

In human knowledge we may distinguish two elements. First there is that knowledge which we acquire step by step—'discursive knowledge', as it is called—either by the operation of our mind, by processes of reasoning or argument, or else by receiving information from others. This includes all facts of history or natural science. Secondly, there is that knowledge which we call intuitive, gained not piecemeal, but by a direct and immediate perception. This includes all sensations as of colour or pleasure, or, again, all judgments of moral and spiritual insight. We see the truth, not as the conclusion of any argument or reflection, but with an immediacy and clearness that leave no room for doubt. When we turn to the Gospels, we find that in the first kind of knowledge our Lord, for all we can discover, shared all human limitations.<sup>2</sup> 'He grew in wisdom.' He used the ordinary methods of investigation. He asked questions to get information. He could be surprised at unforeseen events. The uncertainty of the future lay dark upon His soul. He expressly declared that He did not know the day of His coming to judgment. So, too, He accepted the current Jewish opinions about physical science or the books of the Old Testament, that He learnt from His human teachers.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Moberly, *op. cit.* p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Mk 11<sup>1-4</sup> (the instructions to find the colt) and Mk 14<sup>13</sup> (the man bearing a pitcher of water) were probably pre-arranged signals. Even if they were instances of unusual perception they could be paralleled from the lives of the prophets.

On all such points it would seem that He lived and thought as a Man of His own day.

But in the region of intuitive knowledge He showed a unique discernment. He claimed an unfailing insight into the mind of God and sympathy with His purposes, an unclouded vision of divine truth. He passed judgment on all questions of morality with the authority of one who saw the truth beyond dispute. He could read the thoughts and the hearts of friends and foes. He displayed an unerring perception of human character. The realm of moral and spiritual truth held no secrets from Him. His whole life and teaching were based upon this unique consciousness of God. He bore witness in His example and His discourses to what He knew. He revealed God by revealing Himself. Even here we may not draw a hard and fast line between the human and the divine. Among ourselves the power of moral and spiritual insight varies enormously. It depends not on education but rather on holiness of life. It is the pure in heart who see God. In the case of the Hebrew prophets and others we get instances of men endowed with powers of spiritual perception that the normal man does not possess, yet that in no way destroy their humanity. It is hard to set any limit to the moral and spiritual vision of a sinless human being. So in our Lord's case we may hold that here, too, the divine raised the human to its highest perfection. Even under the limitations of a human life He enjoyed a true and adequate perception of God and of His own relation to God. And this perception He imparted to His disciples so far as it could be expressed in the human language of His day.

We believe that our Lord came for a special purpose. He did not come to give us infallible information on questions of history, or criticism, or science. God has given us the ordinary methods of attaining to truth on such points, if we will only use them. Revelation is never given to save us trouble. Rather Christ came to bring men back to God. A real part of His saving work was to impart to men something of His own vision of the truth of God and to reveal the character of God and His purpose for man. The fulfilment of this mission demanded not omniscience but infallibility within the limits of the task entrusted to Him. Ignorance is one thing, error is another. If in His incarnate life He willed to submit to the limitations of human knowledge, yet He showed Himself aware of those limitations. On questions of moral and spiritual truth He spoke with the certainty of conviction: He claimed an infallible knowledge and appealed to His own life and character to prove the truth of His claim. 'Which of you convicteth me of sin? And if I say truth, why do ye not believe me' (Jn 8<sup>46</sup>). The power to live a life, faultless in its active performance of duty both towards God and towards man, carried with it the right to declare without contradiction, the secret source of strength, whence that power was derived. The truth of the life guaranteed the truth of the teaching.



There is, however, one point on which it has been maintained that our Lord showed not merely ignorance but error. He expected and taught others to expect His return to judgment and the end of the world within the lifetime of His own generation. Subsequent events have proved this teaching false. In support of this view the chief passages quoted are Mk 13<sup>30</sup>, where 'all these things' that shall be fulfilled in 'this generation' at first sight would seem to include the final advent of the Son of Man predicted in vv. 24-27 (Mt 24<sup>34</sup> and Lk 21<sup>32</sup> are parallel passages); Mt 24<sup>29</sup>, where the final advent is foretold 'immediately after the tribulation of those days' *i.e.* the fall of Jerusalem (*n.b.* Mk 13<sup>24</sup> has 'in those days'). So, too, Mt 16<sup>28</sup> runs: 'There shall be some of them that stand here which shall in nowise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom' (Mk 9<sup>1</sup>, 'till they see the Kingdom of God come with power'). At first sight these passages appear to suggest the fallibility of Christ. But a closer examination of the Gospels makes any such conclusion at least precarious.

(a) Our Lord expressly declared that as Man, He shared the ignorance of men and angels as to the time of His final advent (Mk 13<sup>32</sup> and probably Mt 24<sup>36</sup>).<sup>1</sup> It is therefore improbable that at the same time He should have predicted it as about to happen within a generation. Further, much of His teaching beyond dispute assumes a long interval before His last coming. The Gospel is first to be preached to all the nations (Mk 13<sup>10</sup>) and in the whole world (Mt 24<sup>14</sup>). In Lk 21<sup>24</sup> 'the times of the Gentiles' are interposed between the capture of Jerusalem and the coming of the Son of Man. We must not be too confident that we always know exactly what is meant by the 'coming of the Son of Man'. We are dealing not with English literalism but Oriental imagery. In one sense Christ most really came in judgment at the fall of Jerusalem. His words then received a first fulfilment in the lifetime of those who heard them. They await a further fulfilment whose date and distance are unknown. Above all, the primary aim of our Lord's eschatological discourses was not to give a detailed forecast of the future, but to rouse the disciples to the duty of watchfulness. They were to live as men in daily expectation of the Lord's return and prepared to render an account to Him.

(β) Here, if anywhere, we need to bear in mind that we have received our Lord's words through human agency. The discourse in S. Matthew is demonstrably a collection of speeches from different sources, probably not spoken at the same time but grouped according to subject-matter. The same is probably true of Mk 13. Hence, it is precarious to judge any saying by its present context. Again, the speeches have been translated from Aramaic into Greek. It is the

<sup>1</sup> We may not unreasonably suppose that the actual moment of the end of the world and the final Advent is contingent upon human conduct. Hence, inevitably, our Lord as man must be ignorant of its date (*cp.* also p. 285 ff.).

easiest thing for a reporter unconsciously to alter the exact wording, to add or subtract a shade of meaning, or to give precision to what was intentionally left vague. If our Lord's descriptions of His second coming were couched in dark and mysterious language, they may well have come down to us coloured by the presuppositions of those who heard them. If we compare Mt 16<sup>28</sup> with Mk 9<sup>1</sup>, Mt 24<sup>3</sup> with Mk 13<sup>4</sup>, and Mt 24<sup>29</sup> with Mk 13<sup>24</sup>, we can see how the first evangelist has made more definite the vaguer expressions of S. Mark, so as to bring out his own belief that the final coming of our Lord would follow immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem. This definiteness demonstrates not the fallibility of Christ but of His interpreters. It is clear that the early Church, including S. Paul, lived in daily expectation of the Lord's return. This proves that His teaching did not exclude such an interpretation, but it does not prove that it was the true interpretation (*cp.* the misunderstanding recorded in Jn 21<sup>23</sup>). It seems to have been our Lord's will that the Church should so live as to be prepared for His return at any moment. In a very real sense He 'came in power' in the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. In another sense He came at the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> In an equally real sense He comes in all times of crisis whether for the Church or for the individual. In every case His coming is a judgment, a blessing and an opportunity for those who are watchful, a condemnation of those who are not. In the fulness of time there will be a last coming and a final judgment.

(γ) We must also bear in mind that our Lord spoke as a prophet. He employs the imagery of ancient prophecy and contemporary apocalyptic. We must therefore take account of the perspective of prophecy. 'Long ages of the future are foreshortened in a series of pictures which seem to be immediate and simultaneous, until the course of events shows that they represent successive ages of long duration and slow development.'<sup>2</sup> Because this is so we do not dare to call the prophet mistaken. It may be that our Lord, as the last and greatest of the prophets, condescended to share their limitations and their mental outlook. He has told us expressly that He, as Man, did not know the day or hour of His return. But He had a clear vision of the certainty of that return, and that clearness He expressed under the symbol of nearness. His utterances must be judged by the standard of prophecy, and as such they have in part received and in part await fulfilment.†

(ii) In the Epistle to the Hebrews (4<sup>15</sup>) our Lord is stated to have been 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin'. It has often been objected that such a statement is self-contradictory. With us

<sup>1</sup> We can hardly imagine all that the fall of the city and the abolition of the Temple meant to a Jewish Christian. It was a very shaking of heaven and earth and the fall of all that seemed most permanent. It was the dawn of a new world.

