THE PROBLEM OF NATURAL EVIL
In The Light Of
THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE OF GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

For several years, as a believer in God, I have sought after the raison d'etre of involuntary frustrations of the ideal fulfillment of the lives of innocent and righteous persons. The thesis which I am submitting herewith, therefore, represents the thought which I have given this subject over a period of years, as well as the research which I have conducted during these past two years in Glasgow University.

The bibliography, consisting of some one hundred and fifty volumes, given in detail at the back, reveals the printed sources of my material. Most of these books are by or about persons whose views are treated herein, many of them are general studies of the same problem as that on which I have written, and several of them make only incidental reference to my subject; but all of them, in varying degrees, have been an enrichment to my life and thought, and have contributed, either directly or indirectly to the preparation of this dissertation.

The originality of my work consists in both its approach and its conclusion. In approach it is original on two counts: first, because it is an attempt to separate natural evil from moral evil and to treat only the former; and second, because it contains specialized study of the relation of the Incarnation to the problem of involuntary evil. In its conclusion there is originality in both types of solution which are there worked

out. In the philosophical, armchair solution to the theoretical problem of why natural evil exists, it is novel that the two causes given--natural laws and a "fall" in animate creation--should be affirmed by the same writer; and, as a corollary of this, it is new to the field to understand that natural laws originate the inorganic instruments of frustration, whereas the "fall" in animate creation is the cause of organic ones. In the incarnational, life-situation solution to the practical problem of what to do about the evils as they confront us in our empirical existence, there is originality in linking the melioristic approach to an incarnational emphasis and in affirming that just as the Death of Christ is only a provisional redemption from moral evil, awaiting as it does man's appropriating faith, so the Incarnation is only a provisional redemption of natural evil, and awaits man's active confrontation of such evil, as he becomes a workman together with his condescended God, who is metaphysically and experientially one-with-him, in the holy business of preventing involuntary evils and of transforming them into creativity when, not having avoided them, they tend to frustrate the ideal fulfillment of his life.

This thesis, in its present form, would have been quite impossible apart from the step-by-step supervision, both in procedure and in actual content, given so genially and so painstakingly by the Reverend Professor J. G. Riddell, D.D., ~~Regius~~ Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, Glasgow University. As I have prepared it, also, I have been in

constant awareness of my debt to Edwin Lewis, Th.D., Emeritus Professor of Systematic Theology and the Philosophy of Religion at Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, under whom I majored in theological studies from 1947 until 1950. Less direct, perhaps, but nevertheless of underlying significance, is the contribution made by S. S. White, Ph.D., Professor of Systematic Theology at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, under whom I studied from 1940 until 1947, first at Olivet Nazarene College, Kankakee, Illinois and later at the Kansas City seminary. My wife, too, has contributed immensely first, by listening patiently as I have read aloud, for her reactions, passage after passage; second, by encouraging me to study until late hours month after month even although it has meant that she has had to move about our one room quietly and speechless; and third, by typing most of the second and final drafts.

J. K. G.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

CHAPTER
VIII. CONCLUSION, Continued

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Evil may be defined as whatever frustrates the fulfillment of ideal human existence. When the frustration of such existence is volitional, on man's part, it may be called moral evil. Examples of such evil are disobedience to God's laws, selfishness, and the will to disregard an acknowledged ideal. When the frustration of ideal human existence is unrelated to man's volition, it may be called natural evil. This type manifests itself in such occurrences as earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, tidal waves, floods, famines, fires, accidents, pain, disease, and imbecility, and in such aspects of creation as poisonous reptiles, ferocious beasts, flies, mosquitoes and disease germs.

Whether moral or natural, evil may be either intrinsic or instrumental. It is intrinsic when in and of itself a frustration of ideal human existence, and instrumental when it contributes to such frustration. A theft of money would be an example of intrinsic moral evil, whereas an automobile used in a theft would be an instrumental moral evil. A disease would be an example of intrinsic natural evil, and germs of disease would be a type of instrumental natural evil.

As moral and as natural, and whether instrumental or

intrinsic, evil is a problem to man. In its instrumental manifestations, however, both moral and natural, it produces a less serious problem than when it is intrinsic. This is because it is only contributory to frustration when it is instrumental, but frustration which is actual when it is intrinsic. Similarly, in its moral aspect, evil is less serious a problem than when in its natural form. This is because the responsible agent of moral evil is more easily located than is that of natural evil. Moral evil, just because of its volitional character, is quite readily seen to arise from man's prostituted use of freedom; he himself, of his own choosing, brings it upon himself. In natural evil, however, man's volition is not involved at all. Frustrations of his ideal existence come to him quite apart from his own choosing; he neither selects the instruments of them, nor chooses within the sphere of their realized character.

Natural evil, then, more than moral evil, and particularly when in its intrinsic form, is a problem to man. Indeed, it constitutes one of the gravest of all the problems which he has pondered. Of natural evil Alfred Hoernle says, "It is undoubtedly one of the gravest problems which the philosophy of religion has to face"(Hoernle, Matter, Life, Mind and God, p. 9). Leslie Weatherhead writes, "The subject of pain has haunted my thinking ever since I began to think for myself at all"(Why Do Men Suffer, p.9). Radoslav Tsanoff speaks of it as man's "...overwhelming problem"(Tsanoff, The Nature of

Evil, p. viii). John S. Whale calls it "...this notorious problem which has vexed thought and tried faith in every age of human history"(Whale, The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil, p. 13). John Fiske declares, "Ever since human intelligence became enlightened enough to grope for a meaning and purpose in human life, this problem of the existence of (natural) evil has been the burden of man"(Fiske, Through Nature to God, p. 11).

The problem reaches its most acute form in the suffering of innocent and righteous persons. If natural evil should come only to mature persons, and solely to the wicked among them, its raison d'etre would not be difficult to understand. Such persons would be receiving their just desert. But natural evils affect the well-being of infants and children, and also of twice-born men.

A person wonders why five of his twelve brothers died during infancy or childhood. He wonders, further, why one of the spared brothers has come by far more natural frustration than have all the others combined, in December of 1951 adding to fifteen years of illness an arm amputation, and in February of 1952 a dread disease. Why should an intimate college friend, twice-born on any reckoning, be viewed as a lifeless form two days after leaving lectures? Why should two other college intimates, also twice-born, have been blown to bits in a powder plant explosion? One's mind traverses years spent in the pastorate, too, and lingers now with the innocent child who has met death by accident and now with the

suffering saint--and one wonders why.

In a wider range of experience, why do righteous and innocent persons suffer from earthquakes in California, volcanoes in Japan, tidal waves in Hawaii? Why do torrents of water, in many places of the world, unchecked by the best that man can do, rush down from mountains into the valleys and ravage whole cities? Why do many innocent and righteous persons in China suffer from famine, due to weather conditions over which they have no control? Why do fires, caused by spontaneous combustion or unforseen explosion, and not by willfilness, work havoc to whole families? Why did fifty-one Roman Catholics, on a pilgrimage to Rome, die (November 16, 1950) in an Alpine plane crash? Why do survivors of accidents, regardless of their innocence or guilt, suffer pain even for years? Why do children, innocent because unaccountable, and mature persons, righteous--as human righteousness goes--because twice-born, suffer from incurable disease? Why are some persons imbeciles through unavoidable accident or other non-volitional causes, as opposed to such causes as alchoholism and syphilis? Why do poisonous reptiles lie in wait for human victims? Why are there, in our forests, ferocious beasts which wait to pounce upon men? Why are there flies to spoil a good man's ointment? Why mosquitoes to carry germs? Why germs?

The modern counterparts of the Psalmist's problem are no less real than the stones against which he pictured men dashing their feet, or the lions and adders which beset their way. A. C. Welch writes, "Many good men, whose trust in God was very real, have stumbled heavily over the rough stones of life. The lion, before it springs, and the adder, before it strikes, do not stop to consider whether their prey fears God or not"(Welch, The Psalter, in Life, Worship, and History, p. 111).

Such frustrations of ideal human existence befalling, as they do, the just as well as the unjust, are not a philosophical problem to the consistent atheist. He can only maintain the placid attitude of the Stoic, and bear things as best he can. Minot J. Savage rightly declares,

> If we are the product of mere blind, unthinking, unintelligent force, then what is the use of our fretting? There is nobody to complain to; there is nobody to get angry with; there is nobody to charge with injustice. There is no court of appeal, there is no hope of redress(Savage, Life's Dark Problems, p. 4).

Radoslav Tsanoff affirms, "...a problem of evil, the judgment of anything as good or bad, evaluation of any sort, cannot be an integral part of a mechanistic system"(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 3). Frank Ballard gives the same insight when he writes, "Plainly, if chance and luck rule the universe, there can be no shock nor difficulty concerning anything that happens"(Ballard, Why Does Not God Intervene?, p. 6).

John S. Whale says, "Give up this pathetic belief in God, which is causing all the trouble, and there is no longer any problem"(Whale, The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil, p. 28).

Nor should the involuntary frustration of ideal human life be a problem for the agnostic. Not knowing whether or not God exists, the agnostic would not have any positive reason for rebuff. On this point John S. Whale asserts, "The problem of evil, which is very acute for theism, does not arise for agnosticism"(Ibid., p. 28).

The problem is particularly acute for the theist. It arises from his endeavor to reconcile the undesirable, non-volitional human experiences with belief in a God who, either from His will or His nature, evidently causes or permits the evil. And it is, for him, a most baffling problem. Frank Ballard writes, "It is, almost everywhere, an ever-troubling perplexity to thoughtful believers"(Ballard, Why Does Not God Intervene?, p. 31). Preston Bradley says, "The greatest problem which I and all other Christian leaders face is: why do the good suffer"(Stated Friday, January 31, 1947, on the radio program "Hymns of All Churches", originating in Chicago). E. S. Brightman affirms, "The quantity and distribution of evils make difficult the belief in a good God....No objection to religious faith compares in seriousness with that arising from the fact of evil"(Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 240). Harris Franklin Rall asserts, "The fact of evil has

always been the greatest single obstacle to faith"(Rall, Christianity, p. 313). Daniel Thompson declares, "Religiously considered, the problem of evil is the most perplexing and seemingly the most insoluble of any that pertain to theism" (Thompson, The Problem of Evil, p. 314). Nels Ferre, writing as a theist, says: "Evil has always been my central problem" (Ferre, Evil and the Christian Faith, p. ix). Floyd Hiatt Ross insists, "The problem of evil must be faced squarely by the theist"(Ross, Personalism and the Problem of Evil, p. ix). And he asks, "Can one continue to think badly of evil without thinking badly of God"(Ibid., p. ix)?

Attempts to solve this problem, so significant for theism, have taken--and indeed, can only take--three general forms: a few attempts have been pessimistic; many have been optimistic; and some, particularly in modern times, have been melioristic. A chapter devoted to each of these three general attitudes comprises Part One of this thesis. Part Two consists of a specialized study of the ancient and modern emphasis upon the doctrine of the Incarnation, in its relation to involuntary evil. Both the general and the special research is used, in the conclusion, in order to show that the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, when properly understood, points toward an answer to the abysmal mystery.

PART ONE: GENERAL APPROACH

CHAPTER II

PESSIMISM

Pessimism is the theory which "would explain away both intrinsic and instrumental good and would leave only intrinsic evil and instruments perfectly adapted to achieving evil"(E. S. Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 243). In its extreme form it holds that evil is "rooted and dominant in the very heart of ultimate reality..." (Radoslava Tsanoff, Nature of Evil, p. 7). In such extreme, it is a position of "...pandiabolism,..."(Ibid., p. 7). In Hamlet's soliloquy we find the theory stated practically:

> To die: to sleep;
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wish'd (Act III, Scene I).

Othello also stated what pessimists believe when, after striking deceptive Iago with the sword, he exclaimed:

> I'ld have thee live; for, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die(Act V, Scene II).

James Thomson states it blasphemously in his City of Dreadful Night:

> Who is most wretched in this dolorous place?
> I think myself; yet I would rather be
> My miserable self than He, than He
> Who formed such creatures to His own disgrace.

> The vilest thing must be less vile than Thou
> From whom it had its being, God and Lord!
> Creator of all woe and sin! abhorred,
> Malignant and implacable! I vow
>
> That not for all Thy power furled and unfurled,
> For all the temples to Thy glory built,
> Would I assume the ignominious guilt
> Of having made such men in such a world.
> (Quoted in Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p.7)

There are at least three principal types of pessimism. They are the religious, the philosophical, and the scientific.

Religious Pessimism

Religious pessimism is an embittered despair arising from frustrated religious strivings. One of the most conspicuous examples of this type of pessimism is the religion of Buddhism.

Gautama, founder of Buddhism, became deeply troubled by prevalent evidences of evil in nature. In his Indian village, he was touched by the human plight. He saw the sick, the dying; the lame, the halt. He saw aged men groping about unaided, and aimless. In the face of this situation he asked the question, "Why?"

At twenty-nine he even left his wife and son, in search of the answer. Not in philosophy did he seek the solution. Not to the crude science of his day did he turn. His gropings were in the religious realm.

And for him there were only gropings; there was no answer for him. Evil was not justified. Its existence was not viewed as purposive. There was no raison d'etre of

natural evil. A religious pessimism was the result.

Gautama propounded "Four Noble Truths". Different writers state the four truths somewhat differently, as they put into outline Gautama's sermon[1] which was preached at Benares to the five companions of his hermit life; but the four truths are usually recognizable, whoever has stated them. Burnouf states them briefly. He says that they are "Sorrow, the production of sorrow, the extinction of sorrow, the path which conducts to the extinction of sorrow"(Introduction to Buddhism, p. 629, quoted by Marcus Dods, in Mohammed, Buddha and Christ, p. 165). An authoritative rendering is given by A. S. Geden, in an article on "Buddha" in The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings. He writes, "All existence involves suffering; suffering is caused by desire, especially desire for continuance of existence; the suppression of desire therefore will lead to the extinction of suffering; this deliverance can only be effected by the Noble Eight-fold Path. These are the

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[1]The following four paragraphs are from this sermon, and enlarge upon the Four Noble Truths: "'Now this, O recluses, is the noble truth concerning suffering. Birth is painful, and so is old age; disease is painful, and so is death. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant; and any craving that is unsatisfied, that, too, is painful....

Now this, O recluses, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering. Verily it originates in that craving thirst which causes the renewal of becomings, is accompanied by sensual delight, and seeks satisfaction now here, now there--that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the passions, or the craving for a future life, or the craving for success in this present life. (Continued on next page)

aryasatyani, or Noble Truths, the four terms of which are duhka, 'pain'; samudaya, 'cause'; nirodha, 'suppression'; marga, 'way' or 'path'"(Vol. II, p. 882). Of these truths Alfred Martin writes, "However much Buddhists differ on other points, they all are agreed on these"(Martin, Great Religious Teachers of the East, p. 60).

For the Buddhist this is not a good world; sorrow is universal: "...birth is painful, disease is painful, death is painful, contact with the unpleasant is painful"(Ibid., p. 60). Sorrow is everywhere present because men have desires, and the path to redemption from having to come back to this world of sorrows, after death, is that of rooting out of all desires while in this existence.

Existence is looked upon as being unwanted, even in the very best kind of a re-embodiment. Buddhists do not want to exist. Extinction in the oblivious state of Nirvana becomes the goal of each adherent of the religion. This individual extinction is his salvation. It comes by a series of

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"Now this, O recluses, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of suffering. Verily it is the destruction in which no craving remains over, of this very thirst; the laying aside of, the getting rid of, the being free from, the harbouring no longer of, this thirst.

"'Now this, O recluses, is the noble truth concerning the way which leads to the destruction of suffering. Verily it is this Eight-fold noble path; that is to say: Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Rapture"(from Professor Rhys David's translation and quoted in Annie H. Small's Buddhism, pp.24, 25).

reincarnations.

Philosophical Pessimism

Philosophical pessimism is a type of embittered despair which arises from an exaggerated dependence upon the human reason as an instrument of explaining the evils of life. Arthur Schopenhauer, the eighteenth century German philosopher, is probably the most noted example of this type of pessimism.

He is considered by many to be the arch-pessimist of all time. He was an "...antirationalist, pessimist, atheist; 'tough' as opposed to 'tender' minded, a wild ass in the desert of philosophy"(Dewitt H. Parker (ed.), Schopenhauer Selections, p. ix).

Some philosophers "...tend to look upon themselves as apologists for the cosmos, press-agents for the Deity; the smell of theology is still strong upon them, and they are never quite content until they have justified the ways of God to man"(Will Durant (ed.) The Works of Schopenhauer, p.ix). Many other philosophers "...dig their heads into the sand at the sight or the mention of evil"(Ibid., p. ix). Not so with Schopenhauer; he became the extreme opposite of this type of optimism.

One of Schopenhauer's editors says that for the philosopher evil is:

> ...no accidental or incidental fact in the world, but inescapable, essential. It is our central illusion, he tells us, to suppose that we are destined to be happy. Evil is primary; good, secondary. Following Hobbes, Schopenhauer

> defines the good as the objective of desire; but desire itself is painful; hence the underlying motive in desire is to get rid of desire itself. The good is therefore negative, not positive; it is the erasing of a burden(Schopenhauer, (ed. by Parker), Schopenhauer Selections, p. xii).

Tsanoff explains his position thus:

> We can clearly see, then, that from Schopenhauer's point of view pleasure is the exception; pain, the rule in human life. Pain is the fundamental, positive, and primary; pleasure is negative and secondry, the temporary alleviation of pain(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 286).

Of his own writings, four rather brief essays are particularly pessimistic. These are "On Suicide", "On Education", "Of Woman", and "On Noise". In the first he says, "The inmost kernel of Christianity is the truth that suffering--the Cross--is the real end and object of life"(Schopenhauer, (Ed. by Will Durant), The Works of Schopenhauer, "On Suicide", p. 435).

In his essay captioned "A Dialogue", he states his pessimistic Atheism. He writes, "Theism lies like a mountain on all intellectual, and chiefly on all philosophical efforts, and arrests or stunts all progress"(Ibid., "A Dialogue", p. 470). He also affirms, "It is false, that state, justice, law cannot be upheld without the assistance of religion and its dogmas; and that justice and public order need religion as a necessary complement, if legislative enactments are to be carried out" (Ibid., "A Dialogue", p. 470). A statement which summarizes his views as to religion is that it is "a pack of lies"(Ibid., "A Dialogue", p. 483). As proof of this he writes, "The

fruits of Christianity were religious wars, butcheries, crusades, inquisitions, extermination of the natives in America, and the introduction of African slaves in their place"(Ibid., "A Dialogue", p. 490).

Schopenhauer was primarily a philosopher. He had Buddhist leanings, but was not particularly religious. He was not opposed to science, but it was not his peculiar interest. His interest lay in the realm of rational processes. Hence, rather than intuition or faith, and in preference to observation and experimentation, he chose theoretic reason as his instrument of investigating truth. His particular use of reason choked out all elements of a vigorous faith, and led him to an avowed pessimism regarding life and existence.

Scientific Pessimism

In scientific pessimism there is disparagement of life and existence as a result of the exclusive dependence upon the data derived from observation and experimentation in the sphere of natural phenomena.

Joseph Wood Krutch is a leading contemporary representative of this type of pessimism. He is noted chiefly for his book The Modern Temper. The "temper" which he describes in this book is his own. It is atheism, despair, pessimism, stemming out of the problem of natural evil and based upon an implicit dependence upon sense data. He calls his "temper" the "modern" one because it is scientific as opposed to traditional and emotional, and because he thus

considers it "up to date".

In Mr. Krutch's view there is no purpose in nature. He declares, "The universe...was not designed to suit man's needs"(Joseph Wood Krutch, The Modern Temper, p. 7). He further asserts, "Nature's purpose, if purpose she can be said to have, is no purpose of his (man's) and is not understandable in his terms"(Ibid., p. 8). Our author refers to nature's "...ruthless indifference to his (man's) values, and the blindness of her irresistible will, which strike terror to his soul"(Ibid., p.8). Mr. Krutch also states that nature "...has no ends which the human mind has been able to discover or comprehend"(Ibid., p. 39).

It is probably this assumption, that there is no design in nature, which led to Mr. Krutch's atheism. Speaking of the modern temper, in which he includes his own mood, he writes: "Those who are its victims do not and never can expect to believe in God"(Ibid., p. xvi). He also declares, "For the cozy bowl of the sky anchored in a protecting curve above him he (man) must exchange the cold immensities of space, and, for the spiritual order which he has designed, the chaos of nature"(Ibid., p. 8).

In Krutch's world, devoid of purpose and without a Purposer, man is of no more importance than an insect, and far more despicable. He writes,

> Nature, in her blind thirst for life, has filled every possible cranny on the rotting earth with some sort of fantastic creature, and among them man is

> but one--perhaps the most miserable of all, because he is the only one in whom the instinct of life falters long enough to enable it to ask the question, 'Why?'(Ibid., p.9).

Of man's unimportance Mr. Krutch also asserts, "There is no reason to suppose that his own life has any more meaning than the life of the humblest insect that crawls from one annihilation to the next"(Ibid., p. 9).

When purpose is denied, God disavowed, and man equated with "the humblest insect that crawls", a practical, pessimistic despair is the logical result. Mr. Krutch took this step. When "...we survey our world," he declares, "we may permit ourselves to exclaim, a little rhetorically perhaps:

> Hail, horrors, hail,
> Infernal world! and thou profoundest hell,
> Receive thy new possessor(Ibid., p. 248).

The above having been written, it appears that the author tried to look about him but saw only blackness. He seems to have realized that he had blown the light entirely out, but did not want it that way. On the last page of the volume, therefore, he writes:

> If we cannot feel ourselves great as Shakespeare did, if we no longer believe in either our infinite capacities or our importanceto the universe, we know at least that we have discovered the trick which has been played upon us and that whatever else we may be, we are no longer dupes(Ibid., p. 249).

Then he looked at what he wrote and called it cowardice. "No," he thought, "I shall be brave." So he wrote--it is next to the last sentence of the book--"Ours is a lost cause and there is no place for us"(Ibid., p. 249).

Dr. Edwin Lewis once said, "The best criticism of

Comte is exposition" (Lecture in "Philosophical Theism," Drew Seminary, 1949-50). That is the way the present writer feels about Krutch's pessimism. Therefore, suffice it to say this: Mr. Krutch's intellectual delination of man's worthlessness, set forth with such admirable keenness of thinking, plus the very fact that he gave any time at all to the writing of a book for men to read, argue both against the worthlessness of man and against the utter futility of his existence.

Criticism of Pessimism

Henry Van Dyke said that pessimism is "...the bitter tincture drawn from the twisted, tangled roots of sorrowful perversity which underlie the life of man" (Henry Van Dyke, The Gospel for a World of Sin, p. 17). This is often the case; pessimism often comes to be believed when the sorrows and perversities of life have battered unrelentingly and hard 'gainst the human frame. This situation of adversity obtained as relates to all three men whose views have been studied in the present chapter. Frank Ballard, however, cautiously and wisely declares that "...the darkness of the mystery of suffering ought not to prevent our seeing the Divine face with at least sufficient clearness to save us from pessimism and despair"(Frank Ballard, Why Does Not God Intervene, p. 62).

Gautama appealed to religious intuition; Schopenhauer, to rational processes; and Krutch, to scientific data. By

the use of these methodologies each went into pessimism. The present research is later to take a turn which will be an investigation into the question of whether or not the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation points a way out of pessimism.

NOTE

Because he gave so much direct attention to the problem of natural evil, and because he has been of wide influence upon modern philosophy, the thought of David Hume should not be entirely overlooked in a study of the problem of involuntary evil. It has been decided, however, to relegate the treatment of his thought to a note only, because, according to one's interpretation of him, he may be understood to represent any one of a number of thought types. And it has been decided to place the note at the end of this chapter on Pessimism because Hume is so often regarded as pessimistic, a reaction to him which is certainly valid if it is based upon Hume's oft-stated disregard for what Christians in general believe and practise.

Hume was not a religionist; he did not readily bow to the gods. He was a combination of philosopher and scientist, his equipment being the human reason, his methodology being observation and experimentation, and his raw material being the data of sense experience.

Applying his reason, scientifically, to the empirical data derived from the normal functioning of the senses, he became, epistemologically, a sceptic, and at least approached solipsism or even nihilism. He denied the existence of a world external to us, holding that although we have a stream of ideas and impressions about an external world, that constant flow of data is not caused by an existing external world. He even denied that the self or mind which receives these ideas and impressions has any permanency so that it is continuous with itself, the same one instant as the next.

But this epistemological scepticism does not exhaust Hume's teaching. When he applied his reason to the data of sense experience, as that data related to the question of God's existence, he concluded that without question God exists. Indeed, this writer interprets him as affirming that reason can even demonstrate certain qualities of God's nature.

That Hume believed in God's existence may be supported from numerous passages in his works. In the section entitled

"Of a Particular Providence and of a Future Life", contained in his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, even although disguising his thought by supposing he is speaking for the ancient Epicurus, Hume says that "...the chief or sole argument for a divine existence (which I never questioned) is derived from the order of nature;..."(Hume, Enquiry, ed. by L. A. Selby-Bigge, p. 135). What Hume here says may reasonably be understood to be his own view; the interjection of that parenthetical expression can hardly be interpreted otherwise than as a personal confession of the writer. In the opening of his Natural History of Religion, also, Hume affirms his belief in the existence of God. He writes, "The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent Author, and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion." In his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion Hume certainly teaches God's existence. In that work three characters, Demea, Philo and Cleanthes, discuss natural theology, most particularly from the standpoint of the design argument for the existence of a Supreme Being. It is disputed which character is Hume himself, but all three of them affirm God's existence. Demea, the defender of orthodoxy, naturally supports it, but none consider him to be Hume; his thought, therefore, need not be mentioned. Cleanthes says,

> Look round the world: contemplate the whole and every part of it: You will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions, to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy, which ravishes into admiration all men, who have ever contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance; of human design, thought, wisdom, and intelligence. Since therefore the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man; though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work, which he has executed. By this argument a posteriori, and by this argument alone, do we prove at once the existence of a Deity, and his similarity to human mind and intelligence(Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Introd. by Bruce M'Ewen, pp. 30,31).

In another instance we read,

> I shall farther add, said Cleanthes, to what you

> have so well urged, that one great advantage of the principle of Theism, is, that it is the only system of cosmogony, which can be rendered intelligible and complete, and yet can throughout preserve a strong analogy to what we every day see and experience in the world. The comparison of the universe to a machine of human contrivance is so obvious and natural, and is justified by so many instances of order and design in Nature, that it must immediately strike all unprejudiced apprehensions, and procure universal approbation(Ibid., pp. 168,169).

But not only does Cleanthes teach the existence of God; Philo, the more sceptical of the two, also affirms it vigorously. He says,

> But surely, where reasonable men treat these subjects, the question can never be concerning the Being, but only the Nature of the Deity. The former truth, as you well observe, is unquestionable and self-evident. Nothing exists without a cause; and the original cause of this universe (whatever it be) we call God; and piously ascribe to him every species of perfection. Whoever scruples this fundamental truth, deserves every punishment, which can be inflicted among philosophers, to wit, the greatest ridicule, contempt and disapprobation(Ibid., pp. 28,29).

Again he says, "And it is a pleasure to me (and I hope to you too) that just reasoning and sound piety here concur in the same conclusion, and both of them establish the adorably mysterious and incomprehensible nature of the Supreme Being (Ibid., p. 30). After Demea's departure from the company Philo, who has, just previously, for the sake of rational discussion, pretended to be more of a sceptic than he is, confesses:

> You, in particular, Cleanthes, with whom I live in unreserved intimacy; you are sensible, that, notwithstanding the freedom of my conversation, and my love of singular arguments, no one has a deeper sense of religion impressed on his mind, or pays more profound adoration to the Divine Being, as he discovers himself to reason, in the inexplicable contrivance and artifice of Nature. A purpose, an intention, a design strikes everywhere the most careless, the most stupid thinker; and no man can be so hardened in absurd systems, as at all times to reject it. That Nature does nothing in vain, is a maxim established in all the schools, merely from the contemplation of the works of Nature, without any religious purpose; and, from a firm conviction of its truth, an anatomist, who had observed a new organ or canal, would

> never be satisfied, til he had also discovered its use and intention(Ibid., p. 165).

In this same dissertation he adds: "...and thus all the sciences almost lead us insensibly to acknowledge a first intelligent Author; and their authority is often so much the greater, as they do not directly profess that intention" (Ibid., p. 166).

Not only did Hume affirm the existence of God; there is some evidence, meager and conflicting though it may be, on the basis of which we might suppose that he also believed we can justifiably posit certain qualities of God's nature.

Philo, as well as Cleanthes, gives some ground for beliefs about God's nature. He is uaually sceptical about it, as when he writes: "I am Sceptic enough to allow, that the bad appearances, notwithstanding all my reasonings, may be compatible with such attributes as you suppose: But surely they can never prove these attributes"(Ibid., p. 158). However, on the last page of the book, when Philo is bringing to a close his last discourse, and when he is therefore giving us the conclusion to which he has come, he at least leaves room for positive affirmations regarding God's nature. He says,

> A person, seasoned with a just sense of the imperfections of natural reason, will fly to revealed truth with the greatest avidity: While the haughty Dogmatist, persuaded that he can erect a complete system of Theology by the mere help of philosophy, disdains any farther aid, and rejects this adventitious instructor. To be a philosophical Sceptic is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step towards being a sound, believing Christian;...[2](Ibid., p. 191).