<sup>2</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 407.

the sting of temptation lies not only in the solicitation from without but in our own inward affinity to evil. It is the traitor within the camp that betrays us. In the case of an unfallen human nature and a will that had never been weakened by consent to evil, this last element would be lacking. How could evil make its full appeal? Further, if Christ could not sin, His battle with temptation was, so to speak, a sham fight. There was no fear of falling.

Such objections are often urged, but if analyzed they rest at bottom on a misunderstanding of the meaning of temptation.

When our Lord became man, He thereby rendered Himself subject to temptation. God in Himself 'cannot be tempted with evil' (Jas 1<sup>13</sup>). But in expressing Himself in and through the limitations of manhood and the feelings and conditions of finite human life 'He deliberately put on—not, indeed, the personal capacity of sinning, but at least (if we may use the expression) the hypothetical capacity of sinning, the nature through which sin could naturally approach and suggest itself. . . . There was, so far, in His human nature, the natural machinery for, or capability of, rebelling, that the reiterated negative "not my own", "not myself", does deny something.'<sup>1</sup> All free and finite existence contains the possibility of sin. Selfishness exists potentially as soon as there exists a self that can set itself up in opposition to the life of the whole. The fact of limitation carries with it the possibility of transgressing the limit.<sup>2</sup> Again, in virtue of His human nature our Lord possessed certain needs and desires common to all men: not only the elementary desires of the body, for food, drink, rest and the like, but also the desires of our higher nature, as for sympathy and companionship, and the more intellectual desire to explore all the manifold possibilities of life and to taste a full and rich experience. At any moment a being with such desires may find himself in circumstances when he has to choose between doing wrong in order to gratify them or leaving them ungratified. All such appetites, in themselves morally neutral, may become temptations to sin when their satisfaction would conflict with the known will of God. Here, too, our Lord was sensitive to temptation. The nature of His temptations in large part corresponded to His vocation. He was tempted to forward the Kingdom of God in ways that were not in accordance with the will of the Father, to do evil that good might come. He was tempted to escape the pain and shame of the Cross. He experienced the power of temptation in all its reality. In one sense, no two men's temptations are 'in all points' the same, yet they agree in containing the essential elements of temptation. No individual undergoes all forms of temptation. So our Lord's, though different in form very largely from our own, just because His work was unique, were as real and grievous to Him as our own are to us. His possession of unique

<sup>1</sup> Moberly, *op. cit.* p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, c. ii. § 24.

powers does not affect the point in question. The moral struggle is concerned with the use to which we put the powers, great or small, which we individually possess. Any power may be used either for the glory of God or for our own self-pleasing. Nor, again, does sinlessness affect the ultimate and essential nature of temptation. Our Lord, just because He was sinless, alone endured the full brunt of the assault. The man who yields to temptation has not experienced its extremest force. If, in God's providence, our trials are proportioned to our capacity (1 Cor 10<sup>13</sup>), our Lord's conflict may well have been sore beyond our imagination. Further, even in our own experience the temptations that come from sinless desires may be even more grievous than those that spring from our own past weakness.<sup>1</sup> Our own part in yielding to sin may alter the form of our temptation but it does not make it essentially different. A sinful disposition does make men more liable to fall, but it does not increase the pain of being tempted; rather it diminishes it, because it diminishes the antagonism to evil.

Again, when we say that sin was impossible to Him, we mean morally, not physically impossible. He could not sin, not because anything external prevented Him, but because He was Himself one in will with the Father. Temptation is not sin. It only becomes sin when the will fails to decide for the higher course or dallies with the temptation. Our Lord never consented to the suggestion of evil. By prayer and faith He overcame the tempter. He condemned sin, not only by suffering for it, but by personally resisting and overcoming it. His holiness was a real human holiness perfected through moral effort and conquest.<sup>2</sup>

Lastly, here as always, Jesus Christ is the great redeemer. What we need in our fight against sin is sympathy with us in all the pain and effort of resistance. That our Lord can give us, since He resisted 'even unto blood'. What our fallen nature craves is sympathy with us in our falls. That our Lord does not give, and it would be bad for us to receive it, since it would weaken us. Our Lord's true human sympathy is not lessened by His perfect holiness. He felt the strain, as none other has ever felt it, of directing His will unceasingly along the hard path of duty, at the cost of pain to body, mind and soul. It would seem that in the higher stages of the spiritual life, as evidenced by the saints, the pain of temptation lies less in the fear of defeat than in the hatred of all suggestion to evil. As men grow in holiness they grow in sensitiveness to the horror of sin. The more holy the soul the more painful is all such temptation. To our Lord it was more terrible than to others, just because He was sinless. Hence, He can indeed

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested, for instance, that the thirst of the traveller in the desert, which arises out of a sinless human infirmity, may be more fierce than the drunkard's craving for strong drink.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God*, pp. 165-167.

feel with us in our moral conflict. But though He can sympathize with us in our temptations, because He Himself was tempted, He can redeem us from sin just because He never sinned. 'If redemption is to be achieved the redeemer must stand free of moral evil. As the source of victorious spiritual energy He must Himself be in utter oneness with the will of God. The perfect moral health, the unstained conscience to which He is slowly raising others, must be present absolutely in His own life. . . . Like to His brethren in all else, yet He is unlike them here. Yet it is no paradox to say that such unlikeness makes His kinship perfect: for sin had made Him not more a man but less. Sin dehumanizes, and by its entrance the perfection of His vital sympathy would have been increasingly lost.'<sup>1</sup>†

(f) *The Virgin-birth*.—Our Article, following the Creeds, asserts that *The Son . . . took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance*. The Church has always understood such words as these literally, as stating that our Lord was born of a virgin-mother, without the intervention of any human father. Strictly speaking, it was our Lord's conception, not our Lord's birth, that was miraculous. The term 'Virgin-birth' would be more accurately styled the 'virginal conception'.<sup>2</sup> To-day this belief has been challenged by some who claim to be Christians. They hold that it forms no integral part of Christian belief; that there is no satisfactory historical evidence for it, that the statement of it in the Creed must be taken as symbolically, not literally true, that is, as an allegory, not an actual fact, and that in any case the belief in it as an historical event has no particular value for Christian faith. The main lines of argument in support of this contention may be summed up thus. S. Mark, S. Paul, and S. John are all silent about the Virgin-birth. This shows that it had no place in the earliest Gospel. The evidence of the two Gospels of S. Matthew and S. Luke proves on examination to be historically worthless. Similar legends told about great men can be quoted from other religions. This suggests that the idea was borrowed by the early Christians and consciously or unconsciously fashioned into a story to symbolize Christ's uniqueness. Further, it is more fitting, and in accordance with what we know of God's orderly working, that God's Son should sanctify the ordinary processes of human generation and birth by entering human life in the same manner as ourselves. Such a

<sup>1</sup> Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 401; cp. Westcott's notes on Heb 7<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to distinguish between the Virgin-birth and the 'Immaculate Conception'. They are often confused in popular thought. The 'Immaculate Conception' is the view that by a special miracle S. Mary was conceived and born free from any taint of original sin, that she might be the mother of Christ. Its aim is to secure her sinlessness. There is, however, no hint in Scripture or in any Father before S. Augustine that she was supposed to be sinless. Even he only supposed her to be free from actual sin. The doctrine stands on an entirely different footing from that of the Virgin-birth. It arose as a pious opinion, resting on a slender foundation of human logic. In the Roman Church it was elevated to the rank of a dogma in 1854.

miracle would place Him apart from us. By rejecting the historical truth of the story a spiritual faith is strengthened rather than weakened.<sup>1</sup>

In reply we maintain that this Article of the Christian faith cannot be so lightly swept away.

(i) There is a right order in approaching this question. We do not expect a man to believe in the Virgin-birth who does not believe in the divinity of Christ. As a matter of simple history men did not believe Christ to be God, because He was born of a virgin. Rather by a study of His life and character and by the experience of His redemptive power, they became convinced that He was a unique Person. Then, believing Him to be a unique Person, they were prepared to believe, when they were told it on good authority, that He entered the world in a unique way. We gather from the Acts and the Epistles of S. Paul that the apostolic preaching began with Christ crucified, risen and ascended. Then came the study of His human life. The apostles were primarily witnesses to what they had seen. It was only when men had accepted Him as their Saviour and proved for themselves the power of His risen life, that in due time they were bidden to learn how that earthly life began. Both then and now, the Virgin-birth came first in order of time but last in order of apprehension. Only so far as we have learnt for ourselves the uniqueness of Christ are we able to approach the evidence with the right presuppositions. This, then, explains in part the so-called silence of S. Paul and S. Mark. S. Mark's Gospel has preserved for us what is probably an outline of the earliest Christian preaching as given by S. Peter at Rome. To say that either the apostle or the evangelist did not know of the Virgin-birth is precarious. All that we have the right to say is that it was absent from the earliest preaching. Such silence is only to be expected, when we consider the reserve that always surrounds the mystery of birth. The blessed Mother would hardly have called public attention to such an event. It may be that in her lifetime the secret was jealously confined to a few. Again, when we consider the intimacy between S. Paul and S. Luke, it is hard to suppose that the former was ignorant of an event recorded by the latter. There is no occasion in his extant epistles when we can say that he must have mentioned the Virgin-birth if he knew of it. It may well have lain in the background of his mind, when he spoke of God as 'sending forth His Son born of a woman' (Gal 4<sup>th</sup>) or of our Lord as the 'Second Adam', 'the heavenly man', the starting-point of a new humanity (1 Cor 15<sup>46-47</sup>).

(ii) We must remember that the historical evidence for the event is more than that of two documents, the Gospels of S. Matthew and S. Luke. Behind them stands the witness of the Apostles and the whole of the early Church. It is incredible that if the Apostles had

<sup>1</sup> For a temperate statement of the case for rejecting the doctrine, see E. Brunner, *The Mediator*, pp. 322 ff.

taught or were teaching that our Lord was the son of Joseph, there two Gospels should have been accepted without a protest. No doubt, for a long time, the majority of Christians did not know of the Virgin-birth: many may have died without having ever heard of it. But by the time of Ignatius it was accepted without question from Antioch to Ephesus (cp. Ignatius, *ad Eph.* 19, *ad Trall.* 9, *ad Smyrn.* 1). He asserts the reality of our Lord's birth against the Docetists, though it is worth noting that an ordinary birth would have afforded a far stronger argument for his purpose, if he could have taught it. The story of the Virgin-birth must have been made known on very good authority to win so soon such unanimous acceptance. Later in the second century it has a place in the credal summaries which occur in the writings of Justin and Irenaeus. This by itself proves that the Virgin-birth was in full accord with the tradition of the early Church, and formed a part of its current catechetical instruction before the canonization of the Gospels.

When we turn to the two accounts in the Gospels we are struck by their independence. They agree in the main topic that they undertake to narrate, the Virgin-birth, but they differ in detail. There is no actual inconsistency between them, unless we read into either of them statements that are not there, but owing to our lack of knowledge it is not easy to piece all the details together. 'That an event is attested by two stories coming from different sources is usually regarded as affording a presumption of truth, not of falsehood.'<sup>1</sup> In this case we have two independent witnesses, and the source of each account seems to lie in the traditions of the Jewish Church anterior to the fall of Jerusalem.

Let us take S. Luke's Gospel first. With the possible exception of the governorship of Quirinius, we may say that the details of the framework of the story of the birth at Bethlehem have received support and illumination from modern archaeological discoveries.<sup>2</sup> This fact encourages us to trust S. Luke's evidence about the birth itself. It is agreed that behind his first two chapters lie very early sources, strongly Jewish in outlook, and showing no consciousness of the path of shame which Messiah had to tread. The whole tone of the narrative suggests that it came from S. Mary herself. The suggestion has been made to cut out 1<sup>34-36</sup>, the verses that most clearly assert Mary's virginity. In defence of this excision there is no evidence whatever, internal or external.<sup>3</sup> It is a counsel of despair, only of importance as showing how far men will go to rule out evidence that conflicts with their own preconceived ideas about what the Christian faith ought to

<sup>1</sup> Armitage Robinson, *Some Thoughts on the Incarnation*, pp. 32-33; cp. the whole passage, pp. 31-41.

<sup>2</sup> See Ramsey, *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* and the commentaries on S. Luke by H. Balmforth (Clarendon Bible) and B. S. Easton (T. & T. Clark).

<sup>3</sup> A single Old Latin MS. (b) omits Mary's question and transposes the text. Cp. Box, *Virgin Birth*, pp. 223-225.

be. It still leaves unsolved the problem of the prominence of Mary throughout these chapters if Joseph was the father. Nor can we explain why she is so carefully styled virgin twice in v. 27.<sup>1</sup>

The account in the first Gospel is written throughout from the side of Joseph. It is Jewish in tone through and through. The writer is eager to search out Old Testament parallels to the events of the birth and infancy of One whom he regards above all as the Messiah. To our minds many of these parallels seem far-fetched. So much so, that it is clear that the writer did not invent the details of the story in order to fulfil Old Testament predictions. The Jews had no special reverence for virginity as such. Hence, it is impossible to explain the existence of the story unless it was believed to be literally true. It has been argued that the whole narrative is only an attempt to create a fulfilment for the prophecy of Isaiah 7<sup>14</sup>. The use of the Old Testament elsewhere by this writer lends no support to such a view. There is at present no evidence that the Jews either applied the passage to the Messiah or expected the Messiah to be born of a virgin. The Hebrew word in the text of Isaiah does not necessarily denote virginity.<sup>2</sup> Again, in 1<sup>16</sup> there are traces of a reading 'Joseph begat Jesus'. Even if this should be correct, the word 'begat' would be used in the same legal sense as elsewhere in the genealogy. Joseph acted as our Lord's legal father. He was known as Jesus son of Joseph. No alternative was possible.

As regards the Gospel of S. John, his silence is a token of consent. He certainly knew the synoptic Gospels, and at times corrects or explains or supplements them. If he had disapproved of the narratives of the Virgin-birth, he would have shown his disapproval. But is he silent? The language of 1<sup>13</sup> when he speaks of Christians as 'born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God', suggests an allusion. The Virgin-birth is both type and source of the spiritual new birth of the Christian. If we adopt the reading  $\delta\varsigma \dots \epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\theta\eta$ , following early Latin versions, the allusion becomes explicit.

Before we leave the evidence of the Gospels, it is well to ask, If we reject their account of the Virgin-birth, what is the alternative? Our opponents reply 'a birth in wedlock'. But that is an alternative for which we have no evidence whatever. The only non-miraculous birth for which there is any evidence at all is a birth out of wedlock. In later days the current Jewish slander was that our Lord was the illegitimate child of Mary. There are evidences for the existence of

<sup>1</sup> Cp. also Lk 2<sup>49</sup>. The first recorded words of Christ seem to be a correction of His mother's words, and imply that Joseph was not His father.

<sup>2</sup> The passage in Isaiah is one of the most obscure in the Old Testament. Possibly it rests on an old myth found also in Rev 12<sup>1-4</sup>, in which at a time of crisis a deliverer miraculously appears. In this myth the mother may have been a virgin, and the LXX has  $\mu\alpha\rho\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  in the passage. But the whole emphasis is laid on the person of the deliverer, not on the manner of his birth. On the account in S. Matthew see McNeile's commentary.

this slander within the Gospels. Why did Mary accompany Joseph to Bethlehem? Why was she in her condition repelled from the inn? The whole story suggests something unusual. In the genealogy, Mt 1<sup>1-16</sup>, we find the names of four women only, three of whom were of bad character. Their presence may well be a retort to current slanders about the birth of Christ. The Gospel begins with a refutation of the Jewish attack on the birth of Christ, as it ends with a refutation of the Jewish denial of His Resurrection. Again, in Mk 6<sup>3</sup>, the people of Nazareth reject our Lord and say, 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?' The wording is altered in Mt and Lk. 'To designate anyone the son of his mother, whether his father were dead or alive, is almost unknown in the Old or New Testament, and hardly occurs, if at all, in Rabbinic writers. The words were clearly used by the people of Nazareth in an insulting manner; they were referring to rumours which existed as to our Lord's birth.'<sup>1</sup> The same is the simplest explanation of the Jews' retort in Jn 8<sup>41</sup>, 'We were not born of fornication, we have one father even God.' Such an interpretation would suit admirably the irony of S. John. All the evidence points to something unusual in the birth of Christ. If this is admitted, the Christian conscience will not have much difficulty in deciding what is the true explanation.<sup>2</sup>