When one becomes a "believing Christian", he posits, with certainty, even if only by faith and not by reason, a number of qualities as residing in the Divine Being.

Cleanthes more readily affirms qualities in the Divine nature; but again, he is not always consistent in the qualities which he posits. In one instance, for example, we find that Cleanthes gives an explicit statement of theistic finitism. He writes,

> If we preserve human analogy, we must for ever find it impossible to reconcile any mixture of evil in

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[2]This conclusion of Philo is reminiscent of Pascal, for Philo's heart seems to have reasons which his reason knows not of; and it reminds us of the conclusions of A. J. Balfour in his Defense of Philosophic Doubt (1879). But it reminds one

> the universe with infinite attributes; much less can we ever prove the latter from the former. But supposing the Author of Nature to be finitely perfect, though far exceeding mankind; a satisfactory account may then be given of natural and moral evil, and every untoward phenomenon be explained and adjusted. A less evil may then be chosen, in order to avoid a greater; Inconveniences be submitted to, in order to reach a desirable end: And in a word, benevolence, regulated by wisdom, and limited by necessity, may produce just such a world as the present(Ibid.,pp.142, 143).

In another instance we note that he expresses the view of an absolutistic theist. He affirms,

> The most agreeable reflection, which it is possible for human imagination to suggest, is that of genuine Theism, which represents us as the workmanship of a Being perfectly good, wise, and powerful; who created us for happiness, and who, having implanted in us immeasurable desires of good, will prolong our existence to all eternity, and will transfer us into an infinite variety of scenes, in order to satisfy those desires, and render our felicity complete and durable. Next to such a Being himself (if the comparison be allowed) the happiest lot which we can imagine, is that of being under his guardianship and protection(Ibid., pp. 184, 185).

Because the latter view is given after he has stated the opposing one above, and because it is given so near to the close of Cleanthes' reasonings, we might suppose it to be his reasoned view; but we cannot be certain that it is, because it savours more of Demea than of Cleanthes.

Thus we see that when Hume divorces himself from pure, philosophical epistemology, and treats natural theology, somewhat incidentally in the Natural History of Religion and in the Enquiry, and in detail in the Dialogues, he departs from absolute scepticism and posits a reasoned belief, if not in certain qualities of God's nature, at least in God's existence.

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particularly of Kant's conclusion, expressed at the close of his Critique of Pure Reason, which was that he had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith. One wonders if Kant, who read the Dialogues just before writing his great Critique, was directly influenced by the conclusion which Hume put into the mouth of Philo.

CHAPTER III

OPTIMISM

Because of "...the difficulty of reconciling the reality of evil with the existence of a creative deity who is both beneficent and omnipotent, many writers try to show that evil is in some sense unreal, or is an illusion"(C. E. M. Joad, Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics, p. 450).

> On this view, whatever is, is good; starting from this assumption philosophers have endeavored to prove that the world is all good. Spinoza, for example, says that 'by reality and perfection I mean the same thing'(Ibid., p. 453).

This theory, called optimism, is the "...antonym superlative..."(Radoslava Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p.1) of pessimism. It is the theory "...that everything in the present state of existence is for the best"(Joseph Delvin, (ed.) Webster's New Standard Dictionary, p. 638). E. S. Brightman defines it in this wise:

> A perfectly optimistic solution of the problem, for example, would have to include the judgment that all apparently intrinsic evils are either essential parts of the complete intrinsic good or are necessary and perfect means to the perfect end of intrinsic good; and it would also include the judgment that all apparently instrumental evils are really instruments to good. Thus, extreme optimism would in the end leave nothing but intrinsic good together with instruments perfectly adapted to achieving that good(Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 242).

Robert Browning gives a classic statement of optimism in his dramatic poem "Pippa Passes By". In spite of the hardships that were Pippa's, as a poor working girl, with only one day off during the year, she flitted down the street, on the day which was hers, singing:

> The year's at the spring,
> And day's at the morn;
> Morning's at seven;
> The hill-side's dew-pearled:
> The lark's on the wing;
> The snail's on the thorn;
> God's in his heaven--
> All's right with the world!
> (Browning, Pippa Passes by and Other Poems, "Pippa Passes By", p. 25).

The theory of optimism was also given poetic expression in Alexander Pope's Essay on Man. The entire poem is an optimistic affirmation in view of the fact of natural evil. The affirmation reaches a climactic point when Pope declares,

> All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction, which thou canst
> not see;
> All discord, harmony not understood;
> All partial evil, universal good.
> And, spite of pride, in erring reason's
> spite,
> One truth is clear, 'Whatever is, is right'
> (Alexander Pope, Essay on Man, Mark Pattison (ed.), p. 36).

The remainder of this chapter will consist of a treatment of three forms of optimism. They are the religious, the philosophical, and the theological.

Religious Optimism

All men are confronted with at least apparent natural

evil. When so confronted they react differently, as has been shown. A person whose unthinking attitude is one of dependence, and who finds it easy to extend his loyalties to another, is one who readily responds to religion. A negative conception of evil, when such a conception has as its primary basis an unthinking attitude of dependence, may be called "religious optimism".

The religion of Christian Science is probably the truest and most prevalent expression of what the writer means by religious optimism, as different from philosophical and theological forms of the view. Some great individuals of history and certain groups of the past have approached "religious optimism", but it will suffice to treat specifically this modern example.

Since Christian Science was founded by Mary Baker Eddy, and since her teachings are authoritative wherever the religion functions, this form of religious optimism may be studied as it is given in Mrs. Eddy's principal work, Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures.

Mrs. Eddy defines God as follows: "The great I Am; the all-knowing, all-seeing, all-acting, all-wise, all-loving, and eternal; Principle; Mind; Soul; Spirit; Life; Truth: Love; all substance; intelligence"(Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, p. 587).

Her definition of good is this: "God; Spirit; omnipotence; omniscience; omnipresence; omni-action"(Ibid., p.587).

The optimistic Mrs. Eddy is so taken up with the idea of the unreality of evil that in her glossary she does not define it; this is significant, because she does define some things which are unreal to her, as matter, flesh and death. But even although she does not define evil, she gives ample references to it in the text itself. She writes, "If God, or good, is real, then evil, the unlikeness of God, is unreal. And evil can only seem real by giving reality to the unreal" (Ibid., p. 470). And she asserts, "Has evil the reality of good? Evil is unreal because it is a lie,--false in every statement"(Ibid., p. 527). Mrs. Eddy also remarks, "We bury the sense of infinitude, when we admit that, although God is infinite, evil has a place in his infinity, for it could have no place, where all space is filled with God"(Ibid., p. 469). She also states, "Only that is real which reflects God"(Ibid., p. 478). Lest her understanding of evil not be clearly impressed upon us, she defines it in another way. She explains, "Hence, evil is but an illusion, and it has no real basis. Evil is a false belief"(Ibid., p. 480).

Mrs. Eddy affirms that error, also, is unreal. She writes, "Error is unreal because untrue. It is that which seemeth to be and is not. If error were true, its truth would be error"(Ibid., p. 472).

Mrs. Eddy often discusses three unrealities in the same sentence. They are sin, sickness, and death. She

explains,

> That which He creates is good, and He makes all that is made. Therefore the only reality of sin, sickness, or death is the awful fact that unrealities seem real to human, erring belief, until God strips off their disquise. They are not true, because they are not of God"(Ibid., p. 472).

Our author further explains, "If sin, sickness, and death were understood as nothingness, they would disappear. As vapor melts before the sun, so evil would vanish before the reality of good"(Ibid., p. 480).

Many just criticisms have been leveled against Christian Science. Tsanoff calls it a "...reckless and confused body of assertions and denials..."(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 372). Most philosophies contain both assertions and denials, but the assertions and denials of Christian Science are reckless. They are unreasonable, opposed to the empirical facts of existence, and are thus totally unwarranted.

One of the most forceful of the criticisms of this religious optimism was written by E. Stanley Jones. He says that Christian Science

> has mingled sublimity of conception with subterfuges to keep us in pretenses of no pain, no suffering, no sin, no death. The movement has been plagued within itself with charges and countercharges of fraud and deception. I do not believe that this fraud has been deliberate; rather; it is the inevitable result of trying to make life square with an impossible religious position. For it is an impossible position to waive all sickness, all suffering, all sin, all death out of existence as unrealities. If there is no such thing as suffering the the cross of Christ is a travesty. We suspect any solution of the problem of suffering that leaves us with that result. No, the answer of Christian Science is a surface answer, and its

> steps are dogged by the inevitable nemesis of superficiality. It is no chance that it has its greatest vogue among the past-middle-age-comfortably-well-off, where optimism is easy, and yet at the same time where men and women are in need of assurances against the approaching dissolutionment of old age and death. In it there are no Wounds which will heal our woulds, no Death which will heal our deaths"(E. Stanley Jones, Christ and Human Suffering, pp. 65, 66).

Christian Science has come to its error by two related processes: first, it has employed subterfuge; it has evaded what appears to common sense and intelligence to be real--pain, suffering, death. Second, it has exaggerated the good aspects of life. They exist in abundance, it is true, but beside them are the evils.

Philosophical Optimism

Philosophical optimism is a negative view of evil arising from a predominant dependence upon human reason in offering a solution to the "apparent" irrationality of life and existence.

This type of optimism was germinated in the thought of Plato, who applied his reasoning powers to "apparent" evil and came to consider it as mere non-being--a negation of the good, but not positively opposed to it.

Origen, the third century Christian thinker, at times leaned more heavily upon Plato than upon the New Testament. He was prone to use reason at some points on which the strictly Christian theologian employs faith. And, in employing reason, he generally followed the rational processes

of Plato. This caused him, in the face of evil, to advocate two theories which, most authorities agree, are not Christian but platonic. One of these is the pre-existence of the soul. Each human soul, he affirms, is in this existence as temporary punishment because of unfulfilled possibilities of a previous existence. The other is the final return of all human souls to complete union with God. This is a pnatheistic universalism which stems out of Plato and which anticipates Spinoza.

Neo-platonism, an attempt to revive the teachings of Plato, is a school of thought which may certainly be regarded as an example of philosophical optimism. Its methodology was reason, and its conclusion was that evil is purely negative. It affirmed that all human souls will finally receive their fulfillment by completing the cycle and reuniting with the τὸ ἓν, from whence they have come--through the Principle of Intellection.

Although this school of thought as such died out following Justinians's adverse decree in A.D. 529, its influence has been felt ever since. One man who was at least indirectly influenced by it is the modern Jewish philosopher, Benedict de Spinoza.

Philosophical optimism generally takes the form of some type of pantheism. For this reason, in treating this type of optimism, Spinoza, the arch-pantheist of all time, will be quite specifically studied as representing the view.

For Spinoza everything is God. He writes, "Besides God no substance can be granted or conceived." And he enlarges upon this, immediately, by saying: "If any substance besides God were granted it would have to be explained by some attribute of God, and thus two substances with the same attribute would exist, which is absurd; therefore, besides God no substance can be granted, or consequently, be conceived"(Benedict De Spinoza, Philosophy of Benedict De Spinoza, p. 49).

The above quotations state his pantheism. In such a view God would of necessity be absolute. Spinoza explains his theory of this absoluteness. He declares, "God is not only the cause of things coming in to existence, but also of their continuing in existence, that is, in scholastic phraseology, God is cause of the being of things"(Ibid., p. 61). Further, he says that "...God acts solely by the laws of his own nature, and is not constrained by anyone" (Ibid., p. 54). And he adds, "Hence it follows that God is the efficient cause of all that can fall within the sphere of an infinite intellect"(Ibid., p. 55).

The view that all is God and the idea that this God is all-powerful are brought together in the following statement:

> From the sole necessity of the essence of God it follows that he is the cause of himself and of all things. Wherefore the power of God, by which he and all things are and act, is identical with his essence(Ibid., p. 70).

Optimism is the logic of belief in pantheistic absolutism. Therefore he can say, "...since whatsoever exists expresses God's nature or essence"(Ibid., p. 70), whatever exists would have to be good, since God is good. No evil can exist, because "...whatsoever exists expresses God's power, which is the cause of all things"(Ibid., p. 70).

Spinoza's conception of evil is as that of all optimists; evil, for him, is not positive, but negative. It is imperfection. He declares, "Now pain is the transition to the lesser perfection, and therefore cannot be understood through man's nature"(Ibid., p. 236). Evil consists only in our thinking of a thing or condition as such. He asserts, "If the human mind possessed only adequate ideas, it would form no conception of evil"(Ibid., p. 236).

Although Spinoza is in agreement with most other optimists as to what evil is, he is not in agreement with them relative to what we should do about apparent evil. Most optimists advocate submission and resignation to the evils of nature because they look upon its every manifestation as the result of divine decree. Spinoza, on the other hand, presented an active method of dealing with what is apparently evil. Said he, "Whatsoever in nature we deem to be evil, or to be capable of injuring our faculty for existing and enjoying the rational life, we may endeavor to remove in whatever way seems safest to us"(Ibid., p. 243).

This is a more acceptable manner of facing natural evil than that which is adopted by the majority of optimists; but in taking this position Spinoza compromised his optimism: for if all is good or instrumental to good, why endeavor to avoid or remove any apparent evils?

Theological Optimism

By theological optimism is meant the negative conception of natural evil as resulting from a primary concern for the doctrines of the Christian Faith.

Most of the influential theologians of the Church have been optimists. Such men as Augustine, John Scotus Eriugena (or, Erigena), Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin were all optimistic, however much they disagreed on other points. The last mentioned will be treated in detail as a representative of the theological optimists.

Calvin is absolutistic to the extreme, and therefore optimistic. He holds that the will of God never faces any condition in the universe which that will did not directly create or immediately cause. Some absolutists hold that God faces conditions which He only permits, but Calvin states that He is actually the direct cause of everything. He writes, "For Augustine, in expounding this passage, where power is connected with patience, justly observes, that God's power is not permissive, but influential"(John Calvin, Institutes, II, p. 165). He also says, "How exceedingly presumptuous it is only to inquire into the causes of the Divine

will; which is in fact, and is justly entitled to be, the cause of everything that exists"(Ibid., p. 165). He continues, "For the will of God is the highest rule of justice; so that what he wills must be considered just, for this very reason, because he wills it"(Ibid., p. 168).

For Calvin, therefore, everything which exists is right because God even "influentially" wills it. He feels it presumptuous to question the goodness of what comes to men. He writes,

> Do you seek a reason? I will tremble at the depth. Do you reason? I will wonder. Do you dispute? I will believe. I see the depth, I reach not the bottom. Paul rested, because he found admiration. He calls the judgments of God unsearchable; and are you come to scrutinize them. He says, his ways are past finding out; and are you come to investigate them? We shall do no good by proceeding further(Ibid., p. 165).

Also, in defense of his theory that men should not question the goodness of what befalls them, he declares, "When it is inquired, therefore, why the Lord did so, the answer must be, because he would"(Ibid., p. 168). He concludes, "Faithful ignorance is better than presumptuous knowledge"(Ibid., p. 168). He thus affirms that even although we do not understand why a certain type of suffering comes to us or others, it is better to have unreasoned faith that it is for the best than to reason to a theory which would charge God with injustice.

Calvin's entire system rests on

his emphasis upon the sovereignty of God. He conceives that God will have His way, regardless of what man does. God's will is supreme, and man is not free to thwart it. That will has even predestined some to eternal life and others to eternal death; and no matter what man does, he cannot alter this predestined fate. Calvin asserts,

> To say that others obtain by chance, or acquire by their own efforts, that which election alone confers on a few, will be worse than absurd. Whom God passes by, therefore, he reprobates, and from no other cause than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates for his children(Ibid., p. 162).

He also writes, "Hardening proceeds from the Divine power and will, as much as mercy"(Ibid., p. 174). And he declares, "God knows what he has determined to do with us: if he has decreed our salvation, he will bring it about in his own time; if he has destined us to death, it will be in vain for us to strive against it"(Ibid., p. 174).

Now to Calvin's explanation of the suffering which comes to those who are predestined to eternal life. From the following quotations it will be noted that in his opinion all natural evil is disciplinary and therefore good. He affirms that suffering comes in order that the righteous might sin less:

> But believers, admonished by the Divine corrections, immediately descend to the consideration of their sins, and, stricken with fear and dread, resort to a suppliant depreciation of punishment. If God did not mitigate these sorrows, with which wretched souls torment themselves, they would be

> continually fainting, even under slight tokens of his wrath(Ibid., I, p. 594).

Some forms of natural evil come to the elect that they might be taught thereby to rely upon God. He writes,

> ...presuming that whatever may happen, it will remain undaunted and invincible amidst all difficulties. This inflates us with a foolish, vain, carnal confidence; relying on which, we become contumacious and proud, in opposition to God himself, just as though our own powers were sufficient for us without His grace. This arrogance He cannot better repress, than by proving to us from experience, not only our great imbecility, but also our extreme frailty. Therefore He inflicts us with ignominy, or poverty, or loss of relatives, or disease, or other calamities(Ibid., I, pp. 630, 631).

Other natural evils attend the predestined in order that their patience may be increased. John Calvin writes, "The Lord has also another end in afflicting his children; to try their patience, and teach them obedience"(Ibid., p. 632). He adds, "For the scripture applauds the saints for their patience, when they are afflicted with severe calamities, but not broken and overcome by them"(Ibid., I, p. 636).

The optimistic Calvin makes three summarizing statements about the discipline of natural evil. He affirms, "The Lord repeatedly chastises his servants, yet does not deliver them over to death; wherefore they confess that the strokes of his rod were highly beneficial and instructive to them" (Ibid., p. 592). He also says,

> It is true, that poverty, considered in itself, is misery; and the same may be said of exile,

> contempt, imprisonment, ignominy; finally death is of all calamities the last and worst. But with the favor of our God, they are conducive to our happiness(Ibid., I, p. 634).

Of ignominy and calamities he says: "We are chargeable with extreme ingratitude if we do not receive them from the hand of the Lord with cheerful resignation"(Ibid., I, p. 635).

It is plain from this study of the teaching of John Calvin that he was a true optimist. No trace of pessimism can be found, nor yet any symptom of meliorism. Evil is not real, which teaching would be denied by both pessimists and meliorists. And not being actual, it is not a thing which needs to be removed, as the meliorist attempts to do. Calvin does what all consistent optimists do; he meets natural evil with resignation, and argues for this way of receiving (not dealing with) suffering by stating that "...the saints bore these corrections with resignation of soul"(Ibid., I, p. 592).

Criticism of Optimism

Tsanoff is correct when he writes, "The attempted reduction of evil to finitude is a virtual rejection of the clear point with which we start, and, as we have seen, leads not to the solution but to the abandonment of the problem of evil"(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 388). The problem is abandoned when optimism asks, "Who are we that we should try to comprehend the ways of God's omnipotence"(Joad, God and Evil, p. 37)? It is also abandoned when optimism states, "God's ways are mysterious and the faithful will be content

to leave the mystery unresolved, knowing that God acts for the best"(Ibid., p. 37).

E. Stanley Jones writes, "Any system that takes your attention off the grim facts of life and creates a shallow optimism by calling attention to butterflies only, is doomed to be sent into an inevitable pessimism as the blows of life fall"(Jones, Christ and Human Suffering, pp. 66, 67). This probably does not occur in the case of every optimist who is unfortunate, but undoubtedly it does often happen.

To hold the theory one must overlook reasonable facts and keep himself in a forced mental state which reiterates, "I know all is good. I know all is good." Christian Scientists attempt this.

Van Dyke opposed the view of optimism. He writes, "If evil is a nothing, it is a strangely active, positive, and potent nothing with all the qualities of a something"(Van Dyke, The Gospel for a World of Sin, p. 22).

Evil is denied by man because "When most people, whether theologians or ordinary citizens, ask for a solution of the problem of evil, what they want is some argument to convince them that all evil is really good, either intrinsically or instrumentally"(Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 278). Optimism is seldom, if ever, arrived at by investigation. Its adherents already have posited a perfectly good universe, one which is the handwork of God and the object of His direction.

Van Dyke asserts, "The theories which attempt to account for its (evil's) origin by tracing it to a mere negation or absence of good, raise a larger question than that which they attempt to answer"(Van Dyke, The Gospel For a World of Sin, p. 22). This more difficult question may be phrased this way, "Since all is good, why does so much of existence appear to be evil? Since imbecility, for example, appears to be evil, why and how is it that it is actually good?"

Tsanoff rightly queries, "If the evils of life are but illusion, is this illusion aught but evil"(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 373)? Why should a good God desire to put the objects of his affection under such an illusion? Since evil is so apparently real, it is hardly man's fault if he thinks it is real, if actually it is not. Thus, if evil is only apparent, it is the fault of God that man labors under the illusion that it is real; and, if this is so, can God be said to be perfectly good?

One of Voltaire's "...undoubted joys, during the latter part of his life, was flaying optimists to disclose their unsound substance"(Ibid., p. 150). Voltaire was a gifted reasoner. No doubt he showed their arguments to be very unsound indeed. This writer, however, is convinced that a person of very little reasoning ability can prove optimism to be unsound. Yet this must be said: it is more plausable than pessimism.

In this chapter three types of optimism, the religious, the philosophical and the theological, have been treated. The order of their consideration is indicative of the writer's opinion regarding their relative plausability. That is to say, the last one dealt with, the theological, is in content the richest. Even this one, however, as has been shown, tends to abandon the problem rather than solve it. It will be pointed out, too, in the concluding chapter, that optimism, whatever its form, does not properly understand the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, as it relates to the problem caused by the evil aspects of nature.

CHAPTER IV

MELIORISM

Meliorism may be defined as "...the philosophical theory that evil can be eliminated from the universe by moral effort"(R. F. Alfred Hoernle, Idealism as a Philosophy, p. 251). It may also be defined as the theory that "...in some sense both good and evil are real, but good is dominant in that the state of affairs in the universe is always susceptible of improvement"(Brightman, Philosophy of Religion, pp. 276, 277). The latter of these two definitions approaches more closely to the sense in which the term will be used herein.

The pessimist takes the attitude that he is defeated at the outset; that the nature of existence is such that evil is present everywhere, that it alone is real, and that no amount of moral effort will improve existing conditions. The meliorist calmly says to him, "It is better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness." (News Commentator, K.C.K.N. of Kansas City, Kansas, February 13, 1947, 8:12A.M., , quoted, as the writer has since found, from an early thinker).

The optimist laughs at what "appears" to be evil, staunchly avows that only good is real, and sits back leisurely

to meditate on the good and to keep himself in the state of mind necessary for this view. There is a sense in which he overcomes the present evils in the universe; he improves conditions subjectively. In this he is far ahead of the pessimist, who grits his teeth and stoically bears his load. But the consistent optimist, not believing in the real existence of evil, does nothing objectively to improve conditions. After he has brought himself to the ideal state of mind which is supposed to place him above the effects of evil, the evil is still there; it has not been objectively alleviated any whatever. This position cuts the nerve of moral endeavor.

The meliorist, holding that evil, as well as good, is real, sets out to bring about the alleviation or extinction of evil. And he understands that if evil conditions are actually to be improved or eradicated, he will have to deal with the problem objectively rather than merely subjectively.

Harris Franklin Rall reveals a melioristic attitude when he asserts, "The floods may destroy, but we can halt forest destruction, impound waters, and change the process from destruction to service"(Rall, Christianity, p. 334).

Clarence Beckwith is speaking of the melioristic position when he writes, "Scientific men, working in different fields of research, are confident that all accidents and diseases, and, by wiser economic and sanitary administration,

all famines and pestilences will be replaced by healthy, wholesome human life"(Clarence Beckwith, The Idea of God, p. 183).

Mr. Daniel Thompson enlarges upon the view as it relates to our neighbor. He asserts,

> Our concluding word is, that in all the relations of life, business as well as social, men must be taught, and must learn to regard their fellows, not as inorganic nature to be used, but as independent personalities, with aims like their own, whose development and realization is a thing which it is the duty and the pleasure of every other to favor and assist rather than neglect, blight, and defeat(Daniel Greenleaf Thompson, The Problem of Evil, p. 280).

John Fiske gives the future possibilities of meliorism. He writes,

> From the general analogies furnished in the process of evolution, we are entitled to hope that, as it approaches its goal and man comes nearer to God, the fact of evil will lapse into a mere memory, in which the shadowed past shall serve as a background for the realised glory of the present(John Fiske, Through Nature to God, p. 55).

The study of meliorism will be made with a somewhat different approach than that which was followed in the chapters on pessimism and optimism. Pessimists, as was found, tend toward atheism; optimists, toward absolutism. The treatments of pessimism and optimism were therefore divided according to approach rather than on the basis of the conception of ultimate reality since on this question all, in their own fields, were quite generally agreed. In the sphere of meliorism there is a different situation. Meliorists

differ widely in their conception of ultimate reality; this difference is what most distinguishes them. They will be studied, therefore, according to their metaphysics. Among them there are four principal types of metaphysics: pluralism, finitism, dualism, and absolutism.

Pluralistic Meliorism

Pluralistic meliorism teaches at least three things: first, that both good and evil are actual; second, that man can and should set himself to the task of alleviating the evil of the world and to increasing its good aspects; and third, that there are many qualitatively different[1] ultimate realities. This is the theory which is perfectly adapted to the philosophy of pragmatism. One of its principal exponents was the American pragmatist, William James, whose view has been singled out for particular note. His pluralism will first be shown, and that will be followed by support of the

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[1]Personalistic idealism, popularized in America by Borden Parker Bowne and now a significant philosophical view, particularly in that country, is pluralistic quantitatively; that is, it affirms that ultimate reality is composed of a society of persons. Yet, it is qualitatively monistic; ultimate reality is only one in kind--personality. It is readily seen that there is a significant difference between this type of pluralism and that which we are treating just now, which view is that ultimate reality is many in kind. It is an inadequacy of Pringle-Pattison's treatment of pluralism, in the last Chapter of his The Idea of God, which does not sufficiently distinguish between these two types of pluralism.

statement that he is melioristic.

James says that the alternative between pluralism and monism constitutes "...the most pregnant of all the dilemmas of philosophy"(James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 114). The question, he says, is this: "Does reality exist distributively? or collectively?--in the shape of eaches, everys, anys, eithers? or only in the shape of an all or whole" (Ibid., p. 114)? That reality exists as a whole is monism, or absolutism. James everywhere rejects this view. Reality, according to his theory, is many.

His pluralism is derived from his idea of the nature of reality. Whereas absolutism holds that reality is static, he says, "The full nature...of reality we now believe to be given only in the perceptual flux"(Ibid., p. 113). This flux, he affirms, is "...continuous from next to next," but "nonadjacent portions of it are separated by parts that intervene, and such separation seems in a variety of cases to work a positive disconnection"(Ibid., p. 113). Because of the fact that in the continual flux, which is characteristic of reality, there are elements which are "...unrelated or related only remotely"(Ibid., p. 113), he says that reality itself is many and not one; it is pulverized, rather than unified.

Now what place does God have in this pluralistic system? He is only one of the many ultimate realities; one of the ontological eaches.

This God, who is only one of the eaches, is somewhat similar to the other eaches; He is not absolute. James affirms, "Yet because God is not the absolute, but is himself a part when the system is conceived pluralistically, his functions can be taken as not wholly dissimilar to those of the other smaller parts,--as similar to our functions consequently" (William James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 318).

In other instances he speaks of God much as does E. S. Brightman, the finitist. James writes, "...there is a God, but...he is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once"(Ibid., p. 311). He also affirms of God, "He works in an external environment, has limits, and has enemies"(Ibid., p. 124). He further declares,

> The finite God whom I contrast with it (Absolutism) may conceivably have almost nothing outside of himself; he may already have triumphed over and absorbed all but the minutest fraction of the universe; but that fraction, however small, reduces him to the status of a relative being, and in principle the universe is saved from all the irrationalities incidental to absolutism(Ibid.,pp. 125, 126).

In this treatment of James' pluralism and, with reference to God, of his finitism, it has been implied that he espoused the theory that evil as well as good is real. This may now be supported explicitly. He assumes the reality of good which, of course, causes no problem in his understanding of existence. But he also faces up to the fact of the unwholesome aspects of existence. He speaks of "...all those tremendous irrationalities..."(Ibid., p. 116) of the universe. And he

says that abolutism, or the traditional belief that God is the author of all phases of creation, "...leaves us wondering why the perfection of the absolute should require such particular hideous forms of life as darken the day for our human imaginations"(Ibid., p. 117). He also writes of the "...tremendous imperfection of all finite experience"(Ibid., p. 117).

Evil as well as the good, therefore, is a fact of existence. This is the situation. And what is to be man's reaction? For James it should not be despair. Nor should it be an optimistic acquiescence. He holds that man can and should extirpate evil conditions. He writes,

> In any pluralistic metaphysic, the problems that evil presents are practical, not speculative. Not why evil should exist at all, but how we can lessen the actual amount of it, is the sole question we need to consider(William James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 124).