(iii) The alleged parallels from the legends of other nations usually break down on examination. Many are demonstrably later than the Gospel stories and are probably echoes of Christian teaching. Others are gross and carnal stories about the lusts of gods and heroes as different as possible from the Christian accounts. We really cannot compare the narratives of the Gospel with these silly tales. The prevalence of such legends does, indeed, witness to a widespread human instinct that the human race could not produce its own deliverer, but needed a divine impulse from above. They would then embody an unconscious feeling after the truth enshrined in the actual Virgin-birth. As we have seen, the whole tone and outlook of the narratives is so Jewish that an admixture of pagan legend is incredible. It is equally impossible to find any adequate explanation in Jewish ideas. The only alternative is to regard them as an invention of Christian imagination. But from the first Christianity claimed, as against heathen religions, to be the truth. To suppose that Christians embodied their belief in the uniqueness of Christ in stories that bore the appearance of history, but were really only the work of pious fancy, is to charge them with an offence against one of the first principles of their religion. We do, indeed, find in the ridiculous stories of the

<sup>1</sup> Headlam in *C.Q.R.*, October, 1914. See pp. 23-26.

<sup>2</sup> The question has been raised, How could S. Mary have desired to restrain our Lord, as recorded in Mk 3<sup>31-34</sup>, if she knew of all that is recorded in the stories of His birth? Her estimate of His Person could hardly have been higher than S. Peter's at Caesarea Philippi. Yet he vehemently rebuked the Master whom he had hailed as Messiah. She knew as yet nothing of the glory of the Resurrection.

Apocryphal Gospels the later attempts of Christian imagination to picture the birth and childhood of Christ, and the contrast with the canonical Gospels is most instructive. Such attempts were rejected by the Church as unhistorical. They are valuable only as showing what manner of stories Christians invented when they were unhampered by facts. In short, the Gospel stories cannot be treated as legends unconsciously imported or shaping themselves as the years went on. They are narrated as literal history in the lifetime of those who knew the Mother of Christ.

(iv) To assert that the story of the Virgin-birth may be treated as symbolic, is to misrepresent the place of symbolism. The clause 'born of the Virgin Mary' is in no way comparable to such a clause as 'He sat down at the right hand of the Father'. When we are attempting to describe something that is outside earthly experience we can only employ the language of symbol. We are driven to use metaphors borrowed from this lower world. It is apparent that words which have been coined to express earthly things are inadequate to express heavenly things. In picturing our Lord's ascended life, we can only do our best with human ideas and language. The clause 'He sat down at the right hand of the Father' is only our effort to portray the truth that the highest place of honour in heaven belongs to Him. But when we are dealing with the Virgin-birth we are dealing with an event that, on its physical side, lies within human experience. Human language is as competent to express it as it is to express anything. The language of the first century A.D. was as adequate as our language to-day. To say that the birth-narratives of the Gospels are only symbolic is in effect to say that they are untrue: it is not to reinterpret them but to deny them. As a matter of fact, the Virgin-birth can be supported by analogies from nature far more close than those that can be adduced in the case of some other miracles. Parthenogenesis—to use the scientific term—*i.e.* birth from a female without the intervention of a male, is not an unknown phenomenon. 'The latest investigations show that parthenogenesis can be artificially produced by an appropriate stimulus in many animals in which it does not naturally occur.'<sup>1</sup> Even among mankind there is evidence of a certain tendency to parthenogenesis. Such scientific facts do not, indeed, abolish the uniqueness of the Virgin-birth, but at least they show that its principle is not incredible. They in their measure support the literalness of the story.

(v) The question, however, still remains, What is the spiritual value of the Virgin-birth? What moral need of man does it satisfy?

Let us begin by admitting that we must not make *a priori* assertions about it. We do not dare to say that such a birth was the indispensable condition of an Incarnation, or that by no other means could the entail of sin be broken. All we claim is that the Virgin-birth is in

<sup>1</sup> Harris, *Pro Fide*,<sup>2</sup> p. xl. For evidence of science, see pp. xxxviii-xli.

the fullest accord with the revealed purpose of Christ's coming and with our own highest insight into that purpose.

We may illustrate this by a comparison between the birth of our Lord and the birth of John the Baptist. John's was essentially a birth from the past. In every sense he was a child of old age. His parents were of priestly family, stricken in years, righteous in works of the law. He summed up in himself and his mission both the strength and weakness of the Jewish nation. Theirs was a work of preparation. By the Law was given a knowledge of God's righteousness, a conviction of sin, but not the power to live up to such knowledge. So John could convict men of sin and baptize them with the baptism of repentance, but he could do no more. He waited for one mightier than himself who should baptize with holy Spirit, the breath of new life. But the birth of Jesus Christ of a young maiden of the tribe of Judah by the overshadowing of God's power was in all ways the opposite of the birth of John. Jesus Christ was neither physically, morally, nor spiritually the product of the past. The physical fact was a parable and pledge of the moral and spiritual fact. He brought into humanity what humanity could not achieve for itself, a new and undefiled stream of human life. The entail of weakened will and perverted desire was broken. The alleged parallels from other religions, so far as they really apply, witness to a dim consciousness of this need. Men aspired to be liberated from the fetters of their past and to rise above their inheritance of weakness and shame. Jesus Christ was the starting-point, the re-creation of a new humanity, and not merely the summit of past evolution. We dare not, indeed, affirm that without the Virgin-birth this influx of new life would have been impossible. But we can see how the creative act of God in the physical world was a most fitting counterpart of His re-creative act in the spiritual world.

Again, if Jesus Christ was the natural offspring of Mary and Joseph, it is hard to see how we can regard Him as other than an individual human person. In accordance with ordinary laws of nature the product of such union is in each case a single finite human personality. Christ would therefore be at best an individual man exceptionally favoured by being taken into a unique relation with God. In other words, we find ourselves face to face with a Nestorian Christ, who, as we have seen, cannot be the divine Redeemer known to Christian experience. Again, we find Christ not simply a Son of Man but the Son of Man. His humanity was a universal humanity raised above the limitations of sex and country. He realized the ideal of East and West alike. He combined the most opposite virtues. In other words, the Virgin-birth stands for this, that God did not simply reveal Himself through a single human Person, a Jew, but 'that God once for all and completely incarnated Himself in humanity as His Son, and in that all-comprehensive act made all men His sons—potentially.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Du Bose, *The Gospel in the Gospels*, p. 217.

That is, Jesus Christ is not simply a unique example of manhood outside ourselves, to be admired from afar, but He is the truth of each one of us. We may each find in Him our true self and the power of becoming our true self. Once again, we do not assert that this was not possible without the Virgin-birth; we are content to point out its moral fitness. The spiritual and moral miracle of the existence of Jesus Christ demands an act of God not less unprecedented than the physical miracle.

Lastly, our opponents claim that since a full Christian faith was possible in the earliest days without a belief in the Virgin-birth, it is possible to-day. But it is one thing to be ignorant of a spiritual truth, quite another thing deliberately to reject it, when it has been brought to light. Undoubtedly individuals may abandon a belief in the Virgin-birth and yet retain faith in our Lord's divinity, but it is very questionable whether large bodies of people or the Church as a whole could do so. The experience of the last century tends to show that when men give up a belief in the Virgin-birth of Christ, they pass on to a view of His Person that is not that of the Catholic Church: it may be an up-to-date form of Nestorianism or an open Unitarianism. It is significant that the only opposition to the Virgin-birth in ancient days came from Ebionites and Gnostics, who refused to advance to the Catholic estimate of our Lord's Person. The real central miracle of Christianity that staggers the imagination is the Incarnation. If we once believe that God Himself entered into human life and passed through a human experience, then a belief in the Virgin-birth follows naturally and brings no new difficulty. The historical Incarnation involves a break with the past and a new and unprecedented divine activity, beside which the wonder of the Virgin-birth sinks into insignificance.†

§ 2. The Article then proceeds to affirm the reality of the atoning work of Christ, '*Who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.*'

(a) In any endeavour to enter into the meaning of the Atonement we must distinguish between the fact of the Atonement and attempted explanations of the fact or theories about it. It is the fact that is of primary importance. Through Christ crucified, Christians have found peace with God: they have tasted the joy of forgiveness for past sin: they have received new life and strength for the future. 'Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom 5<sup>1</sup>); 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 Jn 4<sup>10</sup>); Christ 'his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness' (1 Pet 2<sup>24</sup>). These are three typical statements from the New Testament, all bearing witness to a common experience. Christians were convinced



that through Jesus Christ they had passed out of darkness into light. The old sense of condemnation had passed away (Rom 8<sup>1</sup>). They had received a new capacity for righteousness and love and a new hope in living (1 Cor 6<sup>9-11</sup>, Eph 2<sup>12-13</sup>, I Jn 3<sup>14</sup>, etc.). Further, they were no less convinced that this experience might be shared by all men who would come to Christ in faith and repentance. That this vivid conviction of new life in union with God was no passing fancy of the imagination was proved by their changed conduct and by the mutual love and holiness of the Christian fellowship. This is the fact of the Atonement. Through Christ crucified men of all ages have been brought into union with God. The Gospel is in the first instance a proclamation of facts, the invitation to share the pardon and peace won by the Cross of Jesus Christ. At the same time, Christians have quite rightly sought to understand the meaning of the Atonement. As rational beings we are bound to think about what interests us most. Hence the attempts to interpret the saving work of Christ in terms of human life and thought. Such attempts are necessary that the Atonement may make its deepest appeal to the whole of our nature. Just because it is a revelation of God, shedding light both upon the character of God and upon the needs and nature of man, we must strive to grasp the truth that it reveals and bring it home to ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

(b) In Scripture the atoning work of Christ is most often expressed in language borrowed from the sacrifices of the Old Covenant. There is probably no subject on which our ordinary ideas need a more drastic revision than on the meaning of sacrifice. Modern research has shown that the fundamental idea of sacrifice is that of fellowship with God.<sup>2</sup> Sacrifice is found all over the world and seems to spring

<sup>1</sup> The word 'atonement' by its derivation means simply at-one-ment, the bringing together of two parties that have been estranged. (It is so used by Shakspeare, e.g., Richard III, Act i. Scene 3.) But in modern English, atonement has come to acquire the meaning 'reparation' or 'making amends': so to our ears it tends to denote the means by which reconciliation is made possible, rather than the reconciliation itself. In the A.V. 'atonement' occurs only once in N.T. (Rom 5<sup>11</sup>) as a translation of *καταλλαγή*. The R.V. substitutes 'reconciliation'. In the O.T. the R.V. retains 'atonement' in many passages. The word so translated rather means 'propitiation'. The verb 'kipper' comes from a root that means to 'wipe clean'. It is, however, always used figuratively. Thus, it is used of propitiating a person, where the original idea may have been wiping clean a face that is blackened by displeasure. It is also used in the passive of sin being 'wiped out' or cancelled. Elsewhere it is used of God wiping clean either the offence or the offender, where it practically equals forgiving. In a legal sense it is used of a priest making propitiation (or atonement, R.V.) for a person or thing, i.e. wiping it clean by a propitiatory act. In this last sense, at least, it comes to mean the process by which propitiation is made rather than the propitiation itself, that is, it corresponds with the modern use of 'atonement' rather than with its original meaning. (See Driver, Article 'Propitiation' in *Hastings' D.B.* Since this was written, discoveries in Babylonia have made it clear that the root-meaning of 'kipper' is to 'wipe clean' rather than to 'cover' as used to be supposed. Cp. e.g. Dr. Burney, *J.Th.S.*, April, 1910, or *C.Q.R.*, April, 1915, p. 55.)

<sup>2</sup> Cp. S. Augustine's definition of sacrifice: 'Omne opus quod agitur ut sancta societate inhaeramus Deo.' See the whole passage, *De Civitate Dei*, x, 5 and 6.

out of a universal human instinct. Its original meaning is still a matter of dispute.<sup>1</sup> From the nature of the case we cannot now discover who offered the first sacrifice or what he meant by it. The practice may have originated independently at more than one place and not had the same meaning in every place. All that we can do is to note the diverse ideas underlying it as found in historical times. All evidence goes to show that sacrifice has no necessary connexion either with suffering or sin. In the case of friendly gods it was often a simple offering of food made as a tribute of respect or gratitude to the god, as to the head of a tribe. In the case of unfriendly powers it may have been regarded as a bribe to go away and do no more mischief. Again, primitive men claimed to hold communion with the god of their tribe by means of a banquet. Religion, it must be remembered, in primitive times was a purely social concern. The god was the god of the tribe or clan, not of the individual as such. According to primitive ideas communion with the god was effected by eating with him at a common meal. The god, like all the other guests, had his portion of food, which, it may be, was burnt that it might ascend to him. In certain countries the food thus eaten—usually food of a special kind—came to be identified with the flesh of the god himself. The vital union between the tribe and their god was renewed and strengthened by a physical feeding upon the life of the god. These sacrificial meals were occasions of joy and boisterous merriment.<sup>2</sup> Such festal meals are prominent in the earlier parts of the Old Testament. But as the sense of sin grew, men felt that before communion with their god could be attained, the sin or defilement, often in primitive times regarded as physical rather than moral, must be expiated. So the idea of sacrifice as a propitiation, an idea probably present in some degree from the first, was brought to the front. Accordingly, in the later religion of Israel the sin-offering came to be the most prominent. The awakened conscience felt that sin had come between the soul and God and must be removed before communion could be restored. Even so, the older forms of sacrifice, the 'burnt-offerings', which primarily though not exclusively expressed gratitude or homage, and the 'peace-offerings', which concluded in a social meal, still survived. And up to the end certain sacrifices were retained which did not require the death or destruction of any victim such as the meal-offering or the show-bread. In the light of such knowledge we can understand that since Christ by His death had made communion with God possible, that death was inevitably interpreted in the language of sacrifice. Christ had achieved perfectly and for ever all that the old sacrifices had attempted to achieve. In all ancient religions stress was laid on action rather than on belief. What was done and the manner in which it was done was all that

<sup>1</sup> Cp. E. O. James, *The Origins of Sacrifice*.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, Lect. VII, esp. pp. 254-263.

mattered. No doubt certain general ideas lay behind the external rites of sacrifice, but they were vague and disconnected. Sacrifice was offered to attain certain recognized ends, but there was no definite theory of sacrifice. Hence the use of sacrificial terms to express the Atonement does not involve any single and complete theory about the Atonement. It is as true to say that for the first Christians the full meaning of the ancient sacrifices was interpreted by the death of Christ as that the meaning of His death was interpreted by them.

(c) Turning then to Scripture, we find our Lord not only predicting His death and passion but regarding them as the climax of His work. He never viewed them as a failure or even as an interruption to His activity. They had an essential place in His mission. He came not to live only, but to die (e.g. Lk 12<sup>50</sup>, Jn 12<sup>23-24</sup>). He always looked through death to the Resurrection (Mk 8<sup>31</sup>, 9<sup>31</sup>, 10<sup>34</sup>, etc.). He was constrained to die not by outward compulsion but by inward necessity. The Scriptures declared His death to be the will of God (Mk 8<sup>31</sup>, notice δεῖ, 9<sup>12</sup>, 14<sup>21</sup> and 4<sup>9</sup>, Lk 24<sup>26-27</sup>). We ask to what passages of Scripture He referred. Probably certain of the psalms, such as those on which He meditated upon the Cross. Probably, too, the spiritual significance of the Old Testament sacrifices as ordained in the Law. But the clearest passage is that of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah in Is 53. The Servant takes upon him the sins of others (v. 9): his death is a sin-offering (v. 10), making reconciliation for many (vv. 11-12), and is followed by a resurrection. In Lk 22<sup>27</sup> He applies to Himself words from the description of the Suffering Servant. It is in this sense, too, that 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister' (i.e. as a servant) 'and to give his life a ransom for many (λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν)',<sup>1</sup> i.e. to buy back lives forfeited by sin (Mk 10<sup>45</sup>, cp. 1 Tim 2<sup>6</sup>). After His Resurrection in the first days of the Church our Lord is explicitly identified with the Servant (Acts 3<sup>13</sup> and 26, 4<sup>27</sup> and 30, cp. Mt 12<sup>18</sup>). His death upon the Cross is explained as the fulfilment of Is 53 (Acts 8<sup>32-35</sup>). This reinforces the evidence of the Gospels as showing that this interpretation of His Cross rests on our

<sup>1</sup> Λύτρον in LXX is used of the price paid to redeem a first-born son, whose life belonged to Jehovah (Num 3<sup>46</sup>), or a slave (Lev 25<sup>41</sup>), or a captive (Is 45<sup>17</sup>). We may compare the teaching of Mk 8<sup>37</sup>. When a man's life is forfeited, he has nothing to give in exchange wherewith to buy it back. The Greek word λύτρον may be the equivalent of either of two Hebrew words, one of which has definite sacrificial associations, being the substantive from 'kipper'.