One criticism of James' position may be mentioned. It has to do not with his meliorism, but with his pluralism. The pluralism bows God almost entirely out. It makes God only one of the many, many "eaches" of which reality is composed. But in order to have been consistent, James should have left God in that minor roll. Instead of doing this he brought God, whom he had declared to be merely one of the multitudinous eaches, back into his scheme to play a quite important role. God is finite, to be sure, but James is even a little cautious in affirming this when of God he says, "...he is finite either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once"(Ibid., p. 311).

Of course God is finite in pluralism! He is much more finite than in dualism. He is not one of two ultimates, but one among countless qualitatively different ultimate realities. If James, therefore, is going to follow through with the pluralism which he sets up, and he thinks to single God out for discussion at all, he should not say that he is finite either in power or in knowledge or in both, but should have no reticence about admitting a very distinct finiteness in every respect.

Finitistic Meliorism

Finitistic Meliorism is an active confrontation of natural evil which is based on the view that God is a limited rather than an absolute Being. Radoslav Tsanoff and E. S. Brightman are two outstanding finitistic meliorists. Their views will be treated briefly.

Tsanoff calls his theory "The Gradational View" of the nature of good and evil. He writes, "In this gradational view of things, evil is literally degradation, the surrender of the higher to the lower in the scale of being, the effective down-pulling incursion of the lower against the higher"(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 392).

Although he defines evil as "degradation", or as negative value(Ibid., p. 387), he still holds that it, as well as good, is actual. He affirms,

> Using the terms good and evil in the broadest sense to designate value positive and negative, we are bound to say that, if either is admissible, both

> must be. We have them both on our hands, both actual. Our problem is to understand the relation between them, and the essential character of the world which the perception of their relation serves to reveal(Ibid., pp. 387, 388).

He further explains the actuality of evil when he writes,

> The view of existence which is here developed recognizes unflinchingly the actuality of evil, but is not on that account plunged into pessimistic despair. It is in no wise to be mistaken for the complacent theory of evil as the mere shadow in the picture or the discord swelling the larger harmony. Evil is not 'somehow good,' any more than sinking is somehow rising. Evil is evil and the opposite of good, contrary in course and direction(Ibid., p. 397).

Lest his readers should forget that although good and evil are opposites and both actual, they are nevertheless gradational and interdependent, Isanoff hastens to say:

> Good and evil are not distinct realities and have no status in isolation; they are always relative to each other. Evil is that ever-present side or factor in the actual world, by resistance to which a possible worthier side or ('of' is likely meant) nature affirms itself and gains reality through attainment (Ibid., p. 401).

But what theory of God accompanies his gradational view of the nature of good and evil? It is a theistic finitism, with evil in the very nature of God. Speaking of the rivalry between good and evil he says, "This contest is at the heart of things"(Ibid., p. 401). He makes it more plain when he writes, "Value positive and negative is not to be located in certain areas of existence but is a fundamental and ultimate character of all existence"(Ibid., p. 389). In the following statement he speaks precisely of God's nature:

> For just this upward-urging, ever more perfectly

> active character of the cosmos is what we can intelligently mean by God. And the evil tug is not outside of God or alien to the divine nature, but just as in finite beings so in the cosmic system of them, in God, it is the negative moment, the obverse of positive enhancement and ideal activity(Ibid., p. 400).

This finite God is working toward the improvement of the world, for Tsanoff writes:

> In God is no stagnant plentitude but plentitude of ideal activity, no dull placidity but ever-heroic redemption of the world from the hazard of settling back. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' Not less than myself but more is God thus resistant to the evil tug of the down pulling and the inert and the complacent(Ibid., pp. 399, 400).

Even although he states above that God is doing more to redeem the world than man is doing or can do, he still leaves much for man to do. He writes, "Evil and the perception of it are conditions for heroic recognition and pursuit of value, be it truth, beauty, goodness"(Ibid., p.400). He also remarks, "In applying science to the demands of modern industry, man may use the forces of nature as levers for the upbuilding of the higher values"(Ibid., p. 395).

Speaking now of the part of both God and man in the redemption of the world, he writes in typically melioristic fashion: "The best we have a right to hope, is that the struggle, real and hard enough, is yet not futile, that possibly and in ways at present unknown to us this half-wild and half-saved Universe is ever more truly being redeemed" (Ibid., p. 368).

One of the most prominent of the present-day finitistic meliorists is E. S. Brightman. Theistic finitism itself is the

distinguishing tenet of all his philosophy. A vein of finitism is found running through the entire content of his The Problem of God and The Finding of God. Much of his A Philosophy of Religion is also devoted to it. He defines theistic finitism as the view "...that the will of God does face conditions within divine experience which that will neither created nor approves"(Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 282).

For Brightman, God is finite because in His nature there is an uncreated, eternal, recalcitrant surd which obstructs God's plans and which is the cause of all that is evil. He explains it thus:

> The present writer began in The Problem of God (1930) the development of the idea of a personal God whose finiteness consists in his own internal structure; an eternal unitary personal consciousness whose creative will is limited both by eternal necessities of reason and by eternal experiences of brute fact. These limits he called The Given--an aspect of God's consciousness which eternally enters into every moment of the divine experience and into everything that is(Brightman, The Finding of God, p. 119).

Finitism has to do with his metaphysics; when one comes to study his theory of value he finds meliorism coupled with finitism. Both good and evil are actual, as we note in this statement:

> Some, among them the present writer, think that a rational definition of the evil of evil and of the good of good and of their relations to purpose in the universe would be a genuine solution of the problem(Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 279).

Of evil itself he writes, "So real are the evils of life, that man's first gods were puny, local creatures, sources of highly precarious goods in a world of hostile powers"(Ibid., p. 248).

On pages 340 and 341 of his A Philosophy of Religion he has a section which he calls "Perfection or Perfectibility", in which he takes the position that neither God nor the universe are perfect but that both are perfectible. This is a view of betterment from the standpoint both of God's nature and of the external world.

From what has been quoted, it can readily be understood that he would write:

> The objection to optimism is that it is not fair to the experience of intrinsic surd evil. The objection to pessimism is that is is not fair to the experience of intrinsic good. The objection often urged against meliorism is that it states the problem and takes a practical attitude toward it, but does not solve it in principle. Yet if any solution is to be found, it must, in view of the fatal objections to other alternatives, be found in some form of meliorism(Ibid., p. 277).

Dualistic Meliorism

Dualistic Meliorism is an active confrontation of the evil in nature, which active confrontation is based upon the metaphysical theory that good and evil are in ultimate conflict. A treatment of three dualistic positions should suffice to bring this type of theory into focus.

Zoroastrianism illustrates this form of meliorism. Zoroaste thought to have been born about 600 B.C., founded this religion, a faith which is both dualistic and melioristic.

He held that the universe is under the control of two opposing principles or powers, the one good and the other evil. Ahura Mazda, or Ormuzd, is the good power who created the beautiful in man and nature; Angro Mainyus, or Ahriman, the evil power who matched every good thing with a counter-creation of something evil. The good which Ormuzd created is real, and the evil made by Ahriman is also actual.

The good, however, is gradually overcoming the evil, and will finally make a complete triumph over it. The good is now triumphing both by the activity of Ormuzd against the obstructive work of Ahriman, and by the active work of the faithful[2] as they join forces with Ormuzd. But not only is there a double meliorism because Ormuzd and the faithful are opposing Ahriman; there is a double meliorism because not only is the triumph of good such that natural good is more and more routing natural evil in the sphere of creation, but the gradual triumph of good is such that Ormuzd is comming closer and closer to final victory over the power which hampers him. Tsanoff writes, "If a grim sense of the moral struggle dictated a dualist theology to the Zoroastrian, a confident meliorism

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[2]Alfred Martin quotes from the Vendidad, which is one of the four parts of their authoritarian book called the Avesta. It reads as follows: "'Contend constantly against evil, strive in every way to diminish the power of evil; strive to keep pure in the body and mind and so prevent the entrance of evil spirits who are always striving to gain possession of men. Cultivate the soil, drain marshes, destroy dangerous creatures. He who sows the ground with diligence acquires more religious merit than he could gain by a thousand prayers in idleness....The man who has constantly contended against evil may fearlessly meet death(Martin, Great Religious Teachers of the East, p. 88).

enabled him to look forward to a monistic[3] finale"(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 367).

Dualistic meliorism is advocated by C. E. M. Joad, in his God and Evil. His position is not easily understood. This is for at least two reasons. One is because his view has changed much, as he admits, during the last thirty years. For many years he regarded theism as untenable. Now, however, he has changed. In some passages his only change is that he is merely reopening the theistic "hypothesis" (God and Evil, p. 102) for investigation; but in others, he speaks freely of God as though he believes in His existence(Ibid., p. 102).

The other reason why his view is difficult to formulate is because he himself does not have it formulated as he writes, but is working it out as he progresses. Thus he asserts, "I will not postulate the existence of God since I do not wish to prejudge the results of the inquiry upon which I am only just embarked"(Ibid., p. 65).

It was not Joad's view of God which led to his theory of good and evil. His view of good and evil led him to postulate a certain type of God. He writes, "There is good in the

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[3]Some authorities, as Tsanoff (note the quote above) and Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison (see p. 137 of his The Philosophy of Religion), do not consider Zoroastrianism as an ultimate dualism. They are quite correct, if its metaphysics is considered in the light of its hope of the triumph of Ormuzd; but as regards existence as it has been and is, and as it is to be for a long while yet, the dualism may be understood as ultimate. Thus the present study of it as a dualism.

world, and there is also evil"(Ibid., p. 101); both are real. When either good or evil leads men to belief in God, it is usually good and not evil; evil is ordinarily the very type of existent which causes men to accept atheism. Not so with Joad. Evil, with him, is the aspect of existence which led him to re-open the question of whether or not God exists. He affirms, "Now, paradoxically, it is this fact of one's conviction of the objective reality of evil, that imparts to the mind the disposition to search for God and to turn toward Him when He is found"(Ibid., p. 63). And he gives it as his own experience: "I do not doubt that in my own case it is the conviction of the pervasiveness and reality of evil that has led me...to examine again the arguments which seemed to me to tell finally and convincibly against the theistic hypothesis some thirty years ago, in the hope that what seemed convincing then may now seem convincing no longer" (Ibid., p. 101).

Joad looks upon both good and evil as real, and posits two different ultimates which cause these opposites. He gives us what follows, in his opinion, from this conception of good and evil. He declares,

> The religious hypothesis, if it were to be accepted at all, must be accepted not in its usual form, but in a form which has always been regarded as heresy. This consists in accepting good and evil as two equal and independent principles, the expression of two equally real and conceivably equally powerful antagonists, God who is good but limited, and God's adversary who is evil, between whom the perpetual battle is

> fought in the hearts of men for the governance of the world(Ibid., pp. 85, 86).

He also writes,

> If a metaphysical principle is to be invoked to explain good, an equivalent principle must be invoked to explain the evil; if, to put it theologically, there is God, there is also the Devil, or there is God plus a principle of inertia which obstructs him(Ibid., p. 101).

He further elucidates,

> If we are to go beyond simple agnosticism, then what must be surmised is that there are two Gods, a good one and a bad; or, since the notion of a bad God is revolting and not absolutely necessary, there must be a good God and an obstructive hampering principle in and through and in spite of which He seeks to work(Ibid., p. 101).

Since in this last quote Joad pictures God working "in and through" this hampering principle, it is implied that it is something within God's own nature against which he must labor. This, however, is not the case. Joad generally portrays the evil principle as outside God. Thus his dualism.

It has been shown that for Joad both good and evil are real, and that God and His opposite are the respective sources of each; it remains to substantiate his meliorism. Since every meliorist has hope for the alleviation of the evil aspects of the universe, it must be revealed that Joad has this hope and advocates putting forth effort for the alleviation of at least a part of the evils. This position Joad clearly takes, as is shown in the following statements:

> It follows that either one must supinely acquiesce in the evil one cannot resolve, or else--there are two alternatives.
> The first, since the world is evil, is to escape

> from it and to find, first in withdrawal, and, as an ultimate hope, in Nirvana, the true way of life. The second is to face evil and seek to overcome it, even to take it up and absorb it into ones own life, transcending it and enlarging one's own personality with what one has transcended. The first is the way of the East, the second of Christianity. My temperament and disposition incline me to the second, but I know it to be impossible unless I am assisted from without. By the grace of God we are assured, such assistance may be obtained and evil may be overcome (Ibid., p. 104).

Yet another type of dualism is that espoused recently by the American theologian, Edwin Lewis. The theory is set forth in his latest book, The Creator and the Adversary, which was published in 1948. Much of the book deals with what is herein called natural evil.

Edwin Lewis is not a pessimist; he would be the last to say there is only evil. Nor is he an optimist; he would be the last to say there is no evil. He conceives of both good and evil as real. He writes, "The presence of good and evil, both in the world itself and in human life and experience, is too self-evident to be denied"(Edwin Lewis, The Creator and the Adversary, p. 15). He also writes, "There is a dead fly in the amber which is the universe, and whose mind is not teased by the fact"(Ibid., p. 16)?

Professor Lewis has a profound conception of the conflict between good and evil. He affirms, "Cosmic benevolence stands in contrast with cosmic malevolence" (Ibid., p. 16). He also says, "On any showing, life is a conflict and the world is a battlefield"(Ibid., p. 16). And again he writes, "Something good is forever coming to be, and

something is forever seeking to prevent it"(Ibid., p. 52). This conflict is waged by God the Creator and His Adversary, the Discreator.

In Dr. Lewis' understanding, the conflict is real, and not a mere sham; it is not waged on an athletic field, but on a battlefield. The opponents are not temporarily opposed for the game of existence; they are eternally and intrinsically and structurally opposed. It is not that the Creator sets up his Adversary in order to oppose him; it is that the Creator eternally finds His Adversary.

This is not a monistic view. For years Dr. Lewis had been a monist; he had sought to trace all aspects of existence to one source. As his thought matured, however, he came to consider it wishful to trace both good and evil to an identical source. For this reason he came to deny traditional monism, and to posit, robustly, an ultimate dualism: the good he traces to God the divine Creator; the evil, to God's eternally existent Adversary who is the demonic Discreator.

When Dr. Lewis' position is classed as dualistic it is because of the eternal battle between two absolutes. But, to class his position as dualistic does not quite do justice to his metaphysics. His is an ultimate triadology, rather than an ultimate dualism. Besides the Creator and His Adversary there is a third ultimate existent. This he calls the "residue" or the "residual constant". By it he means "...the permanent

possibility of empiric actualities"(Ibid., p. 143). That is, it is the eternal formless stuff out of which the Creator creates. It is "constant" because it "...never increases or diminishes in its total quantity"(Ibid., p. 143).

Back of these three ultimate and prime existents is prime existence. This "existence", or "pure existence", "...is under a necessary law of self-differentiation"(Ibid., p. 141). It functions in the three primal forms as explained above. He writes, "There is one eternal existence, but it exists as three eternal existents"(Ibid., p. 142). Dr. Lewis admits that this is highly speculative, but believes it nec-necessary if one is to give an adequate account of existence as we know it.

It has been shown that, in this position, both good and evil are actual. A metaphysical triadology has been set forth as a means of accounting for both these aspects of existence as we know it. It remains to show how man should react to this type of existence.

Dr. Lewis holds that man should not despair, since there is always the good. Nor would he say that man should call the evil a result of God's direct will, and acquiesce to it. His is an agressive meliorism. Chapter eleven of the book is captioned, "The Challenge to Moral Combat". In it he writes, "The will of God in respect of famine is that the hungry shall still be fed, and that means shall be devised whereby famine, like wars, shall be made to cease to the ends of the earth"(Ibid., p. 149). He also affirms, "The

surgeon who makes an incision in quivering human flesh to remove a malignant growth, lessen suffering, and perchance save a life, is not seeking to frustrate the will of God, as men at one time actually thought and said"(Ibid., p. 149)! Again he writes,

> A speaker who called upon the American people to cease believing in God because seventeen million persons now living would die of cancer would have made a much better and a much wiser use of his time had he called upon the American people to join with God in the fight against cancer by the use of the means which God is seeking to put into their hands for this purpose, because the only way in which God can use the means is through human minds and hands. 'We are laborers together with God'(Ibid., pp. 149, 150).

In the last chapter, entitled "The Church Militant", Professor Lewis declares, "...there is nothing the Church more manifestly exists to do than to fight the enemy of human good"(Ibid., p. 259). He also says, "The Adversary is forever devising new ways and means, and he must be met and opposed wherever he elects to stand"(Ibid., p. 259). Yet again he affirms, "Any Christian will find himself confronted with the Adversary in a score of ways every day he lives, and he has just one obligation: to smite him wherever the opportunity offers"(Ibid., p. 261).

Just before the close of the book Dr. Lewis gives Jesus as an example to be followed in combating natural evil. Of the "mighty works" of our Lord he says, "They were directed against pain, against disease, against maimed bodies, against hunger, against the griefs that are born of these evils, and

even, on occasion, against death itself"(Ibid., p. 266). And he adds, "For Jesus these were not the evidences of the will of God but the denial of his will"(Ibid., p. 266).

Dr. Lewis advocates an active confrontation of evil in the faith that one day, God and man working together, righteousness will so prevail that God's children will be granted a state of existence--eternal life--which the Adversary will not be able to touch. The promise of the Creator's ultimate victory is in the Cross, in which the Creator and the Adversary came to a death grapple and in which the Creator was victorious since the "defeat" of the Cross was succeeded by the Resurrection of the Adversary's victim.

This dualistic meliorism of Edwin Lewis has the merit of being a frank facing of the problem of natural evil, and it is one of the most vigorous calls of our time for an all-out campaign for the extermination of evil and for the promotion of the good.

Absolutistic Meliorism

Three types of metaphysical theory have already been treated, in their relation to meliorism. They are pluralism, finitism and dualism. These three types of metaphysics have at least one element in common; they all affirm that God is limited. One of them, finitism, locates the limitation within God's nature, and the other two postulate it as external to God; but all agree that He is limited.

Opposed to this "limited God" theory is the view of Absolutism. This is the affirmation that God is unlimited or infinite in such attributes as goodness, wisdom and power. Absolutistic meliorism is the theory that though God is unlimted, yet man can and should engage himself as a co-worker with God in the alleviation or extermination of the actually existent evils in nature.

Some might question the writer's connecting absolutism with meliorism. It might be thought that belief in an unlimited God precludes belief in the radical reality of evil and in the obligation of man to oppose it. It is hoped, however, that as the treatment progresses the compatability of the terms will become evident.

An outstanding representative of absolutistic meliorism is Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison. Since he constructs his own views by the criticism of the positions of others,[4] it is a somewhat tedious task to extract from his books his own views; but it is nevertheless possible to find them, couched as they usually are within his judgments about other philosophical systems. He wrote a number of books, but the one most directly related to our present subject is his Gifford Lectures of 1912 and 1913, entitled The Idea of God in the Light of Recent

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[4]Of this methodology he writes, "This method of construction through criticism is the one which I have instinctively followed in everything I have written (this was in 1916). I do not claim that it is the best method; I simply desire that its nature be recognized"(The Idea of God, "Preface", p. VII).

Philosophy.[5] In this volume he is strictly a metaphysician,[6] and rather than the spinning of his own web, we find him the scholar indeed, handling the principal sources in the field with an understanding and a confidence which evidences mastery of the materials.

Pringle-Pattison is not a pluralist; he has many hard things to say about the "eaches" of William James.[7] He is not a finitistic[8] theist; no involuntarily-imposed factors limit

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[5]It will henceforth be called, simply, The Idea of God.

[6]He was Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, so he would be qualified in this field; but other works show that he was no mean theologian, because he can handle the Scriptures with an ease and with a thoroughness almost equal to that of the present-day biblical theologian, L. S. Thornton. A book in point is Pringle-Pattison's The Philosophy of Religion, 1930.

[7]Pringle-Pattison devotes much careful thought, especially in his concluding chapter of The Idea of God, to a delineation of the inadequacies of pluralism, which he says was so "fashionable" (p. 386) in his day. He finds James' pluralism to be commendable because there is in it an "...intense conviction of the reality of the moral struggle..."(p. 394); but he considers it to be the opposite view from his own, metaphysically. He writes, "It may be, as James suggests, that there are other than merely logical considerations involved in the decision between monism and pluralism. In an intellectual aspect, it is the alternative between the idea of a system and the idea of an aggregate, and I confess that I find it impossible to reduce the universe to a mere 'and'. Moreover, if it were possible to think of the universe as a collection of independent facts existing each in its own right, a sheer materialism would seem to be the most natural form for such a view to take"(p. 396).

[8]Pringle-Pattison understands Cleanthes--and not Philo--to be speaking for Hume in the Dialogues (The Idea of God, p. 2). He consequently considers Hume a finitist and not a philosophical skeptic. This finitism he respects, but he rejects it(Ibid., p. 405). He also rejects the finitism of J. S. Mill(Ibid., p.406).

God. He is not a metaphysical dualist.[9] He does not oppose dualism as explicitly as he does pluralism and finitism, because it was not a prominent view in modern philosophy until its recent espousal by C. E. M. Joad and Edwin Lewis; but he opposes it incidentally and indirectly in all his philosophical writings. Pringle-Pattison is not pluralistic, not finitistic, and not dualistic; he is absolutistic.

But he is not an absolutist of the Aristotelian sort; his God is not an Eternal Thinker,[10] contemplatively detached from the world. Nor is he an absolutist of the trend of Philo. Philo's absolute was inaccessible and unknowable. Pringle-Pattison writes, "Hence when Philo came, as a philosopher, to consider the relation of God to the world, the fact most present to his mind was the gulf between the two. God was so great as to be beyond the reach of our thought, exalted beyond any categories we could frame"(The Philosophy of Religion,

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[9]Pringle-Pattison opposes ultimate dualism by the entire system which he constructs. He does not conceive of Zoroastrianism as metaphysically dualistic. Of it he says, "But the dualism is temporary, an episode in the world-history, which is destined to terminate in the complete triumph of Ahuramazda's righteous will"(The Philosophy of Religion, p. 137). Were he now living he would probably say that Edwin Lewis is not a metaphysical dualist, since Lewis maintains that the Creator will finally triumph over--but not annihilate--the Adversary (Lewis, The Creator and the Adversary, p. 127).

[10]He writes, "And the purely intellectual character of Aristotle's ideal gives it the same aloofness we have noted from the world's life. It is the ideal of the scholar and thinker who retires into his own thoughts, and finds there his highest happiness"(The Idea of God, p. 408).

p. 197). Even although Pringle-Pattison is a Christian and an absolutist, his position is far removed from the "wholly-other" absolutism of Karl Barth, whose emphasis upon sovereignty has been of such prominent influence upon present-day theology. He conceives of the Absolute as closely related to man and the world.

Pringle-Pattison is an absolutist of the pantheistic type, which is to say that he emphasizes the immanence of God with man and nature. He even affirms that they are so closely related that neither exists nor can exist without the other. He writes,

> But as soon as we begin to treat God and man as two independent facts, we lose our hold upon the experienced fact, which is the existence of the one in the other and through the other. Most people would probably be willing to admit this mediated existence in the case of man, but they might feel it akin to sa sacrilege to make the same assertion of God. And yet, if our metaphysic is, as it professes to be, an analysis of experience, the implication is strictly reciprocal"(The Idea of God, p. 254).

This is pantheism, but of a higher type than that of Spinoza and others; Pringle-Pattison would rather call it higher pantheism or higher naturalism(Ibid., Chapter V in particular).

But God is not so closely related to the world that His identity is lost. He does exist, and that absolutistically; that is, He is infinite in power, wisdom and goodness.

Pringle-Pattison mentions the fact that Dr. McTaggart devoted "...some twenty pages to the barren argument that God is omnipotent, because He cannot override the laws of Identity,

Contradiction, and Excluded Middle, and similar necessities of thought or action"(Ibid., p. 404). Then Pringle-Pattison adds, "But to affirm omnipotence in such a sense is unmeaning, and therefore to deny it is unnecessary. Omnipotence can only mean--as I find it expressed in a recent Catholic manual--the power 'to effect whatever is not intrinsically impossible'. The intrinsic necessities which govern the possibilities are not, because they are called intrinsic, to be regarded as a metaphysical fate behind God, or an impersonal system of 'eternal truths' to which He is forced to submit" (Ibid., p. 404). Pringle-Pattison thus believes in omnipotence, defined in this way, but he does not like to emphasize the aspect of limitless power in God(Ibid., p. 403); he would rather stress the limitless capacity and the unbounded manifestation of God's love(Ibid., p. 417).

God's infinite goodness and wisdom are not taught explicitly, point by point, but they are implicit in his absolutistic position. He defines "Absolutism" as "...precisely the assertion of a perfect and coherent whole"(Ibid., p. 401). The perfection of the whole implies the infinite goodness of the Absolute; the coherence, His infinite wisdom.

So much for Pringle-Pattison's absolutism; it remains to support the statement that he is melioristic. In Pringle-Pattison's day "meliorism" was taken by some to mean the theory that the universe itself is a growing whole. By

others it was taken to mean the idea that God is so finite that He is developing continually. William James had called his own position melioristic, and had at least implied by it both these views. We consequently find Pringle-Pattison in opposition to the theory of meliorism. This is evidenced when he writes, "I am confirmed in my view of the impossibility of regarding the universe as a growing whole, by observing that those who hold to the idea of what James calls 'the strung-along unfinished world in time', and who advocate the creed of 'Meliorism', do not..."(Ibid., p. 382).

But even although Pringle-Pattison opposed the meliorism current in his day, he is not opposed to the view that good and evil are both actual and that man can and should set himself to become a workman together with God in alleviating the evil of the world and in increasing the good. This view he heartily endorses.

There is a sense in which, as an absolutist, he thinks of good and evil as two aspects of an organically whole universe, so that they are not radical contrasts; but he nevertheless understands that both do actually exist. He writes, "Purposive activity is, indeed, the central feature of our human experience"(Ibid., p. 323). The context of this statement shows that he is speaking of the "purposive activity" of God. This type of activity, at work in nature as well as in man, is productive of so much good that the evidence of purposive activity is the "central feature" of our experience. He also declares, "Creation, if the term is to be used in

philosophy, must be taken, we found in a previous lecture, as expressing the essential nature of the divine life; the revelation of the infinite in the finite is the eternal fact of the universe"(Ibid., p. 414). Here we find a kindred view to that expressed in the above quotation: the good is so actual that in the creation of man and nature there is a revelation of the infinite.

Evil is also real. He declares, "An honest controversialist will admit the dark features of the long-drawn-out process--its severity and apparent wastefulness--features which sometimes appear to us intolerable"(Ibid., p. 405). He also affirms, "There are features of the world-process, I have admitted, so horrible that we often feel them to be frankly intolerable. The agonies of helpless suffering from age to age...how are facts like these to be reconciled with the controlling presence of a principle of reason and goodness" (Ibid., p. 414)? He further writes, "Contingency is written across the face of nature--not in the sense that what happens is not determined by natural law, but in the sense that it appears to be only so determined, and cannot, in its detail, be brought within the scope of any rational or beneficent purpose"(Ibid., p. 415).

In this world, in which involuntary good is evidenced in nature, there are manifestations, here and there, of undesirable natural phenomena. And Pringle-Pattison believes that he should betake himself to the task of doing all within

his power to alleviate the world of its natural evil. He writes,

> Without the acknowledgement of the Ideal, the doctrine of immanence must degenerate into the acceptance and justification of the actual, just as we find it. In Pope's shallow phrase, 'whatever is, is right'. This is the lower Pantheism, of which we spoke in the first lecture of this series; and it is to be observed that such a theory, by ascribing everything that happens to the direct or immediate agency of God, is a virtual denial of the existence of reflective self-conscious, spiritual centers, such as we know them in our own experience. For although we often talk, in a legitimate metaphor, of individuals as the vehicle or the channel of certain divine ideas or purposes, the self-conscious individual must appropriate the idea in order to transmit it; he must identify himself with the purpose in order to be its instrument!(Ibid., p. 253).

Criticism of Meliorism

Extreme pessimism denies the actuality of good. Optimism denies the actuality of evil. Meliorism affirms the actuality or reality of both good and evil. It conceives that there are many desirable aspects of life and existence, but it also admits that there are the undesirable aspects. The meliorist, therefore, steers clear of both the rocks of despair and defeatism and the "...frivolous, fat-witted optimism which turns its back, and shuts its eyes, and laughs" (Henry Van Dyke, The Gospel for a World of Sin, p. 18).

Whether in his metaphysics the meliorist is pluralistic, finitistic, dualistic or absolutistic, he holds that he can and should, under God, set himself to the task of thwarting the evil and promoting the good. This attitude is more reasonable and more empiric than either pessimism or optimism, and becomes more adequately based, theologically and

philosophically, when coupled with the unified system of things which is possible only in an absolutistic metaphysic. Absolutistic meliorism, therefore, rather than any other type of it, and in preference to all forms of pessimism and optimism, will constitute the foundation, in the concluding chapter of this thesis, upon which the writer will construct his incarnational answer to the vexing problem of involuntary evil.

PART TWO: SPECIAL STUDY

CHAPTER V

EARLY INCARNATIONAL EMPHASIS: IRENAEUS

In the introduction to this thesis the problem before us was stated. In Part One three general types of solutions to it were treated. In this division, specialized investigation will be made into the question of whether or not the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation points a way toward a solution. The incarnational emphasis in Irenaeus and Athanasius will be given detailed consideration. These Greek fathers will be treated as representative of the early incarnational stress, and as a background for the consideration of the modern emphasis. Following the study of their thought two contemporary theological schools, the Russian Orthodox and the Anglo-Catholic, as they are typified in the writings of Sergius Bulgakov and L. S. Thornton, will be treated as representative of the emphasis upon the Incarnation in modern theology.

There are several reasons why Irenaeus may be studied as representative of the mind of the early Church. Among the reasons are these: first, he was a voluminous writer. No authority would say he was a good writer, but he did find time, in his busy life as a missionary bishop, to write a great deal. Much of his writing has been preserved, so that it is possible to study even detailed ramifications

of his thought. Second, he had a keen sense of the importance of orthodoxy. This is evidenced by his careful--and sometimes tedious--writings against heterodox views, as Gnosticism. Third, he himself was of both the East and the West. He was probably raised in Smyrna, in the East, and we know that for many years he was the bishop of Lugdunum, the modern Lyons,[1] in the West. Fourth, his emphasis upon the Incarnation was unquestionably of direct and significant influence upon the later thought of the Eastern Church. A fifth reason why Irenaeus may be studied as representative of the mind of the early Church is for the very fact that he was such an early Christian thinker, having had, through Polycarp, indirect contact with the apostles and their thought. In his youth he sat often at the feet of Polycarp, who himself had sat at the feet of John and other apostles. Irenaeus writes, 'But Polycarp was also not only instructed by the apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the church in Smyrna, who I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried (on earth) a very long time, and, most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the church

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[1]In January, 1952, it was the writer's privilege to visit Lyons, France, there to see sites connected with Irenaeus and to interview two Roman Catholic priests. One Roman Catholic Church, in its name perpetuates the memory of the saint; there is a twelfth century cathedral, located on a Christian site which dates to early centuries; and the priests were able to

has handed down, and which alone are true"(III, 3, 4 [2]).

Gustaf Aulen affirms the representative character of Irenaeus. He declares,

> Of all the Fathers there is not one who is more thoroughly representative and typical, or who did more to fix the lines on which Christian thought was to move for centuries after his day. His strength lies in the fact that he did not, like the Apologists and the Alexandrians, work along some philosophical line of approach to Christianity, but devoted himself altogether to the simple exposition of the central ideas of the Christian faith itself(Aulen, Christus Victor, pp. 32-33).

Possibility of the Incarnation

Greek thought, following the lead of Plato, had taught that matter is evil. This idea was accepted by Gnosticism, both the pre-Christian and the post-Christian. And at a very early date in the Christian era, many gnostics attempted to join hands with the Christians. They denied, however, the belief that Christ Jesus was God in human flesh. This was precisely because they conceived of matter as inherently evil. Some New Testament writers, particularly John and Peter and Jude, made direct attack upon the proponents of this creed.

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point out that the church of which Irenaeus was bishop was, due to the persecutions, an underground sanctuary. But, for the most part, judging from pointed conversations with the local townsfolk, as well as from the interview with the priests, the modern Lyons has forgotten its early Christian missionary bishop.

[2]The Roman numeral will refer to a book in his Against Heresies; the next number to a chapter, and the last to a paragraph.

Irenaeus, whose life spanned most of the second century, found gnosticism to be a constant threat to the central affirmation of Christianity. Consequently, he attacked those who "...wallow in all error,..."(III,24,2), and who propound "...impious doctrines..."(III,24,1). This he did by assuming that matter is not evil and that therefore it was possible for God to become manifest in its realm.

The Valentinians, and other gnostics, affirmed an evil God, the Demiurge, himself"...the fruit of a defect,..." II,19,9) who fashioned and formed the universe. Irenaeus denied this. In his opinion, "...God is the Creator of the world..."(II,9,1). He reasoned, "How much safer and more accurate a course is it, then, to confess at once that which is true: that this God, the Creator, who formed the world, is the only God,..."(II,16,3). He also declared,

> It is proper, then, that I should begin with the first and most important head, that is, God the Creator, who made the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein..., and to demonstrate that there is nothing either above Him or after Him; nor that, influenced by any one, but of His own free will, He created all things, since He is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator, the only Father, alone containing all things, and Himself commanding all things into existence(II,1,1).

It was not that God only shaped things out of an amorphic, eternal, material substance. It was Irenaeus' view that God created ex nihilo. He writes, "While men, indeed, cannot make anything out of nothing, but only out of matter already existing, yet God is in this point pre-eminently superior

to men, that He Himself called into being the substance of His creation, when previously it had no existence"(II, 10,4).

Since, in the thought of Irenaeus, matter is created, even ex nihilo, by the one true God, it should not be thought of as inherently evil. And, since it was not, for him, inherently evil, the Incarnation became possible.

Fact of the Incarnation

Irenaeus taught that Christ was born of a virgin. He also taught that Christ was both divine and human. Both of these aspects of his teaching support the "fact" of the Incarnation.

The Virgin Birth of Christ is affirmed several times in Irenaeus' writings. He speaks of "...Him, the first-begotten of the Virgin,..."(III,16,4). He also writes of "...the Lord himself, Emmanuel from the Virgin,..."(III, 20,3). In another instance he calls Christ the "...token of the Virgin" (III,21,1). Further, he says Mary was "...as yet a virgin" (III,21,10). This was not only Irenaeus' personal belief; It was the faith of the whole Christian Church. He writes, "The church though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: in ...the birth from a virgin..."(I, 10,1).

Irenaeus makes many precise statements which reveal

his conviction that Christ Jesus was both Divine and human. In one instance he affirms that Christ was of a higher "substance" than were certain outstanding men of previous generations. He writes, "And how could He (Christ) have been greater than Solomon, or greater than Jonah, or have been the Lord of David, who was of the same substance as they were"(IV, 33,4)?

Two other statements of Irenaeus give more positive support to his belief in the Divinity of Christ. Christ's eternity is affirmed when he calls Him "...the eternal King,..."(III,16,4). And, that Christ is God is declared when Irenaeus writes of Him, "...having become this which we are, He (nevertheless) is the Mighty God, and possesses a generation which cannot be declared"(IV,33,11).

In Irenaeus' writings, however, there are very few statements similar to those above. If he were writing today, and he considered it his mission to defend orthodoxy, he would no doubt concentrate on this aspect of Christ's personality. Writing as he did, however, in a day when it was principally Christ's humanity which was under attack, his special burden, as relates to Christ's personality, was to support its true humanity.

The docetic gnostics, against whom Irenaeus directed the greater weight of his attack, denied the belief that in Christ God had taken on human flesh. They held that Christ only appeared to have a human body. Irenaeus

emphasized the import of II John 1:7,8: "'For many deceivers have entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Take heed to them, that ye lose not what ye have wrought'" (III,16,8). And he affirms, "For He did not seem one thing while he was another, as those affirm who describe Him as being a man only in appearance; but what He was, that He also appeared to be"(II,22,4). Against docetism he also writes, "And I have proved already, that it is the same thing to say that He appeared merely to outward seeming, and (to affirm) that He received nothing from Mary"(V,1,2).

The above passages make plain Irenaeus' belief, but they do not indicate why he believes in the true humanity of Christ. He gives many specific reasons why he affirms the humanity. Three will be noted. One is because Christ took food, and was hungry when he did not eat. He writes, "Still further, if He had taken nothing from Mary, He would never have availed Himself of those kinds of food which are derived from the earth, by which that body which has been taken from the earth is nourished; nor would He have hungered, fasting those forty days,..."(III,22,2). Another reason why he affirmed the humanity is because Christ was susceptible to suffering. He declares, "But the Lord, our Christ, underwent a valid, and not a merely accidental passion;..."(II,20,3). A third reason is more inclusive than the above two. He speaks of Christ's "...fulfilling

all the conditions of human nature,..."(III,17,4).

Importance of the Incarnation

In Western theological thought, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, the death of Christ has been lauded as the instrument of redemption. Eastern thought has evidenced more of an incarnational emphasis; it has tended to minimize the death of Christ, and to stress the Incarnation as the means of salvation. Irenaeus represents the Eastern tradition. In his thought the death of Christ is quite incidental; the incarnate life of Christ is what is significant. The attempt to support this statement will begin by a negative approach, and proceed to a positive presentation.

The death of Christ, according to Irenaeus, is relatively insignificant. Some passages in Irenaeus would appear to contradict this affirmation. For instance, he writes, "By His own blood He redeemed us, as also His apostle declares, 'In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins'"(V,2,2). Again, also referring to the "blood" as the redeeming agency, he speaks of "...the mighty Word, and very man, who, redeeming us by His own blood in a manner consonant to reason, gave Himself as a redemption for those who had been led into captivity"(V,1,1). Further, still extolling the "blood", he writes, "Christ, who was called the Son of God before the ages, was manifested in the fullness of time, in order that He might cleanse us

through His blood, who were under the power of sin, presenting us as pure sons to His Father"(A. Roberts and W. Rambaut, editors, The Writings of Irenaeus, "The Lost Writings of Irenaeus," Chapter 39, p. 177).

Mention of the blood of Christ, in our day, usually connotes the idea of the blood which flowed from Christ's body at the Crucifixion; it is a reference to the death. Irenaeus, however, in his emphasis upon the blood of Christ, seems, particularly, to refer to that material element which is one constituent of the incarnate life. None of the several authorities on Irenaeus, which the writer has consulted, makes any mention of this; nevertheless, it seems to be a valid deduction. Several passages may be noted in support of it.

Irenaeus writes, "Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh,...attaching man to God by His own incarnation,..."(V,1,1). This passage refers to the blood, and sums the statement up in such a way as to reveal that he is referring to the blood of the incarnate Life, rather than to a life-giving fluid which flowed from the crucified body. Irenaeus also speaks of Christ as "...one truly possessing flesh and blood, by which He redeemed us,..." (V,1,2). It is quite evident that in this passage the reference is not to the blood spilled in death, but to the blood which, with the flesh, constituted the earthly body of Christ. Another passage reads thus: "...in reconciling us to Himself

by the body of His own flesh, and redeeming us by His own blood,..."(V,14,3). This, clearly, is an allusion to the flesh and blood of the life.

These three passages, depicting, as they do, the blood as a part of the incarnate life rather than as something given in death, make it legitimate to interpret the previously quoted references to the redeeming agency of the blood as allusions to the blood of the life rather than of the death.

It is the Incarnation which is, in the thought of Irenaeus, the instrument of redemption. Before giving several quotations which make the Incarnation the exclusive means of redemption, two passages will be studied as depicting the relative importance of the Incarnation and the death.

In Colossians 1:21f, Saint Paul mentions both the Incarnation and the death of Christ as the means of our reconciliation. Irenaeus quotes the entire passage, and lifts out the Incarnation reference in order to establish the idea of our having been reconciled. Irenaeus writes, "And for this cause the apostle...says, 'And though ye were formerly alienated, and enemies to His knowledge by evil works, yet now ye have been reconciled in the body of His flesh, through His death, to present yourselves holy and chaste, and without fault in His sight'"(V.14,2). Immediately after quoting this passage from Paul, Irenaeus comments, "He says, 'Ye have been reconciled in the body of His flesh,'

because the righteous flesh has reconciled that flesh which was being kept under bondage of sin, and brought it into friendship with God"(V,14,2). It is significant that when Irenaeus here requotes the passage which he has just quoted, he omits the reference to Christ's death. This reveals that even when Irenaeus is treating the statements of Paul, he does so with a bias toward an almost exclusive emphasis upon the Incarnation as the means of man's reconciliation.

There is yet another passage which also clearly shows the relative importance of the Incarnation and the death. Speaking of "Christ Jesus, the Son of God," Irenaeus writes, "...who, because of His surpassing love towards His creation, condescended to be born of a virgin, He Himself uniting man through Himself to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and having been received up in splendour, shall come in glory, the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged, and sending into eternal fire those who transform the truth, and despise His Father and His advent"(III,4,2). Since this one passage mentions the death and Resurrection as well as the Incarnation, it depicts the relative importance of each in the mind of Irenaeus. It reveals that in the thinking of this early writer the Incarnation redeems man, the death and the Resurrection being only incidental. He here states that having "...condescended to be born of a virgin,..." Christ united

"...man through Himself to God,..." Immediately following this statement Irenaeus continues, "...and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again,...shall come in glory,...." The dying and the rising are therefore something additional to Christ's uniting man to God. They are only elements in a subsequent history which preceeds the return of Christ as judge.

In order to support, further, this thesis that it is the Incarnation rather than the death which redeems man, let us note the last phrase in the above passage. In it, it is not those who "despise" the death of Christ who are to be judged and turned into "eternal fire"; it is those who "...despise His Father and His advent".

Many passages in Irenaeus explicitly state that the Incarnation is the instrument of redemption. He says it was prophesied that renewal and quickening would come by the Incarnation. He writes, "For this very thing was proclaimed beforehand, that novelty should come to renew and quicken mankind"(IV,34,1).

The Incarnation is incidentally implied to be the instrument of redemption when Irenaeus writes, "For as He gave by His advent a greater privilege to those who believed on Him, and who do His will, so also did He point out that those who did not believe on Him should have a more severe punishment in the judgment;..."(IV,36,4).

In at least two passages Irenaeus affirms that man's

regeneration comes through the Incarnation. He writes of "...the pure One opening purely that pure womb which regenerates men to God,..."(IV,33,11). He also refers to "...that regeneration which flows from the virgin..."(IV,33,4).

It is the Incarnation which renovates man. Irenaeus declares, "He, the same, took flesh of the Virgin Mary, not merely in appearance, but actually, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, in order to renovate us"(V, title of Chapter One.).

Man's adoption into the family of God comes by way of the Incarnation. He affirms, "For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God"(III,19,1). He also speaks of "...the Son of God being made the Son of man, that through Him we may receive the adoption,..."(III,16,3).

Restoration and mediation are by means of the Incarnation. Irenaeus writes, "And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation, having become 'the Mediator between God and men(I Timothy 2:5)';..."(V,17,1).

Salvation comes from the incarnate Christ. Irenaeus affirms, "For He is indeed Saviour, as being the Son and Word of God;.... But salvation, as being flesh: for 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us'"(III,10,2). That

Christ's own person "saves" men is taught when Irenaeus declares, "For He came to save all through means of Himself--..." (II,22,4).

Man's death, which is, in Irenaeus' view, a result of man's sin, is conquered by the Incarnation. Irenaeus queries, "And how shall he (man) escape from the generation subject to death, if not by means of a new generation, given in a wonderful and unexpected manner by God--that regeneration which flows from the virgin through faith"(IV,33,4)? A little more explicitly, he affirms: "...wherefore also what was generated is a holy thing, and the Son of the Most High God and Father of all, who effected the incarnation of this being, and showed forth a new (kind of) generation; that as by the former generation we inherited death, so by this new generation we might inherit life"(V,1,3).

Last of all, the adversary of both God and man is conquered. This was not by a dramatic death grapple on the Cross, as some Western theologians are now affirming; it was by the medium of the Incarnation itself. Irenaeus says that "...He, in the last times, was made man among men; that He re-formed the human race, but destroyed and conquered the enemy of man, and gave to His own handiwork victory against the adversary"(IV, 24,1). In this connection he also writes, "The Word of God, however, the Maker of all things, conquering him (the adversary) by means of human nature, and showing him

to be an apostate, has, on the contrary, put him under the power of man"(V,24,4).

This study reveals that Irenaeus makes more of the advent than of the departure, more of the life than of the death, more of the Incarnate One than of the Crucified.

The Merit of the Incarnation

The merit of the Incarnation, as one would find from even a superficial study of Irenaeus, is the recapitulatio.[3] This is to say that it is the recapitulation which gives to the Incarnation its worth as the means of redemption.

John Lawson writes, "Many writers upon Saint Irenaeus have essayed a definition of the meaning of the word 'recapitulation' as used by him, and with a perplexing variety of results"(Lawson, The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus, p. 141). Lawson himself contributes to the many definitions. He explains, "...recapitulation appears to be the restoration of humanity into the blessed state of collectivity by Christ, the Second Adam. To accomplish this Christ went through experiences parallel to those of Adam, but with the opposite outcome in each case"(Ibid., p. 142). This definition is probably inadequate because it restricts the effects of the recapitulation to the "...restoration of humanity...." Gustaf Aulen more fully explains Irenaeus' use of the term,

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[3]The most pointed New Testament basis for this view is Ephesians 1:10, which reads: "...as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things ( ) in him, things in heaven and things on earth"(Revised Standard Version, henceforth called R.S.V.).

when he says, "The Divine victory accomplished in Christ stands in the center of Irenaeus' thought, and forms the central element in the recapitulatio, the restoring and the perfecting of creation, which is his most comprehensive theological idea"(Aulen, Christus Victor, p. 37). This definition is more adequate because it includes all creation--man and nature--in the redemptive process, as does Irenaeus' thought.

Irenaeus has much to say about the Incarnate Christ's recapitulating man; that is, about Christ's re-making man so that he is as he was when originally created. He writes, "He had Himself, therefore, flesh and blood, recapitulating in Himself not a certain other, but that original handiwork of the Father, seeking out that thing which had perished" (V,14,2). He also affirms, "...as by the former generation (Adam) we inherited death, so by this new generation we might inherit life"(V,1,3). In this connection he also says that Christ "...summed up in Himself the ancient formation of Adam"(V,1,2). Yet another passage reads, "...and the Lord took dust from the earth and formed man; so did He who is the Word, recapitulating Adam in Himself, rightly receiving a birth, enabling him to gather up Adam (into Himself),..."(III,21,10). Lastly, on this subject he states: "...when He became incarnate, and was made man, He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a

brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we lost in Adam--namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God--that we might recover in Christ Jesus" (III,18,1).

Irenaeus conceives that the incarnate Christ went through the stage of infancy in order to recapitulate, or to go back over,--and thereby redeem--the infant life of every person. He writes, "It was for this reason that the Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it thus not for His own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of man's existence,..."(Iv,38,2).

Not only does he look upon the Incarnation as a recapitulation of man's infancy; he views it also as a re-living, and thereby a re-creation, of every age of man. He affirms of Christ, "He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age...; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord. So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all,..."(II,22,4). Most scholars think Christ died in His early thirties. Irenaeus argues for an age of near fifty. (II,22,6). He bases this assumption, in part, on John 8:57, which reads, "'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham'"(II,22,6)? It is because

of this belief that Irenaeus can say that Christ also recapitulated old age. He apparently considered "near fifty" as old age; and this might be somewhat justified, when we consider the fact that life expectancy was not, at that time, what it now is.

Yet, more than all the stages of life are recapitulated by the Incarnate One. Christ also recapitulated death. Irenaeus writes, "Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He may be the 'first-born from the dead,...'"(II,22,4). He also declares, "For by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up its death"(V,23,2).

But not only are all the aspects of human life and human death recapitulated by Christ;the "summing up" also included a re-creation of the natural world. Irenaeus writes, "...from David's belly the King eternal was raised up, who sums up all things in Himself, and has gathered into Himself the ancient formation"(III,21,9). He also speaks of Christ's "...recapitulating in Himself His own handiwork;..." (II,22,1).

Results of the Incarnation

There are, in Irenaeus' view, three principal results of the Incarnation. They are the "deification" of man, the immortality of man, and the redemption of nature. These three results are not treated separately, or systematically; they may be seen, however, in a study of his thought.

1. Deification of Man:-It may be said that there is a certain deification of man as a result of the Incarnation. Speaking of the ancient fathers, Irenaeus says the Lord "...has regenerated them into the life of God,..."(III, 22,4). He also asks, "Or how shall man pass into God, unless God has (first) passed into man"(IV, 33,4)? He further declares, "...those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature;..."(V,32,1). He also speaks of Christ's "...uniting man through Himself to God,..."(III,4,2). Passages such as these indicate that, for Irenaeus, the Incarnation deifies man. Such statements become tempered, however, by other passages so that, with a view of the whole, one's judgment might well be that Irenaeus went no further in the direction of man's deification than have many another Christian theologian--even of the Western tradition. One such tempering passage is as follows: "...man is infinitely inferior to God;...he has received grace only in part, and is not yet equal or similar to his Maker;..."(II,25,3).

2. Immortality of Man:-A second result of the Incarnation is the immortality of man. Irenaeus did not look upon fallen man as naturally immortal. He conceived that because of the Fall, and because of each man's disobedience to God, men are natively mortal. He writes, "...lest man, falling away from God altogether, should cease to exist"(IV, 20,7). It is his faith, however, that through the Incarnation what is naturally mortal becomes immortal and what is natively

corruptible becomes clothed with incorruptibility. He speaks of Christ's "...bestowing upon us at His coming (His first one, according to the context) immortality durably and truly,...(V,1,1). He also declares, "...we possess eternal duration from the excelling power of this Being, not from our own nature,..."(V,2,3). He further affirms of Christ, "...He appeared as a man, that we, being nourished, as it were, from the breast of His flesh,...may be able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality,..."(IV, 38,1). Yet further, he says that Christ "...bestowed the gift of incorruption"(II,20,3). In a well-rounded passage, when our author is speaking of the Eucharist (by which he means the body and blood of Christ) he writes:"...so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption,..." (V,2,3).

3. Redemption of Nature:-A third result of the Incarnation[4] is the redemption of nature. This redemption will be

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[4]In one passage several natural evils are conceived of as redeemed, but if by "passion" Irenaeus means "death", it is here the death and not the Incarnation which redeems nature. He says, "Our Lord also by His passion destroyed death, and dispersed error, and put an end to corruption, and destroyed ignorance, while He manifested life and revealed truth, and bestowed the gift of incorruption"(II,20,3).

discussed at some length due to the fact that it is so central to the problem of this entire thesis.

Most authorities would allow that man's ignorance is one cause of manifestations of evil in the natural realm. It is, for example, partly due to man's ignorance that there are famines and the ravages of cancer. Irenaeus conceives that the Incarnation redeems men from at least a certain amount of this cause of natural evil. He writes, "For He was already despoiling men, by removing their ignorance, conferring upon them His own knowledge,..."(III,16,4). This redemption from ignorance is through the medium of the Incarnation rather than the death of Christ, because Irenaeus makes the above statement of the baby Jesus in Simeon's arms.

Irenaeus conceives that diseases and bodily infirmities, which are manifestations of natural evil, are redeemed by means of the Incarnation. He writes, "Those, again, who declare that at His coming 'the lame man shall leap as an heart, and the tongue of the dumb shall (speak) plainly, and the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear'...--proclaimed those works of healing which were accomplished by Him"(IV,33,11).

Irenaeus conceives that the poison of serpents, which by most is considered an aspect of natural evil, is made of no effect to those who believe on Christ. He says that

Christ "...conferred on those that believe in Him the power 'to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy,...(Luke 10:19)'"(II,20,3).

All the evils of nature are counteracted, according to Irenaeus, in order to win human nature back to God. He writes, "For all things had entered upon a new phase, the Word arranging after a new manner the advent in the flesh, that He might win back to God that human nature (hominem) which had departed from God;..."(III,10,2).

Irenaeus takes great pains to support his belief that man's body, or flesh, is redeemed. He argues, "Vain therefore are the disciples of Valentinus who put forth this opinion, in order that they may exclude the flesh from salvation and cast aside what God has fashioned"(V, 1,2). He also declares, "God will bestow salvation upon the whole nature of man, consisting of body and soul in close union, since the Word took it upon Him,..."(V, title of Chapter Six). And he asks, "How then is it not the utmost blasphemy to allege, that the temple of God, in which the Spirit of the Father dwells, and the members of Christ, do not partake of salvation, but are reduced to perdition"(V, 6,2)? In another instance he says, "What was it, then, which was dead? Undoubtedly it was the substance of the flesh; the same, too, which had lost the breath of life, and had become breathless and dead. This same, therefore, was what the Lord came to quicken, that as in Adam we do

all die, as being of an animal nature, in Christ we may all live, as being spiritual,..."(V,12,3). Further, he asks, "Or how can they maintain that the flesh is incapable of receiving life which flows from Him, when it received healing from Him"(V,12,6)?

Professor James Orr calls human death "...that crowning evil"(Orr, The Christian View of God and the World, pp. 228,229). And Professor Orr considers that death is a result of man's sin. He writes, "Death for man is an effect of sin. It did not lie in the Creator's original design for man that he should die,--that these two component parts of his nature, body and soul, should ever be violently disrupted and severed, as death now severs them"(Ibid., p. 229). Irenaeus, in his early day, was of this same persuasion. He conceived, however, as do many who take the position, that the Incarnate Christ redeems death. He writes, "When therefore the Lord vivifies man, that is, Adam, death is at the same time destroyed"(III,23,7). Irenaeus also writes, "For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first,...the corruptible might be swallowed up in incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality,..."(III,19,1).

Irenaeus also conceives that nature, or creation, outside man, is redeemed by Christ the Incarnate One. He

speaks of the presence of God in creation and implies that this presence renovates it. His words are, "...to behold God in this creation which is renovated,..."(V,32,1). Another statement yet more explicitly teaches this same truth. He writes, "For all these are tokens of the flesh which had been derived from the earth, which He had recapitulated in Himself, bearing salvation to His own handiwork"(III,22,2). He also speaks of "...the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition,..."(V,32,1). Irenaeus also affirms,

> For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, in that they should reign. For God is rich in all things, and all things are His(V,32,1).

Another lengthy passage, in support of his belief in the Incarnation as constituting a redemption for nature, may be given. Irenaeus writes,

> For if He did not receive the substance of flesh from a human being, He neither was made man nor the Son of man; and if He was not made what we were, He did no great thing in what He suffered and endured. But every one will allow that we are (composed of) a body taken from the earth, and a soul receiving spirit from God. This, therefore, the Word of God was made, recapitulating in Himself His own handiwork; and on this account does He confess Himself the Son of man, and blesses 'the meek, because they shall inherit the earth'"(III,22,1).

In yet another passage Irenaeus says that because of the Incarnation the savage earth is reclaimed. He writes, "...because

the Word, having been firmly united to flesh, and in its mechanism fixed with pins, has reclaimed the savage earth" (IV,34,4).

CHAPTER VI

EARLY INCARNATIONAL EMPHASIS: ATHANASIUS

The other outstanding light among the early incarnationalists, born about a century after the death of Irenaeus, was Athanasius. Like Irenaeus, he was a voluminous writer. Some of his works have been destroyed, but many have been preserved. Those extant include apologies, treatises, doctrinal statements, histories and letters. Most of these works have been included in Volume Four of A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Archibald Robertson edited this volume which is devoted exclusively to Athanasius. He used Cardinal Newman's translation, save at certain points. It is the text of this volume which will be quoted herein, except where otherwise stated.

The divisions of this study will be similar to those in the treatment of Irenaeus. The principal topics will be the possibility, the actuality, the importance, and the results of the Incarnation.

Possibility of the Incarnation

Athanasius was trained in a type of thought which tended to view matter as essentially evil. He reveals a familiarity with the writings of Plato, as interpreted in

Neo-Platonism, the revival of Plato's thought. He studied at the theological school in Alexandria, where the influence of Origen was still potent.

He maintained a life-long interest in asceticism, especially as it was expressed in the lives of celibate hermits. As a young man he lived for a time with the hermit Antony in the Egyptian desert. When he later wrote his Life of Antony he included this statement in his introduction: "I was able to learn from him, for I was his attendant for a long time." As a bishop he wrote letters of encouragement to the hermits. In them he reveals his high regard for "...those who practice a solitary life"(Letters of Athanasius, LIII, "Second Letter to Monks"). This interest in and reverence for the ascetic life might have grown out of his training in a type of thought which tended to look upon matter as inherently evil.

Notwithstanding the influence of a Greek type of thought, and his consequent reverence for asceticism[5], Athanasius nevertheless did not go the full distance in that direction; he did not consider matter to be inherently evil. Matter was the direct creation, ex nihilo, of the one true God. He writes, "...for it (creation) too has been brought into existence by

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[5]It must be allowed that the Scriptures also, in which Athanasius saturated his thinking, played an important roll in his position on asceticism.

the Word out of nothing"(De Incarn. Verbi Dei 42,2). He also says, "...they (created things) are made out of nothing,..." (Contra Gentes 35,1). It is not that an evil god made all, or any part, of created existence. Athanasius further writes, "...He (God) made all things"(Ibid., 46,5). And he says, "...He (God) made all created Existence,..."(Ibid., 46,6). This "created existence" is not an evidence of some recalcitrant element in existence; it is a revelation of God Himself. Athanasius gives this caption to the first section of Part III of Contra Gentes: "Creation a revelation of God; especially in the order and harmony pervading the whole." He also writes, "...He so ordered Creation that although He is by nature invisible He may yet be known by His works"(Ibid., 35,2).