The dominant theory of the Atonement in the Church until the time of Anselm, so far as it had one, was based on this metaphor of 'ransom'. The death of Christ was viewed as a ransom paid to the Devil. This presses the metaphor too hard. The word 'ransom' is symbolical of the truth that Christ's death has freed us from slavery, and that this freedom was purchased at a great cost. But when we go on to ask, to whom was the ransom paid, we are pressing the metaphor beyond the limits of the truth that it was selected to express. No answer can be given. Israel was often said to have been ransomed or redeemed from Egypt. Such language laid stress on the mighty exhibition of God's power and the cost of redemption. But obviously no ransom was paid to Pharaoh. (Cp. Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 297 ff.)

Lord's own teaching. The vision of the Transfiguration suggests that it was through meditation upon the Law and the Prophets that our Lord in His human consciousness learnt the divine necessity of His death (Lk 9<sup>30-31</sup>). At the Last Supper in the institution of the Eucharist our Lord clearly attaches a sacrificial value to His death. He views it as inaugurating a new covenant between God and man by which remission of sins was secured to many (Mk 14<sup>24</sup>, Mt 26<sup>28</sup>, cp. Exodus 24<sup>8</sup>). He is in some sense the true Paschal Lamb. As the blood of the Paschal Lamb protected Israel from the angel of death, so His atoning blood averts God's judgment from those who take refuge in it.

In the Epistles our Lord's death is at once compared and contrasted with the leading forms of Jewish sacrifice. In Eph 5<sup>2</sup> the completeness of His self-sacrificing love is expressed under the imagery of the Burnt-offering. In 1 Cor 10<sup>16-21</sup> and probably Heb 13<sup>10</sup> the simile is rather that of the Peace-offering. Christ the Victim is the food of His people. More often His death is likened to the Sin-offering (Rom 3<sup>25</sup> and 8<sup>3</sup>, where περὶ ἁμαρτίας, according to the constant use of LXX, is the technical term for a sin-offering. 1 Pet 2<sup>24</sup> and 3<sup>18</sup>, 1 Jn 4<sup>10</sup>, and Heb 13<sup>11-12</sup>, an isolated passage standing apart from the general argument of the Epistle). Throughout Hebrews it is interpreted by the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement. Elsewhere He is regarded as the Lamb of sacrifice (1 Pet 1<sup>19</sup>, Rev 5<sup>6</sup>, etc., cp. Jn 1<sup>29</sup>) and explicitly as the Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5<sup>8</sup>, cp. Jn 19<sup>36</sup>). Further, the many passages that speak of the 'blood' of Christ imply a similar idea of sacrifice (Rom 5<sup>9</sup>, Col 1<sup>20</sup>, Eph 1<sup>7</sup> and 2<sup>13</sup>, 1 Jn 1<sup>7</sup>, Rev 5<sup>9</sup>, etc.). In short, the whole of the New Testament is permeated by sacrificial thought and language, unfamiliar to our modern minds. We need to get behind it to the ideas of universal human interest that it embodies.

(d) When we consider the Old Testament sacrifices, three leading general ideas stand out and find fulfilment in the atoning death of Christ.

(i) These sacrifices rest upon divine appointment. They are means ordained by God Himself by which His people may be brought back into communion with Him or may realize such communion (cp. 2 Sam 14<sup>14</sup>). They are never viewed as a means of overcoming God's reluctance to forgive, or as earning God's favour. So, in the New Testament the Atonement from first to last proceeds from the love of God. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself' (2 Cor 5<sup>18-19</sup>). 'It was the good pleasure of the Father . . . through him to reconcile all things unto himself' (Col 1<sup>19-20</sup>, cp. Eph 2<sup>4-6</sup>). The Father is always represented as 'sending' the Son to be the Saviour of the world (1 Jn 4<sup>14</sup>, cp. Jn 3<sup>16</sup>). It was God who set forth Christ as propitiatory (Rom 3<sup>25</sup>). Any theory of the Atonement that misrepresents it as an appeasing of an angry Father by a merciful Son not only breaks up the Persons of the Trinity, but contradicts the whole

tenor of Scripture. The initiative of the Atonement is always represented as lying with the Father (cp. Rom 5<sup>9</sup>).<sup>1</sup>

(ii) We may divide the process of Old Testament sacrifice into three main portions, (α) The bringing of the victim to the altar, (β) The death of the victim, (γ) The presentation of the blood before God.

(α) The victim was brought by the offerer to the place of sacrifice. It must be without blemish (Lev 1<sup>3</sup>, etc.). There the offerer laid his hands upon the victim's head, perhaps to signify a very intimate connexion between the offerer and the victim, and made confession of sin. In the case of our Lord these preliminary actions fairly correspond to His life viewed as the approach to Calvary. His life of obedience was, as it were, the bringing of the victim to the door of the tabernacle. He came to do the Father's will. For that end a body was prepared for Him (Heb 10<sup>5</sup>). By His conquest of temptation He proved Himself a Lamb 'without blemish' (Heb 9<sup>14</sup>, 1 Pet 1<sup>19</sup>). He, as it were, laid His hand upon His own life by submitting to the discipline of suffering (Heb 5<sup>9</sup>). What in the case of the animal victim was involuntary and unconscious, was in Him voluntary and conscious. Whereas in the old sacrifices the union between offerer and victim was no more than outward and conventional, Christ was Himself both offerer and victim. Of His own will He gave Himself up to die. His death came to Him in the path of duty and He accepted it as the Father's will.

(β) The victim was slain, not necessarily by the priest at all, since the slaying of the victim was not essentially a priestly act. Perhaps the sole object of this was the setting free of the blood, 'which is the life,' so as to be available for presentation to God. Very possibly it contained also the acknowledgment that sin deserved death.<sup>2</sup> Here, too, the New Testament draws the contrast between the involuntary suffering of an irrational animal and the perfect obedience of the Cross. The death of Christ was the climax of filial obedience (Heb 5<sup>7-9</sup>, Mk 14<sup>36</sup>, Phil 2<sup>8</sup>, Rom 5<sup>19</sup>, etc.). Our Lord voluntarily identified Himself with men, and willed to endure death on their behalf (Gal 1<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> It has been often urged that in parables such as the Prodigal Son forgiveness is in no way connected with the death of Christ. We may reply: First, Christ, like any good teacher, teaches one point at a time. Secondly, in such parables He was addressing men who were approaching God through Himself. He could speak of the Father's forgiveness unconditionally, because He had come from the Father to be and to do all that was needed to make possible that forgiveness. We must remember that in the Epistles stress is laid above all on the Cross and Resurrection, and in the Gospels a very large proportion of space is given to the story of the death and passion.

<sup>2</sup> Probably a majority of modern scholars would dispute this, and hold that there was no idea of transference of sins to the victim and of the victim suffering death as the penalty of sin. Such an idea of penal substitution was certainly not carried through consistently, but very strong arguments can be adduced in its favour. Some such thought underlies Is 53 (cp. 2 Cor 5<sup>21</sup> and 1 Pet 2<sup>24</sup>), and is found in later Judaism. See H. D. B. 'Sacrifice', pp. 340 and 342b, and Mozley, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 14 ff.

2<sup>20</sup>, etc.). As the representative of mankind He offered to the Father a perfect human obedience. Obedience could do no more than die. He made a perfect confession of sin and submitted to death as the due penalty of sin (2 Cor 5<sup>21</sup>). All that the old sacrifices prefigured, He perfectly and in actual fact fulfilled.