The Gnostics and the Docetists, whom Athanasius sometimes attacks directly, denied the Incarnation; they rejected the belief that in Christ Jesus God had become manifested in human flesh. They made this denial because they conceived of matter as inherently evil. Athanasius argued against such (sometimes calling them Gentiles) by beginning with a teaching of Greek philosophy, which was their own belief also. He writes,

> The philosophers of the Greeks say that the universe is a great body; and rightly so. For we see it and its parts as objects of our senses. If, then, the Word of God is in the Universe, which is a body, and has united Himself with the whole and with all its parts, what is there surprising or absurd if we say that He has united Himself with man also. For if it were absurd for Him to have been in a body at all, it would be absurd for Him to be united with the whole either, and to be giving light and movement to

all things by His providence. For the whole also is a body(De Incarn., 41, 5 & 6).

Even although Athanasius tended--more than did Irenaeus--toward the Greek view of matter, as is evidenced by his interest in monasticism, he nevertheless did not go the full distance in that direction. Matter is, for him, the direct creation of God. And since matter is God's creation, it is not inherently evil. The incarnation of God the Son was thus, on Athanasius' prior belief about matter, a possibility.

Actuality of the Incarnation

Athanasius taught that the Incarnation, a possibility because of the nature of existence, became an actuality because of "...our sorry case"(De Incarn. Verbi Dei, 4. Trans. by 'A Religious of C.S.M.V.S. Th.' Int. by C. S. Lewis). The doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ is what makes the Incarnation, in its traditional connotation, an actuality. Athanasius taught this doctrine. He also taught its corollary: that the Incarnate One was both human and Divine.

Athanasius makes numerous references to the Virgin Birth. Several of these are in his De Incarnationes Verbi Dei. In one instance he speaks of Christ's having His body "...from a spotless and stainless virgin, knowing not a man, a body clean and in very truth pure from intercourse of men"(De Incarn. 8,3). He inquires, "Or what woman has sufficed without a man for the conception of human kind? Was

not Abel born of Adam, Enoch of Jared...? Had not each a father as author of his existence"(Ibid., 35,7)? He speaks of "...His body not being of a man, but of a virgin alone;..." (Ibid., 37,3). He also affirms, "For He it is that proceeded from a virgin and appeared as man on the earth,..."(Ibid., 37,3). In another instance he asks, "For which of the righteous men and holy prophets, and patriarchs, recorded in the divine Scriptures, ever had his corporeal birth of a Virgin only"(Ibid., 35,7)? In the same vein, speaking of Christ's body, he says: "...by an unparalleled miracle it was formed of a virgin only,..."(Ibid., 20,4). And he asks, "For what man, that ever was born, formed a body for himself from a virgin alone"(Ibid., 49,1)?

The Virgin Birth is also taught in other writings of Athanasius. In the Statement of Faith he writes, "...He ...took from the undefiled Virgin Mary our humanity (ἄνθρωπον), ..."(paragraph one). In De Decretis we read, "...He took on Himself a body from the Virgin Mary;..."(Ch. 3, sec. 14). In his On the Opinion of Dionysius we have this statement: "...the Virgin at the consumation of the ages conceived, and the Lord has become man"(Sec. 9). In the Four Discourses Against the Arians there are several specific references to the Virgin Birth. One is when he writes, "...afterwards for us He took flesh of a Virgin, Mary Bearer of God, and was made man"(III, Sec. 29).

The conception of the Incarnate One as both human

and Divine quite naturally follows from belief in His birth from a Virgin. In the second century Irenaeus stressed Christ's humanity. Gnosticism, the dominant heresy of that century, denied the humanity, and Irenaeus was impelled to make attack upon that heresy. In the fourth century it was Christ's Divinity which was under fire. Arianism, the principal heresy of that period, denied it, affirming that Christ was of like substance as is God but not of the same substance. For some fifty years Athanasius preached and wrote against Arianism and in defense of Christ's Godhead.[6] Though Irenaeus stressed one aspect of Christ's person, he taught both phases. The same was true of Athanasius.

Some passages in the writings of Athanasius may justly cause the student to say that he denied the true humanity of Christ. He writes, "...the Incarnation did not limit the ubiquity of the Word,..."(De Incarn. title of Sec. 17). He enlarges upon this statement: "For He was not, as might be imagined, circumscribed in a body, nor, while present in the body, was He absent elsewhere; nor, while He moved the body, was the universe left void of his working and Providence; but, thing most marvelous, Word as He was, so far from being contained by anything, He rather contained all things Himself;..."(Ibid., 17,1). He further writes, "...He was not

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[6] The question is not labored in Athanasius' two earliest works, Contra Gentes and De Incarnationes Verbi Dei, because they were written shortly before the Arian Controversy began. The doctrine is, nevertheless, affirmed in these treatises.

bound to his body,..."(Ibid., 17,4). He even goes so far as to say, "So that not even when the Virgin bore Him did He suffer any change, nor by being in the body was dulled:..." (Ibid., 17,5). And he affirms, "For not even by being in the universe does He share in its nature, but all things, on the contrary, are quickened and sustained by Him"(Ibid., 17,6). In another instance he declares, "...so the Lord, when made man for us, and bearing a body, was no less God; He was not lessened by the envelopment of the body,..."(De Decretis, Ch.3, Sec.14). In yet another he writes, "...being Son of the True God, He too is faithful, and ought to be believed, in all He says and does, Himself remaining unalterable and not changed in His human Economy and fleshly presence"(Discourses, II, Sec 6). And he affirms, "For the Word was not impaired in receiving a body,..."(Discourses,I, Sec. 42).

Other passages in his works tend to support the actual humanity. Some affirm that the Word actually became man. Athanasius speaks of "...His becoming Man,..."(De. Incarn. 16,4). And he reasons, "...the Pharisees...complained...'Why dost Thou, being man, make Thyself God?' Insensate, and verily blind of understanding! they ought contrariwise to have said, 'Why hast Thou, being God, become man?'" (De Decretis, Sec. 1).

Some statements declare that the Word actually took a body. Athanasius writes, "Whence He took, in natural

fitness, a mortal body,..."(De Incarn., 13, 9). He speaks also of "...His actual body..."(Ibid., 14, 8). And he declares, "Thus the Word condescended to man's engrossment in corporeal things, by even taking a body"(Ibid., title of Sec. 15). In another instance he speaks of "...His bodily appearing;..."(Ibid., 20, 1). He asks, "Is it merely our saying that the Word has been made manifest in the body" (Ibid., 41, 2)? Still further he says, "...He took on Him flesh like ours;..."(Discourses II, Sec. 9).

In some passages there are comprised both the idea that the word became man and that He took a body. He writes, "Whence, naturally, willing to profit men, He sojourns here as man, taking to Himself a body like the others,..."(De Incarn., 14,8). He also affirms, "...the loving and general Saviour of all, the Word of God, takes to Himself a body, and as Man walks among men and meets the senses of men half-way,..." (Ibid., 15,2). Directly attacking the docetists he says, "...it was proper for these things to be predicated of Him as man,to show Him to have a body in truth, and not in seeming" (Ibid., 18,1).

Athanasius also supports the humanity by reference to human characteristics of the Incarnate Word. He says, "...the actual body which ate, was born, (poor order) and suffered, belonged to none other but the Lord:..."(Ibid., 18,1). He also writes, "For it is said of Him, as also that He hungered, and thirsted, and asked where Lazarus lay, and suffered,..."(De Decretis, Sec. 14). Yet again he

declares, "...he (Christ) exhibits his (not capitalized; nor is the previous pronoun) human character in weeping,..."(On the Opinion of Dionysius, Sec. 9). Still again he writes, "...and it became the Lord, in putting on human flesh, to put it on whole with the affections proper to it;..."(Discourses III, 32).

Passages which appear to deny the true humanity of the Incarnate Word have been given, and statements affirming the humanity have been set forth. A case could certainly be made for Athanasius' inconsistency on this question, and it might be argued that he definitely rejected the true humanity of the Word; but in view of his many statements in which the humanity is affirmed, one might say with at least a degree of basis for it, that Athanasius taught the humanity of the Word. One would not say, however, that he went as far in this emphasis as did Irenaeus; and one would not say that he conceived of Christ as human to the degree to which most Christian theologians have taught that doctrine.

Theologians have often gone to an extreme in their zeal to set forth one certain aspect of Christian Truth. This was probably the case as relates to Athanasius' emphasis upon the Divinity of the Word. In most of his writings his chief purpose, in view of the Arian denial of the Divinity, was to support that aspect of the Incarnate Word. Therefore, if he emphasized the Divinity to the slighting of the true humanity,

he should at least be studied, from our vantage-point, with understanding if not with complete acquittal.

That Athanasius taught the Divinity of the Word is not a debatable point. In his writings there are many affirmations of that doctrine. He speaks of "Christ's own Godhead."(De Incarn., 1, 2). He also writes of the "divinity of the Word of the Father"(Ibid., 1, 1). At least two references are made to the "...divinity of the Saviour,..."(Ibid., 52, 4; and 53, 1). He alludes to "...that sacred Manhood, Whose deity all nature confessed,..."(Ibid., title of Sec. 19). He affirms, "...Christ on the Cross was God,..."(Ibid., 19, 3). He again calls Christ God when he writes, "But as it is, what irreligious men believe not, the spirits see--that He is God,--and hence they fly and fall at His feet, saying just what they uttered when He was in the body:..."(Ibid., 32, 5). In this same vein he also asserts, "...and Christ alone has been recognized among men as the true God, the Word of God"(Ibid., 47, 3). At least three times he speaks of "...God the Word,;,..."(Ibid., 49, 6; 55,2; and 55, 6, respectively). Again he calls Him God when he declares, "...He was God the Son of God;..."(De Decretis, Sec. 1). To the probable enragement of the remaining Gnostics, he said, "He descended in body, and He rose again because He was God Himself in the body"(Discourses I, 44). And, he also said, "...He who was in the body was God,..."(Ibid., II, 16). Athanasius said that he himself confessed "...Him Lord and God,..."(De Decretis, Sec. 11).

Affirmations and declarations, however, are not enough. Support must be given them. There are many instances in which Athanasius gives support to his affirmations. He does this in three principal ways: by mention of the Virgin Birth, by reference to the pre-existence of the Word and by pointing to the works which the Incarnate Word wrought.

At least two passages give proof for the Divinity from the Virgin Birth. One is when Athanasius writes, "...He fashioned His body for Himself from a Virgin, thus to afford to all no small proof of His Godhead,..."(De Incarn., 18, 5). The other is when he says, "For who, seeing a body proceeding forth from a Virgin alone without a man, can fail to infer that He Who appears in it is Maker and Lord of other bodies also" (Ibid., 18, 5)?

Several passages support the Divinity from the pre-existence of the Word. He writes, "...even before He became man He was worshiped,..."(Discourses, I, 42). He also asserts, "He was not from a lower state promoted; but rather, existing as God, He took the form of a servant,..."(Ibid., I, 40). Of Christ he declares, "...He exists eternally"(Ibid., I, 14). He also speaks of "...the everlasting co-existence of the Word with the Father,..."(De Decretis, Sec. 27). And he also reasons, "It is plain then from the above that the Scriptures declare the Son's eternity;..."(Discourses, I, 13). All these passages teach that the Word existed before the manger scene at Bethlehem; they thereby support the Divinity of the

Word.

Athanasius' principal method, however, of supporting the Divinity of the Incarnate Word is by calling attention to the works wought by Him. He writes, "...He who can do these (works) is not man, but the Power and Word of God"(De Incarn., 18, 3). He also speaks of "...the proofs of the Godhead from His works,..."(Ibid., 20, 2). He even declares, "...His works proved Him God,..."(De Decretis, Sec. 1).

Importance of the Incarnation--In Relation to the Death of Christ

Athanasius gives a somewhat greater significance than does Irenaeus to the Death of Christ, but it is still the Incarnation which is of paramount importance.

There are numerous passages in his writings which give a very great import to the Death. In one place he even calls it the sum of the Christian faith. He writes, "But the next step must be to recount and speak of the end of His bodily life and course, and of the nature of the death of the body; especially as this is the sum of our faith,..."(Ibid., 19, 3).

There are at least two passages which state that it is the Death which ransoms men. He writes, "...He died a ransom to all,..."(De Incarn., 21, 7). He also declares, "...the Lord's death is the ransom of all,..."(Ibid., 25, 3).

Sometimes Athanasius says it is the Death which is the instrument of salvation. He affirms, "...it may justly be argued that in no other way than by the Cross was it right for the salvation of all to take place"(Ibid., 26, 1). He also

says, "...they (the Scriptures) feared not to mention even the causes of His death,--that He suffers it not for His own sake, but for the immortality and salvation of all,..."(Ibid., 34, 1). He asks, "But which of the Holy prophets or of the early patriarchs has died on the Cross for the salvation of all"(Ibid., 36, 4)? Again he inquires, "Or who among those recorded in Scripture was pierced in the hands and feet, or hung at all upon a tree, and was sacrificed upon a cross for the salvation of all"(Ibid., 37, 1)? He affirms, "He is the Life of all, and He it is that as a sheep yielded His body to death as a substitute, for the salvation of all,..."(Ibid., 37, 7).

There are some instances in which the Death of Christ is considered the instrument of the destruction of death as it relates to men. He writes, "So death came to His body, not from Himself, but from hostile counsels, in order that whatever death they offered to the Saviour, this he might utterly do away"(Ibid., 24,2). He also declares, "He accepted the Cross, and endured, a death inflicted by others, and above all by His enemies, which they thought dreadful and ignominious and not to be faced, so that this also being destroyed, both He Himself might be believed to be the Life, and the power of death be brought to nought"(Ibid., 24,3). He further states, "...the death, which they thought to inflict as a disgrace, was actually a monument of victory against death itself"(Ibid., 24, 4). Yet further he declares, "...it

was not from any natural weakness of theWord that dwelt in it that the body had died, but in order that in it death might be done away by the power of the Saviour"(Ibid., 26, 6).

At least two passages give the Death a greater significance than the Incarnation because they make the Incarnation merely a prerequisite for the Death. He asks, "Why, then, did He not prevent death, as He did sickness? Because it was for this that He had a body,..."(Ibid., 21, 7). He also asserts, "...the Word was made flesh in order to offer up His body for us all,..."(De Decretis, Sec. 14).

One statement teaches that the Incarnation was merely for the purpose of making the Word "visible", and that it is the Death which is of actual merit to us. He writes, "Now for this cause, also, He did not immediately upon His coming accomplish His sacrifice on behalf of all, by offering His body and raising it again, for by this means He would have made Himself invisible"(De Incarn., 16, 4).

Although there are numerous passages in Athanasius which give a very great significance to the death of Christ, his writings as a whole give a far greater importance to the Incarnation. The question then arises, "Why, if this be the case, can one find the above-quoted passages, and more as well?" One can find such passages for at least three reasons. One is because Athanasius was probably not always consistent. He "...was not a systematic theologian:..."(Robertson, St. Athanasius, p. lxix). That is, he did not set out to give the

Christian doctrines in all their inter-relatedness. He wrote in order to meet the practical doctrinal needs of his day, and not in order to systematize doctrines. For this reason, even in the same treatise, he sometimes makes contradictory statements about the death of Christ and the Incarnation.

Another possible reason for conflicting statements about the Death and the Incarnation is a change of view. It may be noted that, with the exception of one passage, all the above quotations about the significance of the Death of Christ are from the De Incarnatione Verbi Dei. There is a conspicuous absence of such an emphasis in the other writings. Since this work was written in his youth, may we not allow for a change of view on his part?

A third possible reason for the conflicting passages is a mere change of emphasis. The work in which most of the stress upon the Death is found was written just prior to the outbreak of the Arian heresy. In Athanasius' subsequent writings his concern, above all other concerns, is to defend the Divinity of Christ. This naturally calls for concentration upon the Person of Christ rather than upon His Death. In this case, Athanasius might have always believed in the significance of the Death of Christ as expressed in his early treatise, but was later bent upon another emphasis.

Before proceeding to a detailed treatment of the results of the Incarnation, in which the importance of the Incarnate Life will be seen in positive unfolding, three passages will be given which show the Incarnation to be more

important than the Death. Athanasius writes, "For the Lord died in those days, that we should no longer do the deeds of death. He gave His life, that we might preserve our own from the snares of the devil. And, what is most wonderful, the Word became flesh, that we should no longer live in the flesh but in the spirit should worship God, who is Spirit"(Letters of Athanasius, VI, "Easter Letter for 334," Par. 1). Here, after speaking of the Death, he says: "And, what is most wonderful, the Word became flesh,..."(Ibid., Par. 1).

The Incarnate Life is implied as of more importance than the Death when he writes, "In which humanity He was crucified and died for us, and rose from the dead, and was taken up into the heavens, having been created as the beginning of ways for us (Prov. 8:22), when on earth He showed us light from out of darkness, salvation from error, life from the dead, an entrance to paradise, from which Adam was cast out,..."(Statement of Faith, par. 1). Not only does this passage mention that it was in "humanity" that Christ died; the significant matter is that immediately following mention of the Death he says "when on earth he showed us" light and salvation and life.

Archibald Robertson says this of the importance of the Incarnation in the writings of Athanasius: "Accordingly the mere presence of the Word in a human body, the mere fact of the Incarnation, is the essential factor in our restoration" (Robertson, in Introduction to volume on Athanasius, Op. Cit., p. lxx).

Results of the Incarnation

There are six principal results of the Incarnation, according to Athanasius. They are re-creation, redemption from ignorance, man's deliverance from sin and his salvation, the defeat of death and the bestowal of immortality, man's deification, and the redemption of nature.

1. Re-creation:-Irenaeus' most distinctive teaching was comprised in what he called the recapitulation. Athanasius, prefering such terms as re-creation or renewal, teaches a somewhat similar idea, but with him the emphasis is rather incidental and the implications of the idea are less far-reaching. He conceived that man, created by God, had fallen from his first estate, and that through the Incarnation of the Word he is re-created or renewed. He writes, "For in the first creation, men had become unfaithful, and through them that first creation had been lost; and there was need of someone else to renew the first creation, and preserve the new which had come to be" (Discourses, II, 65). He also writes, "Hence the Word must come,...to recreate,..."(De Incarn., title of Sec. 13). Again, "Whence the Word of God came in His own person, that, as He was the Image of the Father, He might be able to create afresh the man after the image"(Ibid., 13, 7). And he continues, "...that ...men made after His Image might once more be renewed"(Ibid., 13, 9). To this he adds, "...the most holy Son of the Father, being the Image of the Father, came to our region to renew

man..."(Ibid., 14, 2). He also writes, "...none other could create anew the likeness of God's image for men, save the Image of the Father;..."(Ibid., 20,1).

Most passages include only man in the re-creation or renewal. A few, however, extend it to "all things". In one instance he writes, "...just as all things were made by Him, so in Him all things might be renewed"(On Luke X:22, (Matt. XI:27), Sec. 2). In another he says, "For example, at the time of the creation of all things, their creation consisted in a fiat, such as 'let (the earth) bring forth,' 'let there be' (Genesis 1:3, 11), but at the restoration it was fitting that all things should be 'delivered' to Him, in order that He might be made man, and all things be renewed in Him"(Ibid., Sec. 2). It might be noted that these passages which extend the renewal to "all things" are in a later work. This could be construed as proof of a development in his concept of re-creation or renewal.

2. Redemption from Ignorance:-A second result of the Incarnation is man's redemption from ignorance. Socrates had held that to know the right is tantamount to doing it. Other Greek thinkers had followed this view. Athanasius was probably influenced by this type of thought, and not altogether by the Scriptures, which teach that although man knows the right he will not always do it(Romans 7). He considered that no small reason for man's plight was his

ignorance, and he taught that the Incarnate Word enlightened man. He writes, "All man's superstitions He met half-way;..." (De Incarn., title of Sec. 15). He says that Christ became incarnate that we might "...through Him recognize the Father" (Ibid., 15, 2). He also writes, "...He manifested Himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father;..." (Ibid., 54, 3). Again he declares, "It must be plain...that Christ is come and that He has illuminated absolutely all with his light, and given them the true and divine teaching concerning the Father"(Ibid., 40, 7). He further asserts, "...all parts of the world in every direction are illumined by His teaching"(Ibid., 55, 3). Yet further he declares, "Man, unmoved by nature, was to be taught to know God by that sacred Manhood,..."(Ibid., title of Sec. 19). Still further he states, "...the Word of God appeared to us in a body, and made known to us His own Father,..."(Ibid., 55, 5). He also says that Christ came that men "...might at any rate from the works of His body recover their sight, and through Him receive an idea of the knowledge of the Father,..."(Ibid., 19, 1). Yet one more statement might be quoted: he writes, "...by the sojourn of the Saviour among men all nations also on every side began to know God;..."(Ibid., 35, 6).

One reason why the Incarnation, in the thought of Athanasius, is more important than the death is precisely because no small reason for man's plight is his ignorance; and, as these passages reveal, it is the Incarnate Life rather than the Death, which dispells ignorance.

3. Man's Deliverance from Sin, and his Salvation:-A third result of the Incarnation has both a negative and a positive aspect. It is man's deliverance from sin and his salvation. Several passages teach that it is by the Incarnation that men are delivered from sin. Athanasius writes, "...Flesh was taken by the Word to...make redemption for sins,..."(Letters of Athanasius, LX, "Ad Adelphium," Par. 5). He further writes, "He came among us from Mary once at the end of the ages for the abolition of sin..."(Discourses, III, 31). In another instance he declares, "But once for all 'at the consumation of the ages, 'to put away sin', 'the Word was made flesh' and proceeded forth from Mary the Virgin,..."(Letters of Athanasius, LXI, "Ad Maximum," Par. 2).

Still more emphasis is given to the teaching that the Incarnation issues in man's salvation. Athanasius declares, "...He has yet of the lovingkindness and goodness of His own Father been manifested to us in a human body for our salvation" (De Incarn., 1, 3). He also asserts, "...for our salvation He dealt so lovingly as to appear and be born even in a human body"(Ibid., 4, 3). He further says of Christ, "...Who in ages later took a body for the salvation of all,..."(Ibid., 32, 6). Again he writes, "...so we also having our bodies homogeneous with the Lord's body, receive of His fulness (John 1:16), and have that body as our root for our resurrection and our salvation"(De Sententia Dionysii, Sec. 10). He further asserts, "For when 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us'

and came to minister and to grant salvation to all, then He became to all salvation, and became life, and became propitiation;..."(Discourses, I, 64). In another instance he declares, "For even for our sakes the Word came down, and being incorruptible, put on a corruptible body for the salvation of all of us."(Letters of Athanasius, VI, "Easter Letter of 334", Sec. 4). To all of these may be added two very brief, and similar statements: He says, "...He has become also man for our salvation..."(Letters of Athanasius, LX, "Ad Adelphium", Par. 8). And he writes, "...He became man in the body for our salvation,..."(Letters of Athanasius, LXI, "Ad Maximum", Par. 3).

4. Defeat of Death and Bestowal of Immortality:-A fourth important result of the Incarnation is the defeat of death and the bestowal of immortality. They, too, are negative and positive aspects of what is actually one accomplishment of God's becoming man.

Several passages teach that the Incarnation of the Word defeats death. Athanasius writes, "...He took pity on our race, and had mercy on our infirmity, and condescended to our corruption, and, unable to bear that death should have the mastery--lest the creature should perish, and His Father's handiwork in men be spent for nought--He takes unto Himself a body, and that of no different sort from ours"(De Incarn., 8, 2). He also declares, "And so it was that two marvels came to pass at once, that the death of all was accomplished

in the Lord's body, and that death and corruption were wholly done away by reason of the Word that was united with it"(Ibid., 20, 5). There is no Death emphasis in these passages; it is solely the Incarnation which defeats man's death. Two other passages make this doctrine evident: He asserts, "And then, from Adam unto Moses death reigned; but the presence of the Word abolished death. And no longer in Adam are we all dying; but in Christ we are all reviving"(Discourses I, 59). He also declares, "And they who divide the Word from the Flesh do not hold that one redemption from sin has taken place, or one destruction of death"(Letters of Athanasius, LX, "Ad Adelphium," Par. 5).

The positive aspect of this same teaching is that the Incarnation bestows immortality. He writes, "Whence also, whereas the flesh is born of Mary Bearer of God, He Himself is said to have been born, who furnishes to others an origin of being; in order that He may transfer our origin into Himself, and we may no longer, as mere earth, return to earth, but as being knit into the Word from heaven, may be carried to heaven by Him"(Discourses III, 33). In this same work and in this vein he also says, "For it beseemed, that the flesh, corruptible as it was, should no longer after its own nature remain mortal, but because of the Word who had put it on, should abide incorruptible. For as He, having come in our body, was conformed to our condition, so we, receiving Him, partake of the immortality that is from Him"(Ibid., III, 57). He further

declares, "...the Word is become Flesh, not by reason of an addition to the Godhead, but in order that the flesh may rise again"(Letters of Athanasius, LIX, "Ad Epicetum", Par. 9). Yet further he asserts, "Seeing then that Flesh was taken by the Word to deliver all men, raise all from the dead,..."(Ibid., LX, "Ad Adelphium", Par. 5). Still further he says that the Word "...took a body for the salvation of all, and taught the world concerning the Father, and brought death to nought, and bestowed incorruption upon all by the promise of the Resurrection,..."(De Incarn., 32, 6). Also, he declares, "For this cause the Saviour reasonably put on Him a body, in order that the body, becoming wound closely to the Life, should no longer, as mortal, abide in death, but, as having put on immortality, should thenceforth rise again and remain immortal"(Ibid., 44, 6).

An important corollary of this doctrine that the Incarnation bestows immortality is that man is not naturally immortal. Athanasius took this position, as did Ireneus and some of the other early Fathers.

It should be noted that Athanasius is not always clear as relates to what he means by this bestowal of immortality. Sometimes it appears that it is only a gift of future life to the body. That may be noted in some of the passages above. It is given direct support in his apologetic work, Contra Gentes, when he writes: "For if our argument has proved it (the soul) to be distinct from the body, while the body is

by nature mortal, it follows that the soul is immortal, because it is not like the body"(33, 1). Here it is implied that the soul is by nature immortal and that it is only the body which is mortal. In this case, since Athanasius thought the immortality of the body to be an important matter, the Incarnation could have been only a bestowal of continual existence upon it--rather than upon the soul. The implication, however, in Athanasius' general trend of thought is that if the body is not made to rise from the dead then we will have no existence after the death of the body. Most of the quotations given in this study are of that implication. Aside from a few passages like the one quoted immediately above, from Contra Gentes, Athanasius does not appear able to conceive of the future existence of the soul or spirit apart from the future existence of the body.

5. Man's Deification:-The fifth principal result of the Incarnation is man's deification. Athanasius gives greater emphasis than does Irenaeus to this accomplishment of the Incarnation. Some passages might be given in order to show that he does teach a "deification" resulting from the Incarnation. He writes, "...and that He might hallow and deify them (men), the Word became flesh..."(Discourses, III, 39). And he explains, "Therefore He was not man, and then became God, but He was God, and then became man, and that to deify us"(Ibid., I, 39). He asks, "And how can there be deifying apart from the Word and before Him"(Ibid., I, 39)? And he asserts, "...for as the Lord, putting on the body,

became man, so we men are deified by the Word..."(Ibid., III, 34).

The deification is usually said to be accomplished solely by the Word's taking on a body and becoming man. That is the implication in the above quotations. It is also the implication in other passages which will be quoted later in another setting. Sometimes, however, it appears that it is the mighty "works" of the Word, while in a body, which deify man. For example, he writes: "...for if the works of the Word's Godhead had not taken place through the body, man had not been deified;..."(Discourses, III, 33).

Several passages might be quoted in order to reveal what Athanasius meant by man's deification. In at least one statement he seems to intend a very extreme meaning. He writes, "For He was made man that we might be made God;..." (De Incarn., 54, 3). He probably did not actually mean this, however, because he is not generally this extreme in his view of deification. In another work, for example, he cautions: "No one, for instance, shall compare God with man,..."(Discourses, I, 57). Another statement, which is contained in yet a different work, implies that the deification consists merely in man's "partaking of His Spirit": he declares, "...the Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, and that we, partaking of His Spirit, might be deified, a gift which we could not otherwise have gained

than by His clothing Himself with our created body,..." (De Decretis, Sec. 14). After making the above statement he clarifies his teaching about deification, lest anyone think he means by it that man loses human "substance": he writes, "But as we, by receiving the Spirit, do not lose our own proper substance, so the Lord, when made man for us, and bearing a body, was no less God;..."(Ibid., Sec. 14). The implication, however, because of the analogy which he uses, is that man does pass into the nature of God, just as the Word passed into our nature.

Athanasius, therefore, teaches an extreme view of deification, when he says that by the Incarnation man becomes God; but he makes other statements, as we have found, which temper this view. He also gives other positive, but less extreme, meanings to the idea of deification. One is that man thereby becomes "a god". He writes, "...all that are called sons and gods, whether in earth or in heaven, were adopted and deified through the Word,..."(Discourses, I, 39).

Yet another meaning is that man thereby becomes a son of the Father. He asserts, "...He Himself has made us sons of the Father, and deified men by becoming Himself man"(Ibid., I, 38).

Still another meaning is that men thereby become a holy race and "partakers of the Divine Nature". He writes, "And if God sent His Son brought forth from a woman, the fact causes us no shame but contrariwise glory and great grace. For He has became Man, that He might deify us in

Himself, and He has been born of a woman, and begotten of a Virgin, in order to transfer to Himself our erring generation, and that we may become henceforth a holy race, and 'partakers of the Divine Nature,' as blessed Peter wrote"(Letters of Athanasius, LX, "Ad Adelphium", 4).

A further meaning is that man is given a higher type of body. He writes, "He deified that which He put on, and more than that, 'gave' it graciously to the race of man"(Discourses, I, 42). By the deification of the body he seems to mean the body's immortality, for he declares in another work: "...for He was not lessened by the envelopment of the body, but rather deified it and rendered it immortal" (De Decretis, Sec. 14).

6. Redemption of Nature:-The sixth principal result of the Incarnation is the redemption of nature. In one instance Athanasius teaches that nature, or creation, did not become severed from God, as did man, and that therefore it did not need any redemption. He writes, "Now, nothing in creation had gone astray with regard to their notions of God, save man only. Why, neither sun, nor moon, nor heaven, nor the stars, nor water, nor air had severed from their order; but knowing their Artificer and Sovereign, and Word, they remained as they were made. But men alone, having rejected what was good, then devised things of nought instead of the truth,..."(De Incarn., 43, 3). This passage is somewhat contradictory to many others in Athanasius' writings. He

usually assumes that nature had become severed from its Maker and that it, as well as man, needed redemption. This is the direct implication of the many passages which will now be quoted in support of the above statement that the Incarnation redeems nature.

Man's flesh is redeemed by the Incarnation of the Word. He writes, "...in the Christ we are all quickened; the flesh being no longer earthly, but being henceforth made Word, by reason of God's Word who for our sake 'became flesh'"(Discourses, III, 33). He also says that the Incarnation exalts man's flesh. He declares, "But we worship the Lord of Creation, Incarnate, the Word of God. For if the flesh also is in itself a part of the created world, yet it has become God's body"(Letters of Athanasius, LX, "Ad Adelphium", 3,). He further writes, "...that the Word Himself might be made Flesh, and by taking the flesh, restore it wholly"(On Luke X;22, Sec. 2).

The "body", which seems to be somewhat more inclusive than the "flesh", is also redeemed by the Incarnation. He writes, "...He quickened and cleansed the body..."(De Incarn., 17, 7). He also says that Christ "...Himself sanctified even the body"(Ibid., 43, 6). He further declares, "...He modified man's whole nature and restored the body whole!"(Ibid., 49, 2). Yet further, he writes: "For on the contrary, a great addition has accrued to the human Body itself from the fellowship and union of the Word with it"(Letters of Athanasius, LX, "Ad

Epicetum", Par. 9).

There is, in Athanasius' writings, a recurrent teaching that the Incarnation redeems nature in an inclusive way. He writes, "...all things are moved by Him, and in Him are quickened:..."(De Incarn., 1, 1). He also declares, "...even while present in a human body and Himself quickening it, He was, without inconsistency, quickening the universe as well, and was in every process of nature,..."(Ibid., 17, 2). He further asserts, "For the Lord touched all parts of creation, and freed and undeceived all of them from every illusion;..." (Ibid., 45, 5). Yet again, he writes: "Since then all things 'were delivered' to Him, and He is made Man, straightway all things were set right and perfected. Earth receives blessing instead of a curse,..."(On Luke X:20, Sec. 2). Yet another instance in which he teaches this is when he writes, "For the coming of the Saviour in the flesh has been the ransom and salvation of all creation"(Ibid., Sec. 6). Yet one other instance might be mentioned. He writes, "Nor, because the Son that was in the form of God took upon Him the form of a servant was He deprived of His Godhead. On the contrary, He thus became the Deliverer of all flesh and of all creation"(Letters of Athanasius, LX, "Ad Adelphium", Par. 4).

The Incarnate Word was and is Lord over this nature which He redeems. Athanasius writes, "Nature, man, demons, or the dead, He showed Himself Lord of all these"(De Incarn.,

title of Sec. 15). He also affirms, "He went upon the sea also as its Master, and walked as on dry land, to afford evidence to them that saw it of His Lordship over all things" (Ibid., 19, 6). He says that the Word "...orders all things" (Ibid., 20, 1). He also speaks of "...His power over the universe"(Ibid., 53, 4). Christ is now lord over creation, for he writes: "...He none the less has all creation under foot, and bending their knees to Him..."(Discourses, I, 42).

Athanasius so emphasises the redemption of nature--through the Incarnation--that Archibald Robertson can say, "So far as he (Athanasius) works the problem (of redemption) out in detail it is under physical categories"(A. Robertson, "Introduction", Op. Cit., p. lxx.).

CHAPTER VII

MODERN INCARNATIONAL EMPHASIS: SERGIUS BULGAKOV AND L. S. THORNTON

After the death of Athanasius (A.D. 373), Western Christian thought came more and more into ascendency over that of the East. The influence of Irenaeus and Athanasius consequently waned, and that of Augustine (A.D. 354-430), who stressed the death of Christ rather than the Incarnation, began to supplant it.

The East and the West continued to drift apart, until they came to actual schism in A.D. 1054.[1] Soon after that total break Anselm of Bec (A.D. 1033-1109) wrote his Cur Deus-Homo, in which he followed the Western tradition of emphasizing the death of Christ. For eight hundred years that book has been of such influence on Western Christian theologians that but few of them have sought their bases in the opposing interpretation, that of Irenaeus and--in a less extreme form--Athanasius. In the Eastern churches, however, these early Greek theologians have held their own

[1]Recent investigations, and their consequent re-interpretations, support a somewhat later date for the break. See George Every's "East and West in the Twelfth Century", Sobornost', December, 1944, pp. 23-26.

through the centuries.

At the present time the Eastern churches are coming into closer fellowship with those of the West. Walter Marshall Horton writes, "One of the notable events of our time is the dissolution of the ancient barrier between the Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe and the Catholic and Protestant churches of Western Europe"(Horton, Contemporary Continental Theology, p. 1). He also says, "For the first time since their separation in the early Middle Ages, Oriental and Occidental Christianity are now clearly aware of one another, and engaged in conversation"(Ibid., p. 2). There is "awareness" and "conversation" between all three of the principal branches of Christendom, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant. This is evidenced by the fact that all three branches sometimes come together in unofficial meetings. An example of this is the Franco-Russian Conference which was held for a number of years, commencing in 1932. Unofficial delegates from all three Christian branches met for the reading of papers and for discussions. In 1938 Dr. Nicholas Zernov wrote,

> On April 30th I went to the Franco-Russian Conference at Bièvre. It is one of the unexpected results of the Russian exile that the Russians have helped the French Roman Catholics and Protestants to meet each other[2].... There were about thirty-five members present, and these were equally divided between the

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[2]In 1951, at Marburg, Professor L. A. Zander, of the Orthodox Institute in Paris, started a German-Russian Fellowship. (This was stated in a personal letter to the writer from Dr. Nicholas Zernov, 26 February, 1952.)

> Russian Orthodox, French Roman Catholics and French Protestants"(N. Zernov, "From the Secretary's Diary", Sobornost', June, 1938, p. 43).

His reaction to this conference, based also upon his attendance at one or more of the early ones, is as follows:

> These conferences, unofficial as they are, served (should be "serve") a great cause, for they bring together those people who otherwise have little chance of meeting one another. They are intensely theological and very outspoken, and therefore they really help those who take part in them to understand the others' point of view and to appreciate the sincerety of their convictions, and this to realise that fundamental unity still exists among Christians in spite of the divergency of its interpretation(Ibid., p. 44).

But this closer fellowship between East and West is particularly between the Eastern or Orthodox churches and the Protestant West. There are several evidences of a growing fellowship between these branches of Christendom. One is the existence, since the late 1920's, of a very active and influential, unofficial organization, known as The Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, whose widely distributed magazine, Sobornost', is, in its name (meaning "Catholicity" or, more precisely, "all-together-ness") suggestive of the organization's objective. That objective is stated in paragraph three of the Fellowship's constitution: "The Fellowship prays for reunion, and to the same end has as its object the promotion of mutual understanding by the members of the Anglican Communion and of the Eastern Orthodox Church, as well as those of other Churches" (Sobornost', September, 1939, p. 38).

Another evidence of the growing fellowship between Orthodox and Protestant is the fact that several national branches of Orthodoxy were officially represented at the Amsterdam meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1947, one of its delegates becoming one of the five presidents of the Council.

A third evidence is the fact that Eastern theologians, in a wide sphere, through their translated writings, have been exerting a considerable influence upon Protestant thought. This influence has come, chiefly, through the Russian exiles in Paris, most of whom have been connected with the Orthodox Theological Institute in that city. One of the most prominent of these theologians is the late[3] Father Sergius Bulgakov, who had been, as a Marxist,[4] prior to his taking Christianity seriously and his consequent voluntary exile, Professor of Economics at Moscow University, and who for many years was Professor of Theology at the Paris Institute.

The Eastern churches, now in this more intimate

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[3] "Father Sergius Bulgakov died on the 13th July, 1944, at the age of 73" (By A.F.D.B., "In quos fines saeculorum" (Sobornost', December, 1944, p. 6).

[4] In conversation with the writer, on December 31, 1951, Professor L. A. Zander, disciple and student of Bulgakov, said that as a young man Mr. Bulgakov wrote, for a University, a two-volume work on Marxian economics and, because he let the truth lead him, completely undermined Marxism. Professor Zander added, incidentally, that because of the conclusions an M.A. degree only was conferred, whereas the custom was, when two volumes were written, to confer a doctorate.

relationship to the Protestant West, are calling it to a re-thinking of the import of Irenaeus and Athanasius; that is, to a reconsideration of the theological importance of the doctrine of the Incarnation. But not only are Eastern theologians fulfilling this function today; many theologians within Protestantism are also. Eminent among them are certain Anglo-Catholic[5] theologians of the Church of England, and outstanding in this school is Father L. S. Thornton, formerly of the Community of the Resurrection, near Leeds, and now residing in London.

The remainder of this chapter will consist of a study of the incarnational emphasis in the Russian Orthodox and Anglo-Catholic schools of thought, as those schools are represented respectively by Sergius Bulgakov and L. S. Thornton.

Sergius Bulgakov

Father Bulgakov is a traditionalist;[6] he believes that the content of the truth resides in the past teachings of the church--the Orthodox Church.[7] Consequently, he has high regard for the Scriptures, the councils, the early fathers, and all who have had a part both in formulating

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[5]Historically, they may be grouped with Protestantism; many of them, however, owing to their doctrines and their practices, would prefer a separate grouping for themselves.

[6]He writes, "And each member of the Church, instead of placing himself outside the history of the Church, accepts the doctrine of the Church, expressed and fixed during all the time of its history"(The Orthodox Church, p. 19).

[7]This is the only church, for he writes: "Just as there

the dogmas of the Church and in setting forth the doctrines--the theologoumena--which elucidate and apply them. And he tends to treat this tradition, for which he has such high regard, as an organism.[8] That is, he thinks of it in its wholeness rather than in its coponent elements; and he conceives of it as having been shaped by innumerable divinely-led men, and not by a certain one or a certain few.[9] For this reason he does not single out a certain concept within the tradition, as that of recapitulation,[10] in order to give it detailed elucidation. Nor does he focus attention upon such Eastern stalwarts as Irenaeus and Athanasius in order to give them special praise or in order to make his system a mere re-statement of theirs.

But even although Bulgakov is a traditionalist, he

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cannot exist several Truths (although the Truth may have many aspects), so there cannot be many 'Churches.' There is only one true Church, the Orthodox Church." (The Orthodox Church, p. 104)

[8]He calls tradition"...a living organism" (The Orthodox Church, p. 20). (The context of this phrase shows that it is used here expressly as over against something dead, but a secondary meaning of the phrase as it is here employed is "wholeness".)

[9]He declares, "The fullness of the true faith, the true doctrine, is much too vast to be held in the consciousness of an isolated member of the Church; it is guarded by the whole Church and transmitted from generation to generation, as the tradition of the Church" (The Orthodox Church, p. 19).

[10]This writer recalls only one instance of the use of "recapitulation" in the English translations of his works. It occurs when he affirms, "But the whole of this history is recapitulated in the genealogy of Christ our Saviour" (Bulgakov's article in the symposium on Revelation, p. 145).

is nevertheless a liberal;[11] his mind is in constant quest for truth, and it is ever reaching out into the new and the untried in order to find it and explain it.[12] He writes, "We are called upon to acquire a deeper and clearer understanding of the revelation that has been received in the past or given anew" (Bulgakov, "The Spirit of Prophecy", Sobornost', September, 1939, p. 7).

He is, in fact, so evidently liberal that it would probably not be unjust to say that tradition is often a yoke hard to bear upon his free and questing spirit. This is not entirely denied by Professor L. A. Zander, the greatest living authority on Bulgakov's thought. In a personal interview with Professor Zander, at his Paris home, on December 31, 1951, this writer asked, "Would you say that

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[11]Donald A. Lowrie says, in the preface to Bulgakov's The Orthodox Church, "The prejudiced Western critic who thinks of Orthodoxy as a matter of rigid and unchangeable tradition, will be disarmed by the author's forward-looking attitude in those things which concern the revelations of modern science or the active role of the Church in solving modern problems, political and social as well as religious."

[12]It is in this attitude that Bulgakov has set forth, in elaborate elucidation, two theological concepts: Sophia and sobornost. The first is the organizing principle of his theology; the second is the principle whereby his theology is applied in the Church and its work. For the first he has been accused of heresy by some members of the Orthodox hierarchy; the second certainly savours of the twentieth century, with this century's stress upon ecumenicity, but it is not contrary to tradition. A treatment of Bulgakov's theology as such would necessarily give detailed study to both these terms. They are not given such attention herein because they relate only more or less indirectly to our problem.

Father Bulgakov was a liberal in chains?"

Professor Zander answered, "I would not use the term 'liberal'. I would say 'free'. He had a spirit which was absolutely free.... He was a synthesis of the prophet and the priest.... The Christian dogmas were always an inspiration and not a chain.... The main dogma was the Trinity."

In Father Bulgakov's teaching regarding the Incarnation we find a preponderance of traditionalism, with occasional evidences of the unshakled spirit of liberalism. A Study of his teaching may follow the general pattern, used previously in the treatment of other thinkers, of the possibility, the actuality, the importance, and the results of the Incarnation. It is given for the purpose of learning whether or not Bulgakov's findings in the incarnational sphere assist in solving the problem caused by the existence of evil in nature.

Possibility of the Incarnation:-Most theologians teach that man is linked to nature. They teach man's link to nature because his connection to it is so empirically evident that it is almost axiomatic. Bulgakov, along with the others, teaches this connection between man and his world;[13] his theology takes individualistic form in what he consequently teaches about man and nature, and about the Incarnation, which has given the

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[13]For Bulgakov the Bible begins with the first chapter and not with the third; with creation, and not with sin.... The Incarnation is involved in creation."(L. A. Zander, in conversation with the writer on December 31, 1951)

relatedness of the two a new and comprehensive significance.

The world, to which man is intimately related, is, in Bulgakov's teaching, the direct creation of God, and is therefore good and not intrinsically evil. He writes, "The World and the first man issued from God's hand innocent and perfect"(The Orthodox Church, p. 124). He also writes, "Alongside of the divine and eternal world, there exists the world of creaturely being established by God in time. And God created it from 'nothing'"(The Wisdom of God, p. 96). He further says, "There can be no source of the world but God" (Ibid., p. 96). He also speaks of "...the irrefragable fact that the creation of the world was the work of the whole Holy Trinity"(Ibid., p. 102). He gives the reason why the world is so "good": "But in creating the world by his omnipotence from 'nothing' God communicates to it something of the vigour of his own being, and, in the divine Sophia, unites the world with his own divine life"(Ibid., pp. 111,112). This is further explained in platonic terms when he writes, "This means that the species of created beings do not represent some new types of forms, devised by God, so to speak, ad hoc, but that they are based upon eternal, divine prototypes. For this reason therefore the world of creatures also bears a 'certain imprint' of the world of God, in so far as it shares the fullness of the divine forms or ideas"(Ibid., p. 107).

God wanted to redeem man. In order to do this, God would have to come to man in man's natural setting. This He,

the Holy God, was able to do because that natural setting, nature, is good and not evil. Bulgakov answers in the affirmative this question: "Or does not the fact of the Incarnation itself suppose the presence in human nature of some inalienable characteristic in virtue of which the possibility of the Incarnation becomes comprehensible, no longer as the invasion of human nature by some deus ex machina, but, on the contrary, as the complete unfolding of its possibilities"(Ibid., p. 126)? And he adds, "The ground of the possibility of the Word being made man underlies the very creation of mankind, which seems in consequence to make ready to receive him"(Ibid., p. 126).

Actuality of the Incarnation:-Bulgakov teaches that, as relates to the Incarnation, the possible becomes actual; he says that at a specific juncture in history God did unite Himself with humankind. He does not set out to construct, directly and positively, his belief that the Incarnation did take place; he does construct such a teaching, however, indirectly. This is accomplished bhrough his affirmation of the Virgin Birth and through the many passages which portray Christ as either divine or human or both.

Many theologians have denied the miracle of the Virgin Birth. Some who have made such denial have nevertheless affirmed the Incarnation. Bulgakov, however, states that it is through the Virgin Birth that the Incarnation was realized and that it could have come about by no other means. He affirms, "But the simple assertion of the birth of the Word from Joseph and

Mary is not only the absence of Christology but a complete denial of it. The sole logical consequence of this would be merely the Jesuanismus of the Liberal Protestant school of Harnack and Ritschl, which sees in the God-man only the Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth"(Bulgakov, "The Incarnation and the Virgin Birth", Sobornost', June, 1938, p. 32). He also declares, "To accept the fundamental miracle of all--the Incarnation--but to stop halfway by denying from a rationalistic standpoint the Virgin Birth, indicates only the inconsistency of a half-faith" (Ibid., p. 34). And he writes,

> Hence Mary is not merely the instrument, but the direct and positive condition of the Incarnation, its human aspect. Christ could not have been incarnate by some mechanical process, violating human nature. It was necessary for that nature itself to say for itself, by the mouth of the most pure human being: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word.' At that moment the Holy Spirit descended upon her; the Annunciation was the Pentecost of the Virgin, and the Spirit completely sanctified and abode with her(The Orthodox Church, p. 138).

He also declares, "The Word was not fully made flesh till he came down from heaven and was conceived by the Virgin;..." (The Wisdom of God, p. 152). He also speaks of Christ's "...virginal conception..."(Ibid., p. 140). In another instance he speaks particularly about the function of the Holy Ghost in Christ's birth. He affirms, "The person who actually effects the incarnation of the Word, however, appears to be the Holy Ghost, sent down upon the Virgin Mary"(Ibid., pp. 126,127). In yet another passage, thinking this time of the eternal character of the Incarnation, he declares: "The birth of Christ

from the Virgin is not merely an isolated event in time; it established an eternally abiding bond between Mother and Son;..."(Ibid., p. 176).

A corollary of the Virgin Birth is that Christ was both divine and human. This Bulgakov teaches. There is no necessity of going into detail in order to establish his doctrine at this point; suffice it, therefore, to give but a few passages. The divinity of the Incarnate Word is taught when he writes, "For Orthodoxy, faith in Christ, as Son of God, is not a Christological doctrine, but life itself"(The Orthodox Church, p. 121). It is also affirmed when he declares, on the same page, "We (the Orthodox) throw ourselves at the feet of the Saviour with the joyful cry of faith: 'My Lord and my God';...." Although Bulgakov does not agree with some of the modern kenotic theories,[14] he nevertheless writes of Christ's humanity: "The Word, in assuming an animated body, assumes the whole nature of man;..."(The Wisdom of God, p. 131). He also says, "In order to serve as a person to manhood, the divine person of the Word must itself be human or, more exactly, 'co-human'"(Ibid., p. 129). Many passages teach both the divinity and the humanity. One such is when he says, "And so we confess Christ to be perfect God and perfect Man, and the human compound in him to be maintained entire, for

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[14]He writes, "How are we to conceive this kenosis of the Word? In the first place it is essential to realize that, contrary to the various kenotic theories of Protestantism, our Lord in his abasement never ceased to be God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity"(The Wisdom of God, p. 134).

there is sufficient metaphysical ground for the possibility of the Word's descent into humanity"(Ibid., p. 131). Another is when he speaks of the "...perfect union of divine and human in Christ..."(The Orthodox Church, p. 137).

Importance of the Incarnation:-It is extremely seldom that Bulgakov ever mentions the death of Christ, and then the reference to it is only incidental and beside his main object. One such reference occurs when he is giving a brief resume of Orthodox dogmas and doctrines, which dogmas and doctrines are understood to be his own also. He says,

> The idea of the love of God sacrificing itself for the fallen creature, love extending even to incarnation and to death on the Cross; and on the other hand the idea of the existence of the God-Man, the idea of a positive relation between God, Who created man in His image, and man, lifted by the incarnation to the possibility of deification--these two ideas are supreme evidences of a religious philosophy; they are expressed with an especial love in the Russian theological thought of our day(Ibid., p. 120).

Two ideas are here mentioned as important to contemporary Russian theological thought: the sacrificial love of God, and the actual existence of the God-Man. The former is evidenced by the "incarnation" and the death on the Cross. The other idea is the Incarnation itself, and it--and not the death on the Cross--lifts man "...to the possibility of deification--...".

But even although the death of Christ is given hardly any mention and scarcely any import, the Incarnation is not the sole factor in the redemption of man and nature; the Holy Spirit, given in full measure at Pentecost, is a second important factor. The work of the Holy Spirit is given this

important place in part because His work was necessary, in a prior way, for the Incarnation itself. He writes, "The next point to note in this mystery is that the Spirit must come on the Virgin, and be accepted by her, before she can conceive and give flesh to the Word"(The Wisdom of God, p. 153). He also says, "In the Incarnation the Son and the Spirit come down from heaven together:..."(Ibid., p. 153). The Spirit thus becomes inseparable from the son, for he speaks of "The Holy Spirit who thus eternally rests on the Son and is therefore inseparable from his divinity,..."(Ibid., p. 153). It is therefore two Persons who are sent, or who come, to the world. He writes, "We are faced with the fundamental fact that two hypostases, and not one, are sent from on high to the world" (Ibid., p. 163). He also writes, "We can easily grasp this by considering the Incarnation and Pentecost, which both represent the descent of God from on high"(Chapter by Bulgakov in Revelation, edited by John Baillie and Hugh Martin, p. 130). The Holy Spirit completes the link between God and Creation, begun in the Incarnation. He declares, "The Holy Spirit coming down, without leaving heaven, from on high, completes the link between God and creation, initiated in the Incarnation"(The Wisdom of God, p. 162).

That the Incarnation is more important than the death of Christ, in the teaching of Bulgakov, would not be questioned by any student of his writings. Some, however, might see the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, or Pentecost, as being of equal or even of greater importance than that of the Incarnation. It

would not be denied that many passages could be adduced to support the equality of importance of the two doctrines--or dogmas--but support could hardly be found for the priority of Pentecost. But even although Pentecost is stressed, the Incarnation, nevertheless, is given the primacy. He considers it the basic Christian dogma. In the following passage he states this:

> And at the very heart of things there stands, as of old, the basic Christian dogma of the Incarnation, of the Word made flesh; in the dogmatic setting bequeathed to us by Chalcedon. The roots of this dogma penetrate to the very heart of heaven and earth, into the inmost depths of the Holy Trinity and into the creaturely nature of man. 'Incarnationism' even now stands as the main fact of dogmatic self-determination in Anglicanism, and in Protestantism also--let alone in the most ancient Churches such as the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic(Ibid., p. 35).

In this sub-division the importance of the Incarnation has been treated particularly as regards its relative significance in comparison with the death of Christ and Pentecost. There is a sense in which the results of the Incarnation reveal its importance, but that study has been left to the more comprehensive treatment which will now be possible.

Results of the Incarnation:-[15]One important result

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[15]In the interview, referred to already, the writer asked Professor Zander: "Was natural evil a very great problem to Father Bulgakov? Was he occupied with it very much in writings not yet translated?"

He answered, "No, Father Bulgakov did not write very much about it. The most explicit statement is found in his The Bride of the Lamb--not yet translated. And taking that book, he briefly explained the section on evil, pages 159-208. Then he said, "I spoke to him about it (evil) and he said, 'It is an episode'". Professor Zander further explained, "He was a great optimist. Hell is not eternal. In one brief

of the Incarnation is deification. We shall first see what he intends by the term, and then notice that it is something bestowed upon both human nature and the natural world.

He states, definitively: "Life in God, deification, sanctity, are the evident marks of the spirit of the Church, its synonyms"(The Orthodox Church, p. 113). It is further defined, and somewhat explained, when he affirms: "The capacity for deification, for becoming God-like, is without limit, like eternity"(Ibid., p. 127). More elucidation is given when he writes, "The Church is the Body of Christ and those who are saved in the Church receive the power and the life of Christ, they are deified, they become 'gods by virtue of grace'; they become Christs in Jesus Christ"(Ibid., p. 141). No capital is used for "gods", but one is employed for "Christs"; one wonders if this has been purposeful. If so, his capitalization of "Christs", which is a reference to saints themselves, implies that this "deification" is to such extent that reference to men who have attained it should be made with the capital, as is a reference to one of the persons of the Trinity. In any case, he seems to mean more by "deification" than even extreme schools of Protestant

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writing he showed how the Devil could receive salvation."

"But was not the fact of the Incarnation the reason why natural evil was no great problem for him?"

"Without the Incarnation", he replied, "natural evil would not only have been a problem; it would have been a tragedy."

humanists would wish to affirm. The view is at the opposite extreme from that of Karl Barth and his school.

Human nature is deified by the Incarnation. He writes, "God takes unto Himself human nature, and human nature assumes divinity: it is the deification of human nature, result of the union of the two natures in Christ" (Ibid., p. 11). He also affirms, "Redemption by the Incarnation is not only the liberation of man from sin by the sacrifice of the Saviour, it is also a new creation, a definitive creation of man as God,..."(Ibid., p. 129). Yet further, he declares: "Christ, in His holy and sinless humanity, sanctified and deified all human nature"(Ibid., p. 129).

The natural world is also deified by the Incarnation. When God created the world, He already had a plan to deify it. Bulgakov writes, "God created the world only that He might deify it and himself become all in all to it"[16](The Wisdom of God, p. 203). He also writes, "Man discovers the seal of Deity both in his own spirit and in nature"(Chapter by Bulgakov in Revelation, Op. Cit., p. 135). The Incarnation, along with Pentecost, has been God's means of deifying Creation. He writes,

> God created the world for the sake of the Church. That is as much as to say that it is at once the

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[16]Other passages in Bulgakov's writings teach that nature fell when man did, and that it then needed a greater degree of deification, but that "fall" will concern us presently.)

> ground and goal of the world, its final cause and entelechy. The world of men by its creation is already designated to and for its deification, which whether virtual or actual, is the supreme actualization of the world, is effected through the Church which thus appears as a ladder joining heaven and earth and conveying divine life to the creation"(The Wisdom of God, pp. 200,201).

A second important result of the Incarnation, very closely allied to the deification of nature but not referred to by that term, is the redemption of nature. As a traditionalist, Bulgakov teaches that nature fell as a consequence of man's moral fall. He writes, "However, as soon as man fell the whole of created nature also fell into disorder, for it was all bound up with man"(Ibid., p. 121). He also affirms, "With the fall of man, 'the creation was made subject to vanity' (Romans 8:20), and from (misprint: should be "for") his glorification it must await its own" (Ibid., p. 207). Nature is thus fallen, and is consequently in need of redemption. The needed redemption comes principally through the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. Bulgakov writes,

> The destiny of nature is allied to that of man; corrupted because of man, she awaits with him her healing. On the other hand, Our Lord, having taken on Himself true humanity, has joined His life to all of nature. He walked on this earth, He looked at its flowers and its plants, its birds, its fish, its animals, He ate of its fruits. He was baptized in the water of the Jordan, He walked on its waters, He rested in the womb of the earth, and there is nothing in all creation (outside of evil and sin) which remains foreign to His humanity. So the Church blesses all creation;...(The Orthodox Church, p.158).

He also writes, "But man is a spirit incarnated, a cosmic being: the cosmos lives in him, it is sanctified in him, for the Lord is not only Saviour of souls, but of bodies also, and consequently of the entire world. Hence the cosmic quality of the Orthodox office expresses that fullness of Christianity, and the Lord who sanctified the earth and the waters of the Jordan continues to bless them by His Spirit present in the Church"(Ibid., p. 159).

A third result of the Incarnation is the state of God-manhood. For purposes of analysis, we have had to separate one aspect of redemption from others; and we have had to refer to the Incarnation in isolation from Pentecost. This has been necessary to our task, but it tends to detract from the unified and inter-related system constructed by Bulgakov. In order, therefore, not to leave his system torn apart and lifeless, the treatment is concluded by a brief mention of His concept of God-manhood. By it he means the state of existence in which God is like man and the world, and man and the world are like God. God's likeness to man and nature is what he calls the divine Sophia; their likeness to God is the creaturely Sophia. "Sophia" becomes the organizing principle of his entire system of theology, and the doctrine of God-manhood is the state of existence as it is and as it is to be. This he explains when he writes, "The dogma of God-manhood is precisely the main theme of sophiology, which in fact represents nothing but its full dogmatic elucidation" (The Wisdom of God, p. 34). This state of existence,

God-manhood, is effected both by the Incarnation and by Pentecost. He writes, "Here we are faced with the real connection between these two acts--the incarnation and Pentecost;.... Hence the salvation and deification of that creation in God-manhood can be accomplished only through both in conjunction"(Ibid., pp. 159, 160).