(γ) Then, when the blood was shed, the culmination of the sacrifice was reached in the manipulation of the blood by the priest. In the sin-offering it was sprinkled on the horns of the altar. On the Day of Atonement it was carried by the High-priest within the veil and sprinkled on and before the mercy seat. This was the essential act of sacrifice and could only be performed by the priest. It signified not the infliction of death but the offering of life. 'The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life' (Lev 17<sup>11</sup>). The killing of the victim was a necessary means to this end, but still a means (cp. Heb 9<sup>22</sup>). Through the life thus liberated by death propitiation was made. The sin was wiped out and communion with God restored. The New Testament prefers to say that we are saved by the 'blood' of Christ rather than by the 'death' of Christ. That is, we are saved by the life of Christ that was surrendered to God in death, and thus set free to be the means of our atonement. Christ's redeeming work did not end on the Cross. It was consummated when as our high-priest He entered into Heaven to present His life to the Father. 'While the thought of Christ's blood (as shed) includes all that is involved in Christ's Death, the Death of Christ, on the other hand, expresses only a part, the initial part of the whole conception of Christ's Blood. The Blood always includes the thought of the life preserved and active beyond death.'<sup>1</sup> This thought will be developed when we come to the Ascension. We must not isolate the Cross from the Crucified if we wish to understand the meaning of the Atonement. The Cross was indeed the necessary means of our salvation. Only as having been slain, could Christ's life become available for us. But we are saved by a living Christ, not merely by something that He once did. Here again the 'blood' of Christ stands in contrast with the blood of victims. The life of the victims was only conventionally alive after death. But the life of Christ through death is a glorious reality. He has become all that He now is through the Cross. His 'blood' is Himself, His own life. As the 'Lamb that hath been slain' He is the 'propitiation for our sins' (1 Jn 2<sup>2</sup>).

(iii) The purpose of the Old Testament sacrifices was not exhausted by the removal of the sin. The people were restored to full communion with God in order that they might continue in His service. So the object of our Lord's atonement includes far more than a bare

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *The Epistles of S. John*, Note on 'The idea of Christ's Blood', pp. 35-36. Cp. Milligan, *Resurrection*, Note 56.

forgiveness of sins. We are saved in order that we may serve, and in God's service find our true satisfaction. We are redeemed from evil that we may become something good. Through an abiding union with God made possible by Christ we are to live henceforth our true life as Sons of God. Christ is to be to us day by day a living Saviour imparting to us through the Holy Spirit His own life. As redeemed we are progressively to appropriate all the blessings of God's people (1 Pet 1<sup>4</sup>, cp. Rom 8<sup>17</sup>). No view of the Atonement can be satisfactory that ignores the work of the Holy Spirit in us, transforming us into the very likeness of Christ and sanctifying all our life. We are to do all things 'in Christ'. As members of Christ we are to share the joy and peace that the Spirit brings (cp. Gal 5<sup>22-23</sup>, Rom 14<sup>17</sup>). The Christian life here and hereafter is the goal for which we were saved. 'If while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life' (Rom 5<sup>10</sup>).

(e) How then, it may be asked, can the Article speak of Christ dying 'to reconcile the Father to us'? Such language suggests that the Atonement wrought a change of mind in God towards us. We must admit that in all the passages in Scripture in which the word 'reconcile' is employed in connexion with the work of Christ, the fact is expressed the other way round. We are said to be reconciled to God, not God to us. That is to say, the change, according to our use of the term, is said to be wrought in us, not in Him (Rom 5<sup>10-11</sup>, 2 Cor 5<sup>18-20</sup>, Eph 2<sup>8</sup>, Col 1<sup>19-22</sup>). But even if the form of expression in the Article is not scriptural, the truth that underlies it is. The Greek word (*καταλλάσσω*) translated 'reconcile' simply means to re-establish friendly relations between persons.<sup>1</sup> On which side the hostility exists is not determined by the word itself. Thus in Mt 5<sup>24</sup> the grievance is on the side of the brother of the man who is about to offer a sacrifice. Yet it is the man himself who is bidden 'to be reconciled'. In English idiom we should say that the brother needed to be reconciled. The moment that we grasp that the Atonement is at bottom a personal matter, we can see that a change on one side inevitably carries with it a change on the other. Further, we hear much in Scripture of the 'wrath' of God, as a present and not only a future attitude towards sinners (e.g. Rom 1<sup>18</sup>, Eph 5<sup>6</sup>, etc.). So, as unredeemed, men are said to be *ἐχθροί* 'hostile' to God. In some passages this may have a purely active sense, 'hating God,' but in Rom 11<sup>28</sup> it is certainly passive, being opposed to *ἀγαπητοί*, 'beloved,' and this suggests that a passive meaning cannot be entirely excluded elsewhere (e.g. Col 1<sup>21</sup>, Jas 4<sup>4</sup>). Again, it is true that the New Testament never speaks of 'propitiating God'. 'The propitiation is spoken of as being made in the matter of sin or the sinner. . . . That is, the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Bengel on Rom 3<sup>24</sup> *καταλλαγὴ est διπλευρὸς et tollit (α) indignationem Dei adversum nos 2 Cor 5<sup>18</sup>, (β) nostramque abalienationem a Deo 2 Cor 5<sup>20</sup>.*

sin is regarded as an obstacle to communion, which alienates man from God and is removed by the propitiation.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, such words as propitiation (*ἱλασμός*) imply a person in the background. Someone must be propitiated, and who, if not God?<sup>3</sup>

But the real question goes deeper. Since God is holy, His relation to sin must be one of active hostility, not of passive dislike. It is impossible to think of God as not filled with unceasing energy against all that is evil. That is the meaning of the 'wrath of God'. We are too apt to limit our picture of the divine wrath by the analogy of human wrath. In the case of men anger has almost always an element of selfishness. It springs not from a pure love of good and hatred of evil, but from mixed motives, pride, malice, and the like. It is often arbitrary and personal. But even so a true zeal for righteousness involves a certain fierceness against wrong. 'Neither doth he abhor anything that is evil' is a terrible condemnation of a man's character. In God His wrath is not a burst of feeling that overcomes Him and leads Him into actions inconsistent with His character. It is rather one aspect of His abiding love, as it deals with the sin that opposes and wars against that love. It is the reaction of God's holiness against transgressions. It is quite true that God's love never changes. But love that is incapable of moral indignation against all that violates and opposes love, or that is slow in putting forth a destroying energy against it, falls short of the highest love. The Atonement does not create God's love: as we have seen, it starts from that love. But it does enable that love to act differently towards us by removing the sin that has impeded its free activity. By repentance we do not change God's will towards us, but we are changed ourselves, so that God can treat us differently; hence, from our point of view and in relation to us the attitude of God appears to change. The principle on which He treats us is unchanged, but the treatment itself changes. The mind of God toward sin is unaltered—it is our mind towards sin that has to be transformed, not His—but the change in ourselves makes possible a new personal relationship. To say that He is reconciled to us represents a real fact of personal experience. It expresses in the language of human friendship the conviction that through the Cross of Christ we have passed into the full light of God's favour.

(f) The question is often raised, Is the Atonement 'subjective'<sup>3</sup> or 'objective'? That is, does its efficacy lie in the appeal of the Cross to our heart and conscience, or in some work that Christ did outside us? The only true answer is that the Atonement must be both subjective and objective. On the one hand we must remember that the problem of Atonement is very largely a moral problem. If men are to

<sup>2</sup> See Westcott, *Epistles of S. John*, p. 87. Cp. C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, c. v.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the application of the word 'subjective' to theories of the Atonement, see K. E. Kirk in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 255.

be brought into full union with God, their characters must become such that they are capable of entering into this life. The estrangement due to sin is not the result merely of a number of acts of sin, but of the state of mind and soul which issued in these acts. Our Lord died not simply to save us from the penalty of sin but from sin itself. Only men who have learnt to will what God wills, love what God loves, and hate what God hates, are able to enter into the fulness of the divine life. Just as no friendship is possible between men of utterly divergent tastes and ideals, so fellowship with God is impossible so long as we are alienated from Him in our wills and affections. The Atonement, therefore, must certainly be subjective in that it effects an entire change in us. But we must also maintain that the Atonement is also objective. By our sinful acts we have set free forces of desolation and disorder in the world. The evil consequences of our acts are not limited to our own characters. Mere penitence in us cannot undo the past. Hence, a true atonement must not only change us, but, as it were, provide healing and restorative power by which the evil consequences of our sins in others and in the world at large may be repaired. Again, though the Atonement is primarily a moral problem, as between persons, still we should hesitate to say that it was only a moral problem. Our relation to Almighty God is more complex than our relation to our neighbour. He is our Creator and Preserver and King, with an unconditional claim upon our whole lives. Sin as against Him is something at once more rebellious and more unnatural than as against even the closest or the most authoritative of our fellow-men. Human analogies at their highest go a very long way in attempting to understand the meaning of the Atonement, but it is rash to assume that they go the whole way.