Professor L. A. Zander, friend, colleague and biographer of the late Father Sergius Bulgakov, ranks him very highly. He says, "Everybody studies Thomas Aquinas. Bulgakov is a parallel personality, in some ways perhaps a greater"(Conversation with the writer, December 31, 1951).

L. S. Thornton

The writings of L. S. Thornton give a vigorous emphasis to the doctrine of the Incarnation as the Christian answer to the problem of evil in nature. Father Thornton is aware of the "Death" emphasis in Western Christological thought; but he takes his reader right back to the Scriptures,[17] and from them gives a detailed, scholarly presentation of that incarnational emphasis which has always characterized Eastern Christian thought.

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[17]Professor Thornton is a biblical theologian; the Scriptures, rather than philosophy, are the basis of his system. In all his works he makes numerous direct references to them. In his The Common Life in the Body of Christ the Scripture references total approximately two thousand. In his The Incarnate Lord he says this of the importance of Scripture: "The Christian conceptions of God and of creation were given in essence in the revelation recorded in the Scriptures"(p. 12).

He has an appreciation for the teachings of Athanasius[18], but is so distinctly "Eastern" that he considers Irenaeus to be the most dependable of all post-apostolic authorities. Of Irenaeus he writes, "He is our most reliable guide to the structure of orthodoxy as it appears just after the last personal contacts with the apostolic age have been finally severed. In this way he is the authoritative exponent of a tradition which is continuous with the New Testament and which overlaps it"(Revelation and the Modern World, p. 118). He could have often said what he writes at one juncture: "Here, once more, we move along the lines laid down by St. Irenaeus,..." (Ibid., p. 225). One reason why he so estimates the worth of Irenaeus' thought is because, as he insists, "...the study of St. Irenaeus presses us back to scripture"(Ibid., p. 149).

For Father Thornton the Incarnation is possible, actual, more important than the death of Christ, a recapitulation of creation, and in its results is the key to the solution of the problem of natural evil.

Possibility of the Incarnation:-He views the created world optimistically. He considers it a revelation of God, for he writes: "In the biblical tradition revelation and creation are completely complementary notions"(Ibid., p. 210). In this same vein he says, "Consequently the manifestations of

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[18] Of Athanasius' De Incarn. he says, "Behind all the controversial theology of the fourth century A.D. stands the portrait of the Redeemer outlined by St. Athanasius at the beginning of his career in a treatise which still glows with meaning, because it expresses convictions in a living religious experience"(The Incarnate Lord, p. 286).

this self-giving in created reality cannot be treated as unreal without dishonouring the very character of the Creator as manifested in His creation"(The Incarnate Lord, p. 273). He also affirms, "According to that conception (the Christian conception of the world) this universe is the handwork of a living creative God and exists for the manifestation of His glory and goodness. In more precise language, creation comes from God and must find its true end in Him. Its glory is that it shall find its goal in its Creator" (Ibid., p. 256). We find him further asserting that "...the very dust of the earth is precious in the eyes of the Creator.... From the divine standpoint nothing created is without significance;..."(Revelation and the Modern World, p. 141).

Father Thornton is naturally opposed to the view of oriental pessimism, the Buddhistic form of which was treated in Chapter Two. He writes, "The tendency which we are to criticise has its roots in the oriental conception of the universe, the conception which casts doubts upon the goodness and reality of this concrete sensible world in which we live. That conception has for its greatest foe the Christian conception of creation, which finds the goodness and glory of the Creator manifested and expressed in the whole order of sensible appearances"(The Incarnate Lord, p. 263, 264). On the same page he adds, "In its first contact with Christianity

in some of the gnostic systems, this doctrine involved a total denial of the Incarnation"(Ibid., p. 264).

Father Thornton is even more vigorously opposed to Marcion and the gnostics, as is implied immediately above. Of them he writes in another of his works,

> Since the god of love could have no contact with material things, Marcion, in accordance with another current opinion, assigned the work of creation to a secondary god, to whom he also ascribed the whole dispensation of the Old Testament. Two consequences followed: (1) The gospel could not be the fulfilment of the older covenant; for the two were in radical contradiction to each other. (2) The Christ of Marcion was divine, but not human. Like his 'Father' he could have no genuine contact with this world" (Revelation and the Modern World, p. 108).

Since he views the created world optimistically, and is therefore opposed to philosophies which look with disdain upon creation, he maintains a presupposition which allows for the possibility of the Incarnation.

Actuality of the Incarnation:-What is possible is not necessarily actual; but in Father Thornton's incarnational thought, the possible has become actual. He writes, "The doctrine of the Incarnation declares that the transcendent Creator has entered into the order or process of space and time, of nature and history, in the Person of Jesus Christ. The doctrine thus affirms a contrast between God and the world-process and at the same time affirms a connecxion set up between these two in an event of history"(The Incarnate Lord, p. 28). He also writes, "In Him (the Incarnate Christ)

the absolute actuality of God was incorporated into the historical process"(Ibid., p. 164). He further asserts, "For He is not an organism but the Creator, who has taken organic creation into union with Himself. In His new organism He has become organic to creation"(Ibid., p. 420). Yet further he declares, "For it is here (in the Incarnation) that God and creation are united in the new organism of Jesus Christ" (Ibid., p. 435).

In another of his works--Revelation and the Modern World--at least two passages very explicitly set forth his teaching regarding the actuality of the Incarnation. He reasons,

> A Christ who climbs up the evolutionary ladder instead of down from heaven has not taken 'the form of a servant' in lowly self-humiliation. He has not made himself one with sinners; and he cannot, therefore, save them. The Jesus of the Liberal gospel could no more 'become sin for us' in the Pauline meaning of the words than the docetic Christ of Marcion and his fellow-heretics could become flesh. In both cases superiority spelt an aloofness which was an evasion of the world's burden. Thus the humanist heresy is in substantial agreement with its apparent opposite"(p. 112).

He later explains,

> Compresence and interpenetration may be regarded as two complementary aspects of coinherence, a word which has the highest significance for theology. The order of nature is not only compresent with the order of grace. It is also taken into it in Christ. All things are summed up in him who is the true head of creation. This is the primary meaning of recapitulation. But it has manifold implication. For example, the relationship is mutual. Christ penetrated to the heart of creation that it, in turn, might be brought into his innermost being. This mutuality of coinherence,

> whereby the divine Son dwells in the creature that it may dwell in him, is a truth which has other applications"(Ibid., p. 318).

Importance of the Incarnation:-The incarnation of God's Son, an actualised possibility, is more important, as an instrument of securing redemption, than is His death. This will be supported by implication throughout both the next two subdivisions of this treatment; suffice it here, therefore, to support this proposition by brief study of a few passages which more explicitly reveal that the Incarnation is of more import in securing redemption than is Christ's death.

Sometimes reference to the death of Christ is conspicuously omitted. This is so when Father Thornton writes, "Finally the perfection of human response, thus manifested in His life-story, was actualised by transformation to a new level of activity through His death and resurrection" (The Incarnate Lord, p. 432). Here the "...perfection of human response,..." is Christ's principal merit--and that response reached its peak of perfection only in Christ's ascended state. The death and resurrection of Christ are obviously prerequisite to his existence in the ascended state, but they are not even mentioned.

In other instances it is less conspicuously omitted, but nevertheless not mentioned as having any import in redemption. An example of this tendency is contained in the following statement: "The Incarnation

was the incorporation of the kingdom of God into history, because in the life-story of the Incarnate Lord the adequate response of man was rendered to the Father's love" (Ibid., p. 431).

At other junctures the death of Christ is portrayed as incidental. This is the case when he says, "In the life-story of the Incarnate Lord we see the true messianic Son, endowed with the messianic outpouring of the Spirit, rendering to the Father the true human response of the Kingdom which He proclaimed, and thus embodying the way of the Kingdom in His life and death"(Ibid., p. 431).

Fairness requires that opposing statements be mentioned. He writes, "The whole work of our salvation was accomplished in Christ's death and resurrection"(The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 61). In the same book he also says, "This (the reconciliation of the 'whole universe' to God) was effected through his death upon the Cross"(Ibid., p. 294). In his most recent book he writes, "Here we notice that the idea of 'new creation' is associated with the dying and rising of a god, just as in the New Testament a new creation is effected through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ"(Revelation and the Modern World, pp. 276,277). In these passages it is the death and resurrection, rather than the incarnate Life, which are of importance in effecting the "new creation". Since they imply an emphasis upon the

death of Christ which is not generally found in Thornton's writings, they appear to be inconsistent with what one generally finds; but they should probably be considered as an endeavour on the part of the author to reveal another facet of the truth that God through Christ was reconciling the world to Himself.

The above passages notwithstanding, he attaches a far greater importance to the incarnate Life of Christ than he does to that willing act in which the earthly incarnate Life received its consumation.

Incarnation as Recapitulation:-According to Father Thornton, the Incarnation was a recapitulation of all creation; that is, in the Incarnation the process of the work of creation was repeated--and in the repetition was renewed. In his great biblical work he writes, "That purpose which God prepared in Christ, to be carried out in the fulness of the times, was nothing less than this; to sum up all creation in the Messiah" (The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 178). In another book he declares, "Thus the history of this finite order has the character of a palimpsest, first the writing of creation, then the reverse writing of the Fall, and finally the original story of creation re-written, as it were, in the blood of Jesus, and upon his torn flesh"(Revelation and the Modern World, p. 252). He further states, "For Christ is the whole into which all things are gathered in fulfilment of the divinely ordered plan of creation"(Ibid., p. 271). He also

says, "As God's revelation of Himself is spread out universally over His works in creation and His acts in history, so also it is gathered up cumulatively in Christ..."(Ibid., p. 33). And he declares, "For first, in the story of Adam's creation the many units of earth are 'gathered up' into the form upon which the image is printed. So too the many units of mankind redeemed are gathered up into the body of the new Adam"(Ibid., p. 184). Yet again he asserts, "Recapitulation in Christ is the restoration of that plan ('creation's plan') with its correlative of grace"(Ibid., p. 325). In poetic reference to the Incarnation he writes in this manner of the recapitulation: "By the same qualities the whole order of the first creation is taken up into that 'place' which is 'better than this world', that place where all the defects of the world as we know it are replaced by the perfections proper to the complete manifestation of the divine image, that place where God is made to be truly visible in the work of his hands"(Ibid., p. 182).

It is well-known that Irenaeus taught that the Incarnation is a recapitulation of creation. On this point the early Greek theologian directly influenced the modern Anglo-Catholic thinker. Father Thornton himself is as conscious of this as are any of his readers. He writes, "The incarnation was, for Irenaeus, a recapitulation of the whole creation because he understood that doctrine to imply some such interpretation of Genesis as we are now putting forward"(Ibid., p. 163).

But not only was he influenced, in this insight, by Irenaeus; as is the case with all of Father Thornton's teachings, he affirms that for this idea he has a sound biblical basis. He writes, "This agrees with the apostolic theology in which Christ is not only Adam, but also Wisdom-Logos, the site of creation, who, as the eternal Son, takes up the whole world into his high-priestly action"(Ibid., p. 280).

It will be noted that most of these passages related to recapitulation are taken from Father Thornton's latest book, first published in 1950. It is in this volume that the repetition doctrine is most explicitly taught. A study of his works makes it apparent that there has been a gradual development in his stress upon this teaching as to the method whereby the Incarnation accomplishes the redemption of creation.

Nature Redeemed by the Incarnation:-In Father Thornton's writings there is no assumption of the existence of positive, recalcitrant, surd-like evil; what appears to be evil is only the lower levels of the organic series. He can speak of "...the ordered universe with its ascending series of organisms"(The Incarnate Lord, p. 329).

It is interesting--and a little surprising--that for this view Father Thornton, so biblical in his source material and so theological in his thought content, leans heavily upon the rationalistic philosopher, Leibniz, and that thinker's theory of the ascending degrees of consciousness in all existence. Of Leibniz' thought he writes, "Nevertheless the

general conception of hierarchical structure in the universe, and of its reflexion in man, has now become sufficiently established; and in this particular respect Leibniz was a principal mediator between the old world and the new" (Revelation and the Modern World, p. 308). Of Leibniz he also writes, "For him the universe was functional throughout its whole range. At every level there could, in some measure, be a response to the creator. Every created thing can co-operate in the harmony of the whole. In short, the cumbersome jargon of the Monadology indicated a return from a secular to a religious point of view"(Ibid., p. 304). Again he says, "Nevertheless a great step forward was taken when Leibniz affirmed that the 'reflexion' of the whole (with its pre-ordained harmony) occurred not only in every genuine unit but also at every stage of such a unit's continuity"(Ibid., p. 306).

The more recent idealist, whose thought is directly used by Father Thornton--and equally as surprisingly--is the late Alfred North Whitehead. In an "additional note", at the conclusion of his The Incarnate Lord, he mentions the connection of his optimistic thought with the philosophy of Whitehead. He writes, "The organic conceptions which have been embodied in the text of this book are closely connected with the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead"(p. 456).

In spite of this optimistic thought, which he takes great care to develop--particularly in his The Incarnate Lord--he nonetheless teaches that nature is "fallen" and that it has

been redeemed by the Incarnation.

He teaches that when man "fell" through sin, nature "fell" also, and that when man is redeemed by the Incarnation, nature is also restored. He writes, "If, as was there said, the divine revelation takes on a creaturely character by becoming embodied, then it also follows that 'the vanity' to which 'the whole creation' was subjected by the Fall must necessarily enter into the dispensation of recovery throughout its entire range"(Revelation and the Modern World, p. 215). In this connection he also affirms, "The Incarnation was thus a new creation constituted in the Person of the Son, to redeem, renew and restore the old creation from its state of frustration and sinful estrangement"(The Incarnate Lord, p. 419). That creation is restored when man is redeemed is also taught when he says, "The fulfilment in him of the true way of life carries with it not only a transformation of Israel but also a restoration of creation's order and harmony"(Revelation and the Modern World, p. 219).

The degree of the restoration of creation is very great; Father Thornton even teaches that creation is deified. He writes, "The return of creation to God must be across a bridge adequate to that contrast"(The Incarnate Lord, p. 228). The bridge of which he speaks, which bridge must link the two contrasts--God and creation--is, of course, the Incarnation. Of such a bridge he says, reasoning philosophically: "...this and this alone would bridge the contrast, dissolve the tensions of that contrast, and carry creation over to what by analogy

we may call the level of deity"(Ibid., p. 228). As a man of faith, he believes that the Incarnation does so bridge the contrast and does so elevate creation.

It is not that only certain aspects of creation are thus redeemed by the Incarnation; the entire created order is so restored. He writes,

> The image of God in its completeness has been manifested in Christ and is being reproduced in all His members. The image so extended includes the 'all things' of creation. All was originally created in the form of the Servant; and all is now being restored to that form in Him who has ever shown it forth by his unchanging obedience to the Father"(Revelation and the Modern World, p. 325).

And he declares,

> For this reason, namely that our Lord possesses the fulness of deity, he also became the mediator through whom the whole universe is reconciled to God. .... Moreover not only was reconciliation effected between God and creation, but also peace was made between the warring elements of creation itself. Such peace-making was the appropriate work of him in whom all things cohere. Without him the universe would fall to pieces. There would no longer be anything common between the parts. So his redeeming work restores the common life of all creation(The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 294).

Incarnation Solves the Problem of Natural Evil:-Even although Father Thornton sometimes appears so optimistic that he does not look upon any aspect of creation as actually evil, he nevertheless delineates the doctrine of the Incarnation in such a way as to make evident an underlying belief that in certain instances nature is characterised by that which is unesteemed. He is, in fact, so conscious of such unesteemed aspects of creation that he is of the firm opinion that it is only through belief in the Incarnation that theism may

become credible. He writes, "...the Incarnation when accepted as true is found to bring incalculable aid to theistic beliefs" (Ibid., p. 6). He also says, "The philosophy of theism and the doctrine of the Incarnation must be brought into a new alliance"(Ibid., p. 23). In this vein he further declares, "There are in a religious or theistic interpretation of the universe certain features which must appear insoluble difficulties in a philosophy of theism detached from Christianity; difficulties, however, for which the doctrine of the Incarnation offers a solution"(Ibid., p. 111). Yet further he reasons, "If the Incarnation provides an answer to the difficulties of theism, the Incarnation in turn becomes intelligible only in the light of its terminal concepts, God and man"(Ibid., p. 134). Still further he asserts, "It (the Incarnation) vindicates the Creator to reason by restoring the Creator's handiwork, and by re-establishing the movement of creation towards its goal in God"(Ibid., p. 224).

It is not only that belief in the Incarnation makes feasible belief in the existence of God; belief in the Incarnation makes feasible belief in a certain kind of God. Father Thornton bears this out when he writes, "...the doctrine of the Incarnation appears in history as the 'regulative principle' of the Christian conception of God"(Ibid., p. 7). One aspect of belief in God which the doctrine of the Incarnation "regulates" is that God may become--and indeed has become--directly related to this material order.

Conclusion:-Father Thornton is optimistic, as has been noted; he believes that natural evil, by the Incarnation, has already been redeemed. This position is stated recurrently in his writings, and several passages in support of it have been quoted in this treatment. But it is nevertheless possible to find a tinge of meliorism in his works. An example of this is contained in the following passage: "The new organism (the state of redemption brought about by the Incarnation) is complete in constitution and equipment, but incomplete in the actualization of its own processes" (Ibid., p. 443). This statement allows for the present manifestations of natural evil. It also leaves the gate open for man's moral efforts in which he may work together with Christ for the further actualisation--or for the extension--of the state of natural redemption. But another passage states, more explicitly, that our Master is dependent upon our efforts. Father Thornton writes, "The mystery of which we are speaking confronts us in the fact that, as we are dependent upon our total environment, material and spiritual, so also our Lord has made himself to be dependent upon us"(Revelation and the Modern World, p. 317).

NOTE

The concern of the Church with the significance of the Incarnation has been stressed in recent years in Scotland by the Iona Community, under the leadership of Dr. George MacLeod. The relevance of belief in the Incarnation to the life both of the Church and the community is emphasized in Dr. MacLeod's We Shall Rebuild and in other publications of the Iona Community, in which there are references to the disorder brought about in the natural as well as the spiritual sphere by human wrongdoing, and to the recreative effect of the divine entrance into the material realm through Incarnation. The central purpose of the Iona Community is described as "connected with the type of theological thought which emphasizes the belief that the salvation mediated by the Incarnate Son of God is total or cosmic, affecting all aspects of the creation which have been disordered by sin, and restoring integrity, both personal and social, to the spirit-matter complex of human life"(Report of Ad Hoc Committee on the Iona Community to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, May, 1951). It is recognized, on the other hand, that the Iona Community lays much stronger accent on action than on sedentary thought or theological inquiry as a key to religious illumination. The same report states, "It is not the function of the Iona Community to work out a distinctive theology, and probably there is considerable variety of theological standpoint within its membership"(Ibid.).

In view of the practical rather than theological interest with which the Iona Community is mainly associated, it has not been thought necessary to examine its doctrinal position in detail. It is of interest to note, however, that many of its activities, in the realm of political action, divine healing and economic witness, as well as its teaching and practice in respect of the sacraments, may be interpreted as illustrations and expressions of the incarnational trend indicated as its general theological standpoint, and its optimistic account of the potentialities of a recreated humanity and a natural order redeemed from evil.

Two Scottish contributions to theological study have made explicit reference to the work of the Iona Community. Professor D. M. Baillie, in his treatment of the Incarnation, in his book God Was in Christ, includes a chapter on the Body of Christ which is largely based on an article contributed to The Oracle, the magazine of the Iona Community, in 1942, in which it is pointed out that in the life of the Church alone is to be found the reversal of men's estrangement alike from God and from their fellow men, and that the evidences of the Church's true life as a body are the outcome of the Incarnation. Of the Community Professor Baillie writes, "Its members will be interested not only in men's souls but in all that concerns their bodies too, all their material and social welfare, because

God in His love came right into our material world; His Word was made flesh"(God Was in Christ, p. 209). More recently Dr. Allan D. Galloway, who was for some time a member of the Iona Community, has expressed his gratitude to the Community as the agency through which he first began to realize the importance of the aspect of Christian doctrine expounded in his The Cosmic Christ. His treatment, atonemental as well as incarnational, leads up to the conclusion, actual only within the fellowship of the Church, that the problem of evil is done away through the crucifixion of Christ, which event is "the pivotal point of all evil", and so that Dr. Galloway can write, "It is no more radical, fallen evil, but evil as conformable to the forgiveness of God--and therefore even in the midst of its pain to the peace of God"(The Cosmic Christ, p. 258).

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

An endeavor was made, in the introductory chapter, to set forth the nature of the problem which has been treated herein. The next three chapters, comprising Part One and consisting of a general study, were an attempt to delineate the three principal types of attitudes which the problem has engendered. In Part Two, the procedure has been that of specialization: representatives of an incarnational emphasis have been studied in order to learn whether or not the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation may be understood as pointing toward a solution of the problem. In this concluding chapter the research, both general and special, will be employed as a basis, both negative and positive, upon which to present the writer's contribution to the subject.

Both Natural Good and Natural Evil Are Actual

Natural Good is Actual:-Gautama saw the human plight in his native India, and sought its raison d'etre in the sphere of religious mysticism; but he was thrust out, coldly, upon the rocks of an embittered despair. In his disparagement he conceived that the corporeal world is altogether unfriendly to human life, seeing that apart from man's own choosing,

and at times in spite of the best choices it is possible for him to make, he is met with aspects of nature which obstruct the ideal fulfillment of his existence. And these aspects of nature, in his view, were in the preponderance; they were therefore what essentially characterized corporeal existence. To him, consequently, there was no natural desirability.

Arthur Schopenhauer, much later in the march of mankind, looked upon his world, tried to understand it purely through the methodology of rational processes, and came to look upon it much as did the Buddha. This desert ass, wild through the exhilarating keenness of his mind, disregarded the norms which had guided most thought leaders of the West, and propounded a view in which evil is portrayed as the primary characteristic of the natural world, and the elements which men esteem as only secondary.

Joseph Wood Krutch, not as profound as Schopenhauer, but nonetheless a near perfect example of the same persuasion as it is found in our contemporary scientific scene is, if it can be conceived as possible, more ruthless yet in his condemnation of man's given order. It is purposeless, and when not indifferent to man's ideal existence is positively obstructive of it.

There is no particular inadequacy in the primary methodologies of these three figures; men may always be free to seek an understanding of existence through the tool of faith, or of reason, or of observation and experimentation, or, indeed, of

all three; but these men have exaggerated the undesirable aspects of our world. After all such characteristics of the external world are held up for scrutinization, it is possible to lift up beside them instances of the purposive character of nature; and indeed, it is possible, upon such a showing, to see that there is a distinct preponderance of those elements which are conducive to the high fulfillment of human life. Aristotle, very early in the ongoing process of human thought, understood that the fact of and the order of the universe are such that they make rationally necessary an intelligent Prime Mover, Himself unmoved but moving all else. Thomas Aquinas, following "the Philosopher" and many another man of thought, affirmed, in the first few articles of his Summa Theologica, that from nature as we know it we can prove the existence of a purposive Mind (see Q9. 1-26). Immanuel Kant said that the aspects of nature which we esteem are such that they point to an intelligent Architect, only an antinomy for the pure reason but a certainty for the practical reason. Such persistence of the teleological viewpoint, in spite of much criticism both from within and from outside the sphere of its general conclusion, with its fresh formulation in very different periods of thought, is evidence of the truth and the connotational validity of such a statement as that of Clarence Beckwith, who affirms: "The common judgment of mankind is and has always been that this is, on the whole, a good world"(Beckwith, The Idea of God, p.178).

Natural Evil is Also Actual:-Many persons of faith and thought have urged a position which is the diametric opposite of those of Gautama, Schopenhauer, and Krutch. These persons have affirmed that all aspects of the natural world are actually conducive to the ideal fulfillment of human existence. They understand that those elements of nature which appear to obstruct human life are only harmful in seeming, and are really desirable. In this view what appears to be natural evil is only a negation of natural desirability, or natural desirability on its way to the state of having positive content. The view was studied as optimism in Chapter III: Christian Science was seen to represent its religious form; the theodicy of Benedict de Spinoza, its philosophical; and the doctrine of John Calvin, its theological. The theory was also treated, in the entirety of Part Two of the thesis, in the form of incarnationalism: for those Christian theologians, Irenaeus and Athanasius in an early day, and Fathers Bulgakov and Thornton in our contemporary time, all elements of created existence enhance ideal human life.

But notwithstanding the faith and the thought of these persons, most of whose faith and thought is even within the orbit of Christianity, there is a vast amount of existence for which their "systems" do not account. There are, that is to say, those aspects of the corporeal world which positively obstruct the proper realization of human life. Many of those hampering aspects were enumerated in the introductory chapter.

Most of them are only instrumental evils, as floods and tornadoes and fires, but some of them, as pain, bodily disease, imbecility and untimely death, are intrinsically evil; and, whether they are only instruments of the hindrance of human life, or in and of themselves obstructive of it, they are nevertheless really and radically evil. Radoslav Tsanoff is right when he asserts, "Evil is not 'somehow good' any more than sinking is somehow rising. Evil is evil and the opposite of good, contrary in course and direction"(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 397).

God Is Absolute

Natural Evil Extremists Atheistic:-When evil is considered to be the essential characteristic of the natural world, atheism is generally, if not always, attempted: with evil at the heart of things, so that the undesirable is the positive and the primary, and the desirable is the negative and the secondary, this is the logical metaphysical--or anti-metaphysical--position. The three pessimists studied all attempted this view.

Gautama propounded a system of ethics, a way of life; and it was purely an ethic, for he made no room whatever for God. In this he was consistent, for there is no place for God if the world is actually as the Buddha conceived it to be.

Arthur Schopenhauer was also consistent enough not to posit the existence of God, since he conceived of existence disparagingly. Because of his pessimism, the existence of God, for him, would be contra rationem--rather than supra rationem,

as most Christian authorities, neo-Thomists such as Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain excluded, would be quick to admit.

Joseph Wood Krutch was not able to discern a Divine Mind behind "chaotic", "indifferent" nature, and espoused a vigorous atheism. He considered, too, that all intelligent persons of the twentieth century should also take this view, so that when a few persons, here and there, would persist in their theism, their opinions could be dismissed as a curious recrudescence of scholastic mediaevalism.

Natural Good Extremists Absolutistic:-When natural desirability is understood to be the primary characterising factor of the corporeal order, so that it alone is actual and natural evil is only apparent but not real, the view that God is absolute or unlimited, since it is such a logical step, is the only ontological position which may be taken with consistency; and all the optimists studied herein were consistent, so that theirs is an ultimate absolutism. According to these systems, all of which are theodicies, God is infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness, and never faces, either in his own nature or outside it, any circumstances which he does not will or at least approve. Christian Science mysticism and Spinozistic rationalism--if the former, of so little comparative import, may be compared with its probable basic progenitor--are both absolutistic in the pantheistic sense, all existence having emanated from God's nature and now still a part of Him; John

Calvin's theologicism is absolutistic also, but more from an emphasis upon the oneness of Divine sovereignty and created existence than upon the substantial oneness of God and the thinking-extended world. The Incarnationalists, Bulgakov and Thornton, and their early counterparts, Irenaeus and Athanasius, are also absolutistic, but more as is Calvin than as is Spinoza, yet with an emphasis upon a re-creation, through the Incarnation, so that existence, which had fallen from God's intention, is now back within the Divine desire.

Natural Good and Natural Evil Actualists Generally Finitistic:-When the external world is conceived as characterized both by factors which are conducive to the ideal fulfillment of human life and by factors which positively obstruct that fulfillment, the metaphysical position generally, but not always, espoused, is that God is finite; that is, that He is limited either by a hampering principle within His own nature, or by an obstructive power outside His nature, with which He must cope. Excepting only the pantheistically absolutistic Pringle-Pattison, all the figures studied herein, who are melioristic, and who therefore advocate the actual existence of both natural good and natural evil, conceive of God as finite.

Radoslav Tsanoff and E. S. Brightman locate the hampering principle, over which God does not have full control, within God's own nature. Tsanoff can write, "And the evil tug is not outside of God or alien to the divine nature, but just as in finite beings so in the cosmic system of them, in God, it is

the negative moment, the obverse of positive enhancement and ideal activity"(Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil, p. 400). Brightman is yet more definitive on this teaching, for it is the distinguishing tenet of his entire philosophical position. In his view natural evil is caused by an eternal, uncreated, surd evil, located in the nature of God, which God finds as a "given" experience, and over which His perfectly good will is only gradually gaining control. He can say that God's "...finiteness consists in his own internal structure;..." (Brightman, The Finding of God, p. 119).