(i) Scripture quite recognizes the subjective value of the Atonement. In Rom 3<sup>25</sup> ff. the Cross is viewed as the demonstration of the seriousness of sin. It has made it possible for God to forgive us without the danger of seeming to be indifferent to sin (cp. 2<sup>4</sup>). It is an exhibition of the righteousness of God, bringing home to our conscience the awfulness of sin and showing up its blackness. Elsewhere Scripture speaks of the Cross as manifesting the infinite self-sacrifice of God's love (Rom 5<sup>8</sup>). We see God on the Cross bearing the sins of men (cp. 1 Pet 2<sup>21</sup> ff.). Calvary is the disclosure in time of the wounds that our disobedience is ever inflicting upon the heart of God. There we see the effect of our sins on the love of God laid bare. In the light of such a revelation we cannot continue to go on wounding one who bears our blows so unresistingly and meekly. His patient love must win our hearts and smite our consciences with shame. By every sin that we commit we crucify Christ afresh (cp. Heb 6<sup>6</sup> and 10<sup>29</sup>). Thus the Cross leads us to repentance. It arouses in us new and deeper sorrow for sin. The love of the Crucified melts the stubbornness of our hearts. The Cross is at once the declaration of God's eternal

willingness to bear with men and to forgive the penitent sinner and also the means of awakening penitence in us. The Cross has proved itself able to draw out love and penitence and so to make men at one with God. For the Cross is the supreme example of the purifying energy of self-sacrificing love.<sup>1</sup>

(ii) On the other hand, the above view of the Atonement does not express the whole truth. It does not do justice to all the language of Scripture. From first to last Scripture grounds our acceptance with God not simply on what Christ was or taught, but on what He has done. No doubt it is true that He could only do all that He did by being what He was. But it is no less true that He has become the Saviour that He is to-day, by doing what He did upon the Cross. All the language of sacrifice, all the phrases about the 'blood' of Christ involve the belief that His death opened up new possibilities, and that on the Cross He achieved an atoning act in some sense independent of its apprehension by us. The Atonement is the divine counterpart in action to the 'wrath of God', which wrath a merely subjective view is obliged to minimize or explain away. God is indeed love, but He is holy love, and such love when faced with sin can only issue in active antagonism. Christ on the Cross is not only the patient sufferer, but by His acceptance of death acknowledges the justice of the divine wrath. The death of Christ has a Godward as well as a Manward aspect, though we may find difficulty in entering into its meaning.

From another standpoint the merely 'subjective' view fails to satisfy the demands of our moral nature. We need something deeper than even the fullest disclosure of God's love; we need a transformation of the entire man from within, the infusion of new life and strength. Though we may hesitate to set a limit to the redeeming influence of love, our mind and conscience demand that any revelation of love shall be in the closest relation to our own moral needs. We feel that the Cross is more than a bare exhibition of divine love. Why should the exhibition of love take that form?<sup>2</sup> At present in many quarters there is a prejudice against any doctrine of substitution. Doubtless there have been gross and immoral doctrines of substitution. Men have supposed that so much suffering was the penalty for sin and that the penalty was paid by our Lord's suffering on the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Dinsmore, *The Atonement in Literature and Life*, pp. 232-233. 'As the flash of the volcano discloses for a few hours the elemental fires at the earth's centre, so the light on Calvary was the bursting forth through historical conditions of the very nature of the Everlasting. There was a cross in the heart of God before there was one planted on the green hill outside of Jerusalem. And now that the cross of wood has been taken down, the one in the heart of God abides, and it will remain so long as there is one sinful soul for whom to suffer.'

<sup>2</sup> 'To die in order to display love, if there were no other adequate cause for dying, would be to reduce the Atonement to a mere pageant.' *Life of Bp. Edward Bickersteth*, p. 408.

Cross, or that the Father was pleased by the mere quantity of suffering, not by the obedience perfected through suffering. They have forgotten that Christ died not merely to save us from the punishment of sin but from sin itself. But there is also a true and most valuable doctrine of substitution. Scripture teaches most clearly that Christ came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. As our representative He offered to the Father the homage of a perfected human life, obedient even unto death, a full confession of the sinfulness of sin, and a willingness to endure that death which is its punishment.<sup>1</sup> He did all this 'on our behalf', not that we might continue to be disobedient and impenitent, but that through Him we might have the power to do as He did. He created a new possibility of human obedience and penitence which He imparts through the Holy Spirit to His members. Thus His obedience and hatred of sin are not a substitute for our own in the sense that we need not trouble to acquire them. But they are a substitute for our own in the sense that we could never have achieved them by ourselves, and only through Him are we now able to begin to achieve them. As we shall see, God accepts us here and now in Christ, since, in Christ, there is the possibility of our becoming all that we ought to be. Our present peace with God depends not upon the emotions aroused in us by the Cross of Christ, nor even in the promptings after holiness that the love of God awakens in us, but on what Jesus Christ is now and became through the Cross. In a very real sense He was there made sin for us (2 Cor 5<sup>21</sup>, 1 Pet 2<sup>24</sup>). He paid the price of our redemption, that through Him we might be reconciled to God.

*Note on the 'Victory' theory.*—Dr. Aulen's book, *Christus Victor* (English translation 1931), drew fresh attention to this aspect of the Atonement. He maintains that the theme of Christ's work as *God's victory* over sin, death, and the devil dominates the thought of the New Testament and the Patristic Age on redemption. This may therefore be called the 'classic' theory of the Atonement. In contrast to this S. Anselm in the early Middle Ages for the first time gave a clear formulation of the 'Latin' theory of a *just satisfaction* offered to the Father by Christ *as man* through His death. In reaction to this Latin theory, based on legal ideas of justice and penitential works, there arose the Abelardian or 'subjective' view of Christ's death as God's appeal to man to repent. The characteristic defects of these two lines of thought do not appear in the victory theory, which makes no use

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Sparrow Simpson, *Reconciliation between God and Man*, e.g. "The heavenly Father heard something entirely new upon the earth. It was a human voice pronouncing perfect judgment on human sin; perfectly concurring in the judgment of the Father upon sin; gathering up and pressing into one and perfecting all the earth's imperfect reparations; and offering a perfect sorrow for the sin of the world" (p. 128). It is this truth that Article 31 and the Prayer of Consecration express, when they say that Christ made 'satisfaction' for the sins of the world. The term 'satisfaction' is not scriptural but it represents an essential part of the teaching of Scripture on the death of Christ.

of legal views of sin and satisfaction, and at the same time sees redemption as an objective work of the divine power and love.

The merits of the 'classic' theory as expounded by Aulen are clear. It undoubtedly reproduces much of the thought of the New Testament and the Fathers. It does not isolate the death on the Cross from the victory of the Resurrection. It takes into account the corporate character of sin. It insists that the work of redemption was initiated and carried through by God, who by Christ's death and resurrection achieved the eschatological victory over all the powers of evil. Room must be found for the element of victory in any complete view of the Atonement. Our Lord's perfect obedience was achieved at the cost of conflict. Moreover, redemption conceived as the coming of the Kingdom of God, necessarily involved conflict with and triumph over sin, death and the devil, which all contradict the divine sovereignty (cp. Mt 12<sup>28</sup>). The Lord's resurrection was thus the first-fruits of the victorious new creation of the last days; to participate in this new creation is for Christ's members their eschatological hope, partially realized here and now in the life of grace. No doctrine of Christ's redeeming work can afford to neglect these points.

But against Aulen it must be noticed that Anselm's doctrine contained a truth, whatever defects may be found in his presentation of it. The primitive conception of redemption included the idea of a sacrificial offering 'for sin', made to the Father by Christ as man's Head and Representative<sup>1</sup> *from within the human race*. Just as no sacrifice for sin could be perfect without the conquest of sin, so the conquest of sin on behalf of mankind could not bring back man to God without a sacrificial acknowledgement of sin made by the Son of Man to the Father. By itself the victory theory is therefore incomplete, and in some forms of its emphasis on a *divine* victory it is in danger of minimizing the significance of our Lord's self-identification with man in the Incarnation.†

<sup>1</sup> For a note on Christ as 'man's Representative' or 'inclusively Man', see *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 277.