Notwithstanding the fact that the other meliorists are opposed, metaphysically, since one is pluralistic and the others are dualistic, they are in agreement on the idea of God's finiteness and in locating it outside God's nature. For William James, the pluralist, there are numerous principles outside God's nature, which are ultimate existents just as is God, and which are therefore independent of God, so that although He has the support of numerous ultimate existents which enhance natural desirability, He is not able wholly to suppress the existents in through which natural evil originates. For the dualists, represented herein by the ancient Zoroaster and by the contemporary men of thought, C. E. M. Joad and Edwin Lewis, there is only one ultimate existent which--or who--opposes God, but in each case that existent is powerful enough to originate, and to continue in existence, those aspects of the world which are destructive of ideal human life; and the God of these dualisms is practically as finite as He is in qualitative

pluralism, for although in dualism there is only one near-equal power opposed to God, and in pluralism there are many, in pluralism the numerous "eaches" which oppose God are matched by just as many ultimate "eaches" which are on God's side.

Natural Good and Natural Evil Actualists May Be Absolutistic:-Absolutism is the view that God is the only ultimate existent, and that He is infinite in wisdom, power and goodness. Most adherents of this view believe that although God may be spoken of as unlimited, He has imposed a limitation upon Himself by the creation of free, finite persons, who can thwart His purposes. Many who hold the position, and are not voluntarists, also agree that God is limited by principles of reason, which means that He can only do the rational, the logical.

This theory of absolutism, especially when it is sane enough to allow the two types of limitation to which reference has been made, is more plausible than are any of the finitisms for at least four reasons. First, because it accords with Christian experience. Persons who come into a profound relationship to God, through Jesus Christ, generally worship Him as one who is infinite in wisdom, power and goodness. Only as such is He their all-sufficiency.

Second, because it has been the predominant view among leaders of thought. Although prominent men of thought such as Plato, Marcion, John Stewart Mill, H. G. Wells, and those treated herein as finitists, may be mentioned as teaching the limited character of God, absolutism has been, without question,

the view more widely held both in philosophy and in theology. And whereas most finitists have disagreed in locating and in explaining the finiteness, absolutists have been in substantial agreement ever since Aristotle's day.

Third, because there is validity in the ontological argument for God's existence. There have been not a few, such as Immanuel Kant, who have given no credence to this argument, but Anselm and Descartes seem to have been offering a valid insight when they argued for God's existence from the standpoint of the idea in men's minds of an infinitely perfect being. If this argument has any merit, and William E. Hocking is probably right when he reaffirms to our present generation that it has, then God exists absolutistically rather than finitistically.

Fourth, because Absolutism contains a greater degree of futuristic adequacy than does finitism. Most finitisms, it is true, teach that natural good is gradually triumphing over natural evil; but they cannot have the degree of assurance of this which is possible in absolutism. Whether the evil principle is within God's own nature, as it is for Tsanoff and Brightman, or outside it, as it is for the others, and whether the hampering tug has many ultimate sources, as for James, or only one, as in the dualisms, since the evil power (or powers) is as ultimate as is God, and since God is not all-powerful, the finitists do not have sufficient grounds for teaching that God is gradually winning the battle. Who knows, for instance,

but that the eternal, uncreated, recalcitrant "Given", which Brightman posits in the nature of God, will one day get out of hand, the so-called development of God notwithstanding, and work grave havoc to the universe? And how can Edwin Lewis, to take an example from one of the dualisms, be assured that the "Adversary", an eternal being, will ever come to that degree of subjection which is necessary to the inception of eternal life, the Resurrection notwithstanding, since that discreator is coeval with God and since he has thus far been eternally discreating wherever God has chosen to create?

Natural evil extremists, then, are atheistic, natural good extremists are absolutistic, and those who affirm the actuality of both natural good and natural evil are generally finitistic; but unlike the pessimistic and the optimistic positions, for which atheism and absolutism, respectively, are the only consistent views with regard to metaphysics, the meliористic view that natural good and natural evil are both actual may be consistently joined with an absolutistic metaphysic, as was found to have been at least attempted by Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison. It must be admitted, however, that only the finitisms, among the meliористic views, and not absolutism, may conceive of evil as ultimate in existence; but even although natural evil cannot be ultimately real for absolutism, it can nevertheless be radically and positively actual, to this extent: first, so that it actually frustrates the ideal fulfillment of human life, including the lives of innocent and

righteous persons; second, so that God Himself seeks its extermination; and third, so that man should set himself the task of opposing it wherever it lifts its unseemly head.

The Consequent Problem

The pessimist affirms that, contrary to what is commonly supposed, there is no God at all. And since there is no God, in this position, there is no one, in view of the evils of nature, to charge with malignance. Further, there is no reason why existence should be more friendly to human life than it is, since there is no divine originative-providential Mind. This is one straightforward solution to the philosophical problem of why natural evil exists. It is such a good solution, indeed, that there is no more philosophical problem, after this answer has been tendered.

The optimist maintains an unshakeable faith in the existence of a God who is absolute and who consequently would not allow natural evil; and on the basis of this presupposition, empirical manifestations of natural evil notwithstanding, he avows that there are neither instrumental nor intrinsic evils in nature, but that in every aspect the corporeal order is either instrumentally or intrinsically conducive to the ideal fulfillment of human life. The optimist therefore offers just as coherent an answer as does the pessimist, for, given his presupposition about what an absolute God would not allow, his reaction to natural evil is understandable; but the optimist's

answer, unlike that of the pessimist, is not a solution of the philosophical problem but an abandonment of it--what does not exist cannot give rise to the problem of why it exists.

The meliorist has generally offered a genuine solution to the philosophical problem of natural evil, just as has the pessimist, and he has usually done so by resorting to metaphysical considerations as has that type of theorist. He has usually affirmed that natural evil, which he looks upon in its radical character, exists because God is finite in power and cannot prevent it, although God is usually thought of as suffid wise andgood to want to extirpate it. This, too, is a sound solution; there is no abandonment of the problem here, and there are no fallacies in the logic. But it is a solution which, like that offered by pessimism, is reached at too great an expense, for although it is not a disavowal of God it is a proposal of an inadequate one.

It is readily seen, then, that when natural evil, as well as natural good, is thought of as radically real, and when at the same time there is understood to exist a God who is absolute, the very gravest type of problem arises, one which is twofold in its nature. Why, we must ask, is the ideal fulfillment of human life frustrated through evils of nature which affect persons apart from their own choosing? More particularly, why is there involuntary frustration of the lives of innocent and righteous persons? If these persons are not

guilty, and deserve no punishment, why does God permit the evils when as all-wise He knows they are destructive, when as all-powerful He could prevent them, and when as all-good He should be quick to prevent them since He could only desire the most ideal type of life for innocent and righteous persons?

But not only is it a theoretical problem, so that we are faced with the question of why natural evils exist; it is also a practical one, so that we are met with the question of what we are to do when we find the ideal fulfillment of our lives obstructed by involuntary frustrations.

The answer, therefore, since the problem is twofold, must itself be twofold in nature; and the way is now prepared for its presentation.

Philosophical Answer: The Armchair Solution

From the armchair, as one thinks about the theoretical problem of why involuntary frustrations obstruct the ideal fulfillment of the lives of innocent and righteous persons, and when one sets aside the host of superficial reasons which have been given, two causes appear to be basic: natural laws, which had their inception in the initial creative fiat, and which originate the inanimate media of frustration; and a "fall" in organic creation, which occurred as a result of man's primal sin, as the reason for the animate instruments.

Both these reasons have been given by other writers, the latter being the view which, more than any other, has prevailed throughout the history of Christian thought, and the

former, natural laws, being common in the more modern era of science--excluding the ultra-moderns as Sir Arthur Eddington, Sir James Jeans, and Albert Einstein, who deny natural laws as they are commonly understood--and in the views of modern theology and philosophy which tend toward deism; but their use here is novel on two counts: first, because the two causes have not previously been affirmed by the same person; and second, because one has not heretofore been given as the source of the inorganic frustrating media and the other as the source of the organic ones.

Natural Laws as Originating Inorganic Instruments of Frustration:-A very great many of the involuntary frustrations of the ideal existence of innocent and saintly persons arise from the operation of natural laws. No matter what our metaphysics, and regardless of our type of religion, we must, since we are living in the twentieth century rather than in ancient or mediaeval times, recognize the established procedures of nature.

We cannot, therefore, ascribe the results of every accident to the direct will of God. We realize, for example, that automobile accidents, so prevalent in our day, cause suffering and untimely death because the law of the inertia of motion remains in effect even when innocent and twice-born persons are involved.

No longer can we ascribe the results of every fire to the direct will of God. We know that when the kindling point

of combustible materials is reached, a fire will begin even although it will cause suffering to persons who do not deserve it.

No longer can we attribute every fall from a precipice to the direct will of God. We know that if a child or a twice-born individual steps on a loose rock, stumbles, and falls into a mountain gourge, the likelihood is that he will be killed. The law of gravity, be that law conceived in theory as Newton stated it or as Einstein has put it more recently, will probably remain in effect, the type of person notwithstanding

No longer do we ascribe tornadoes and tidal waves to the direct will of God. We know that they occur because heat, from the sun, becomes intensified at times, due itself to natural causes--such as the position of earth in its orbit and in its rotation, lack of density in the atmosphere, and, although but slightly, the enlarging of the mysterious spots on the sun; because this increased heat expands the gasses which make up our air; because our air consequently, since lighter because less dense, rises; and because cold air replaces it, causing a wind, sometimes so violent that we call it a tornado and occassionally so strong that it produces devastating tidal waves.

Nor can we look upon floods as the direct will of God. Several natural laws operate in causing them, and consequently the tragic evil which they precipitate. Due to frigid temperature, itself naturally caused, snow descends to earth instead of rain. On mountains, which God has given since He is the

epitome of beauty as well as of truth and goodness, the snow piles up, and keeps doing so, until the Spring sun melts it. Then, according to the amount of snow and the degree of heat, and because of the law of gravity, the water seeks a lower level and there are floods.

This type of thinking could be continued almost indefinitely, but what is before us is sufficient to show that many evils are the result of natural laws rather than the direct, immediate will of God.

This "natural laws" phase of the armchair answer to the theoretical problem of why natural evil exists is consistent with the basic views already given. It accords with the view that involuntary evil is radically actual, because these natural laws do really give rise to occurrences which positively obstruct the ideal fulfillment of the lives of innocent and saintly persons. It also accords with the view that God is absolute: both God's infinite power and His infinite wisdom are seen in the extensive orderliness which the natural laws make possible; and His infinite goodness, if not seen directly in each operation of these laws, is seen in their total function, since they make possible an orderly world, rather than a chaotic one, and one which most men consider as the more desirable, even although innocent and righteous persons do sometimes come to harm by the very orderliness which, in general, is appreciated.

A "Fall" in Animate Creation as Originating Organic Instruments of Frustration:-Not all involuntary evils, however,

originate in natural laws; these laws appear to cause only the frustrations which come through inanimate nature. Besides such frustrations, there are many which arise from animate nature. In the introductory chapter a few of them were enumerated, as poisonous reptiles, ferocious beasts, flies, mosquitoes, and disease germs. These appear to have originated through a "fall" in organic creation.

Such organic media of frustration do not appear to be a part of creation as we read of it in chapter one of Genesis. After each creative day, in that account, it was declared that what was made was good; and of the aggregate of creation, at the close of the account of it, it was affirmed: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good"(Genesis 1:31, R. V.).

But what does not appear to be included in the geological ages of creation prior to the creation of man and his initial sin, is introduced as a result of his disobedience. To Eve Yahweh says, "...I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;..." (Genesis 3:16, R. V.). And to Adam He asserts, "...Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee"(Genesis 3:17,18, R. V.).

Whether one understands this early section of Genesis as a literal account or as myth, its teaching is that as a

result of man's moral fall there was a "fall" in at least some aspects of organic creation. Not many phases of organic creation, however, are explicitly mentioned as being introduced as a result of man's sin; it is only that the ground is cursed so that it will now bring forth thorns and thistles. But even although not many are individually specified, the blanket cursing of the ground may be understood as a curse more general than one which would only cause thorns and thistles to begin to grow. This is to suggest that at that time other organic creations, such as ferocious beasts and disease germs, which are instruments of frustration, came to exist.

Just as evil which results from natural laws is consistent with the basic positions taken earlier in this chapter, so is that which befalls persons because of the "fall" in organic creation. Certain aspects of the organic sphere of nature do thwart the ideal realization of the lives of innocent and twice-born individuals. And the fact that they do thwart such lives is not a reflection upon any of the infinite capacities of God, for, as mentioned in the statement of absolutism, that view allows for the human willfulness obstruction of God's highest purposes--and the "fall" in organic creation, as stated in that treatment, was related to human willfulness, since God, in such action, was suiting certain aspects of the organic world to human existence which was characterized by rebelliousness.

Indirect Bearing of the Incarnation:-Natural laws and

the "fall" in organic creation, then, and not the Incarnation itself, explain why involuntary frustration comes to innocent and saintly persons. But even although the Incarnation is not of direct bearing upon this armchair solution to the problem, it is nevertheless of indirect bearing upon it. With the doctrine of the Incarnation as a presupposition, as one approaches the presentation of a rational answer to the theoretical problem of natural evil, the answer will necessarily take some such form as has here been given. It will not be pessimistic, for through the Incarnation, the epitome of all revelations of God, we have unveiled to us the very God whom some have not been able to find and have consequently espoused positions of despair. The answer will not be optimistic, because what God did, through the Incarnation, in the natural realm, as in the healing of diseased and maimed bodies, is evidence that involuntary evils are so radically obstructive that God was at work opposing them--and not even Ritschlian liberals, who believe that Jesus was only human and not divine, would suggest that the Master ever opposed the will of His Father. Nor will the answer be based upon finitism, for the God revealed to us by the Word made flesh does not appear to be limited in any of the ways claimed the finitists; He is one for whom "...all things are possible"(Matt. 19:26, R.S.V.). The answe given, then, which is not pessimistic, nor optimistic, nor yet metaphysically finitistic, but which is in accord both with the view of the actuality of natural good and natural evil and with the idea of an absolute God, is at least indirectly

influenced, or regulated, by the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation.

Incarnational Answer: The Life-Situation Solution

Incarnation Inherently Foreign:-Several views studied in
One of the thesis, when the problem was investigated from a general standpoint, are such that, to them, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is inherently foreign. All three forms of pessimism, because of their atheism, are in this group. Among the optimistic positions studied, the views of Spinoza and Christian Science are also in this category, because their pantheism, with its emphasis upon God's eternal immanence, precludes belief in a doctrine which declares that at a certain juncture in history God became man in one Jesus Christ. And of the melioristic theories, those of Zoroastrianism, William James, and Radaslav Tsanoff are in this group: Zoroastrianism, by virtue of its view that this world of which man's body is a part is the creation of the evil God, and would never be inhabited by the good God; William James' pluralistic view of an indefinite number of qualitatively-different ultimate realities, one of which is God, because in that system God could not change His metaphysical status, as by becoming man, and still remain God--by becoming man He would cease to be whatever He was previously, because He would then be another ultimate "each" of the universe; and Radoslav Tsanoff, because his mere quasi-theistic finitism, in which God is sometimes comparable to the elan vital of

Henri Bergson, and at other times very similar to S. S. Alexander's God who is only futurum esse, and which therefore could not be made to coinside with the view of God contained in the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Incarnation Of Too Little Significance:-Some of the optimists and meliorists who were considered in the general study of the problem would affirm, at least in a manner, and if pressed to it, belief in the Incarnation, but they do not give it the significance which it deserves in the solution of the problem of natural evil.

In Optimistic Views of Origen and Calvin:-Origen thought of Christ as the Logos, who is eternally generated from the Father, and who was incarnate in Jesus. But for Origen, who was, at this point as at others, more neo-Platonic than Christian, the Logos was principally the Creator, and is the Redeemer more because He was the Creator than because He did something on behalf of His creation. He conceived that each person is in this existence because of sin in a previous one, and that the material world, which was created by the Logos, is in all its phases the instrument of bringing us estranged sinners back into union with God. With these views, of Christ's importance as Creator, and of the redemptive character of the natural world, it is obvious that even although God became man, that act could not have been of any great significance in relation to natural evil.

John Calvin even affirmed the Incarnation in its

Chalcedon formulation; but for him it was important mainly as a means to the death of Christ, which death made expiation for the moral evil of the elect. Beginning with the idea of the divine purpose before the foundation of the world, Calvin looked upon every natural phenomenon as the direct will of God. There is no radical evil in nature, according to this view; nothing has gone wrong, and nothing will ever go wrong. All apparent natural evil is the will of God; and if we cannot understand why He wills certain aspects of it, we should not question His wisdom in directing phenomena in that manner. With this prior, optimistic attitude toward the "apparent" evils of nature, the Incarnation could not be understood as a significant agent in the solution of the problem caused by natural evils, but at the most as a condition of the divine plan for the moral redemption of that segment of mankind who are predestined to life everlasting.

In Melioristic Views of Brightman, Joad, Lewis and Pringle-Pattison:-E. S. Brightman is an active churchman, but a Ritschlian liberal, theologically; he would not affirm belief in a Christology which even approached the Chalcedon statement, but would declare, in his own way, as a Christian, belief in the Incarnation. But that doctrine does not enter into his attempt at a solution of the problem of natural evil.

Like E. S. Brightman, C. E. M. Joad offers a philosopher's view. He labors long over the theistic question and seems to try, desparately, to believe in God. It appears, also, that he would like to be able to affirm a vigorous belief in

the central Christian doctrine, the Incarnation. But, as a philosopher, he only works with the metaphysical subject of God, and not with the theological question of the Incarnation, as he seeks to work out a solution to the problem.

Edwin Lewis affirms the Incarnation in its traditional, radical character. He says, "...God does not stay in his heaven, as one 'sitting apart, contemplating all', but enters the arena of conflict as a personal participant,..."(Edwin Lewis, The Creator and the Adversary, p. 153). He also writes, "God becomes man..."(Ibid., p. 154). And he declares, "For by the Incarnation, God the Father in the person of God the Son... receives to himself the worst that evil can do,..."(Ibid., p. 153). He speaks of "...his (God's) actual participation in the creative strife by means of the incarnation of the Word, known among us as Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of God"(Ibid., p. 176). And the next words are: "It is at this point, where the creative and the created, the truly human and the truly divine, coexist in a complete identity, that..." This reminds us of Chalcedon itself, for the two natures are affirmed and the oneness of personality is implied by the phrase "complete identity".

And the Incarnation, in its traditional, radical character, is, for Edwin Lewis, of a certain significance in the solution of the problem of natural evil: it is through becoming flesh that God is able to "...match His Adversary... (Ibid., p. 174) in the arena where that Discreator has brought

about natural evil. But in the view of Professor Lewis, it is not primarily the Incarnation itself which is the instrument whereby God seeks to alleviate the world of such evil; the prime method whereby God combats it is through the death of Christ, which death assured the gradual redemption of natural evil because it was succeeded by the Resurrection.

Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, studied herein as an absolutistic meliorist, believes that the doctrine of the Incarnation should be understood as pointing toward an answer to the problem. He says,

> Both these writers (Erdmann and Edward Caird) point to the deeper view of the nature of God contained in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. But it must be confessed that the speculative truth expressed in the central doctrine of the new religion has seldom been taken seriously--taken in bitter earnest--either in Christian theology or in the metaphysical idealism which has grown up under the same influences. The God of popular Christian theology is still the far-off, self-involved, abstractly perfect and eternally blessed God of pure Monotheism, inherited instincts combining with the potent influence of Greek philosophy to stifle what was most characteristic in the world-view of the new faith. Few things are more disheartening to the philosophical student of religion than the way in which the implications of the doctrine of the Incarnation are evaded in popular theology..." (Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of God, p. 409).

He therefore laments the fact that the Incarnation has not been understood seriously, and implies that he himself does so understand it. And, as one reads through Pringle-Pattison's theodicy, he finds that the Incarnation is actually given a prominent place in the solution of the difficulty arising from natural evil. For example, it is by an emphasis upon the doctrine of the Incarnation that Pringle-Pattison is able to give a Christian tone to his metaphysical view which he

calls "higher naturalism"(Ibid., p. 209). Also, because of the practical side of the Incarnation, because, that is, God is understood as having entered our sphere in order to fight with us, Pringle-Pattison is able to affirm that God is interested in us, suffers with us, and leads us into a type of life in which suffering is overcome(Ibid., pp. 409-417).

But even although he laments the neglect of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and employs it in his own theodicy, he may nevertheless be said to give too little significance to it just because his view of the Incarnation itself is inadequate. He does not believe in it as the Church has taught it. With him, it is not that God has become man; his view is that God is already, by metaphysical status, linked organically to man. It is not that God the Father, through the person of God the Son, enters the arena of conflict; it is that God, only one in person, is always here, in the conflict, not by any sacrifice, but by His permanent, ontological mode of existence. He speaks of the error of "...dividing the functions of Deity between the Father and the Son, conceived practically as two distinct personalities or centers of consciousness, the Father perpetuating the old monarchical ideal and the incarnation of the Son being limited to a single historical individual"(Ibid., p. 409). This reveals his denial of the distinction of personalities in the Godhead, a denial which makes impossible both the Trinity and the Incarnation.

Incarnation Of Too Much Significance:-The writer's

principal conclusion after the specialized study of certain incarnationalists, which study comprises Part Two of the Thesis, is that for the incarnationalists as such, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is of too much significance in relation to the problem of physical evil. All of these theologians, stressing the Incarnation as they do, conceive of it not only as pointing toward a solution of the problem of natural evil, but as having already fully solved that problem, so that it does not arise theoretically and should not arise practically. They understand that when God became man, the undesirable aspects of the natural world were, at that time, corrected.

Irenaeus:-Irenaeus took the first significant steps in this direction. Nature's ills, according to him, were corrected by the One who came for the express purpose of recapitulating--or re-creating, re-making--both fallen man and man's fallen world. In his thought, it is something which has already been accomplished: all of creation, both human and natural, has been re-made so that it is as it originally was, which is to say, for him, that it is perfect in all its aspects.

But what may this concept of recapitulation mean to us of the twentieth century, for whom thought must be, if satisfying, experientially based? In view of the empirical fact of present natural evil, this view of Irenaeus can be only a concept in a man's mind; it can not represent something

which has been done, objectively, for the natural world. A world already re-created, so that it is perfect, is not the one which we see; it is not the one in which there are the involuntary evils mentioned in the introductory chapter.

Athanasius:-Athanasius did not teach a more heightened degree of redemption for nature than did Irenaeus, but he is more explicit in his delineation of this doctrine. He would rather use "re-creation" or "renewal", instead of "recapitulation", but by these terms he meant to connote virtually the same idea. All aspects of nature have been quickened for, as was found, he writes: "...straightway (because of the Incarnation) all things were set right and perfect"(On Luke X;20, Sec. 2).

But, again to use the argument of the mediaeval nominalists, against the realists of their day, this doctrine of re-creation is only real in idea, and not in external fact; the ills are still here. The cobra is still a menace to African missionaries and their children; there is still an abundance of microbes and bacteria to bring disease to the innocent and the twice-born, the world over; and there are still the other species of organic existence which frustrate human life.

Bulgakov:-Even although Father Bulgakov was an Orthodox theologian, and therefore in the ecclesiastical lineage of Irenaeus and Athanasius, and even although, like them, he was an incarnationalist, he nevertheless did not give them prominent mention as early sources of his own teaching. Even without

conspicuous reference, however, one can see, in his writings, a direct connection with these early authorities. This is particularly true as regards Father Bulgakov's oft-treated idea of deification, which is a degree of God-likeness, found, through the merits of the Incarnation, in both man and nature. This "deification", as it applies to nature, is a complete redemption of it from its fallen state.

Again, as in Irenaeus and Athanasius, but with yet more detailed statement than can be found in their writings, it is a redemption which has already been accomplished. The principal criticism, therefore, of this system, as with the earlier ones, is that, empirical existence notwithstanding, the Incarnation is supposed to have already redeemed creation.

Thornton:-In yet more elaborate detail than one finds in his earlier counterparts, and even more pointedly than one finds in his late contemporary, Bulgakov, Father Lionel Thornton teaches that nature has been redeemed by the Incarnation. He is like Irenaeus, in that writer's extreme point of view, when he treats the recapitulation; he is like Athanasius, in that theologian's extreme position, when he discusses the re-creation which has occurred; and he is like the late Father Bulgakov, in this modern churchman's central emphasis, when he talks of God-manhood and deification. In his eclecticism he is like all of these, but this very eclecticism causes him to incorporate into his optimistic system, as was found, a degree of meliorism which was not contained in any of them.

Father Thornton gives a philosophically systematized statement of optimism in his view of the hierarchy of organisms, following Leibniz and Whitehead, as he tells us, and reminding one of the "Holism" of the late General Smuts. But even although he develops this position in detail, he nevertheless teaches, when he becomes more biblical than philosophical, that nature fell as well as man, and that it therefore, no less than humanity, needed the redemption which the Incarnation effected.

In spite of his philosophical optimism, and regardless of his detailed teaching that the re-creation of nature has already taken place, Father Thornton does maintain, as was found and as has just been intimated, a quite healthy meliorism, in which he urges men to work with God in effecting the redemption of nature. Because of this view, his position, in comparison with that of the other three incarnationalists which have been studied, more nearly approximates the Incarnational answer which will now be given.

Incarnation In Its Proper Significance:-To have discussed at length why the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is inherently foreign to certain positions treated in the general study of the problem would have been superficial, so it has been given but briefly; and to have given as much attention as we have to the lack of emphasis upon the Incarnation in other views of the general approach is somewhat to superimpose upon certain positions a question which was not essential to them, and was therefore not taken up when those positions were

first given; but both types of view have been set in the light of incarnational thinking, along with the views of the incarnationalists as such, in order that their very negativism or their lack of emphasis might assist in making the total picture whole.

Yet, when all the positions have been considered from the standpoint of the Incarnation, not any one of them gives what the writer understands to be the proper significance of the doctrine: for that doctrine, in its proper significance, furnishes us with a provisional redemption of the life-situation problem of involuntary evil.

The Life-Situation Problem:-The mediaeval scholastic, who invented major premises and worked out, from them, desired conclusions, and who found a sheer delight in his dialectics, would have been satisfied with that part of the solution which was given earlier in this chapter; he would have considered his problem sufficiently solved after he had, from his armchair, offered rationally-satisfying deductions. But we of the twentieth century are different: we need our rational justifications of existence, it is true, but we are also practically minded. If we are not pragmatists, we are pragmatic; if we are not positivists we are positivistic; if we are not materialists, we nevertheless do not slight the material element; and if we are not scientists, we still think very often in terms of the objectively real. We therefore see that besides the theoretical problem of natural evil there is the practical one. We see, that is, that as well

as the "Why?", there is the "What shall I do?"--and we know that there are probably just as many of the latter. We of this day know, then, that the philosopher, who has answered the first, often needs the clergyman. The clergyman himself, of course, must sit at the feet of the philosopher before he can help his philosopher parishioner, or any other parishioner, for that will give him a basis for life-situation assistance; but the clergyman knows, nevertheless, or, in his work he will soon come to know, that in this task of empirical living there is the practical, life-situation side of the problem of involuntary evil.

Incarnation As A Provisional Redemption Of The Life-Situation Problem:-As a creature who has fallen morally and who is subject, quite apart from his choosing, to inanimate and animate instruments of frustration, man is in need of assistance; he is in need of outside help.

In ἀγάπη love God willingly extended assistance. In the person of His eternal Son, and through the instrumentality of the Holy Ghost--the third person of that Eternal Society--God became flesh and dwelt among us, died for our sins, and rose again. The three significant events, then, in God's gesture on man's behalf, were the Incarnation, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. These events should not be entirely separated, so that they stand in isolation from each other, for they are all part of one unified event; but for purpose

of analytic understanding the primary function of each may be specified. The Incarnation is the event whereby redemption is made for natural evil; the Crucifixion is the event whereby redemption is made for man's moral evil; the Resurrection is the event whereby the merit of both the Incarnation and the Crucifixion is assured and maintained. By these events "Christ restored all evil to a place within the intrinsic meaning of the world,..."(Allan D. Galloway, The Cosmic Christ, p. 259).

As generally admitted, however, the redemption of man's moral evil, through the death of Christ, is only provisional. Not all men everywhere, regardless of their attitude toward Christ, are redeemed from sin; only those are redeemed who, by faith, personally appropriate to themselves the redemption provided for them.

Similarly, the redemption of natural evil is only provisional. The Incarnation does no more than make it a possibility; it only points out, particularly to those who come to be redeemed from moral evil, the way of redemption from natural frustration. We must, on our own part, as the condescended God assists us, make actual what is by grace only provisional. This redemption becomes actual only as we take advantage of the fact that God is metaphysically one-with-us, so near us, and experientially one-with-us, so understanding of our predicaments, and as we see that God is consequently able and willing to assist us in preventing natural frustrations

and in transforming them into creativity if the prevention measures fail and such evils tend to obstruct the ideal fulfillment of our lives.

Through the Incarnation God has become metaphysically one-with-us. The metaphysical wall of partition, because of this historic-eternal event, has been abolished, so that there is no longer a chasm between man, as a finite existent in the universe and God, the supreme, infinite Existent. It is not that man has become a god, or deified, as the incarnationalists have maintained; it is that God, although still existing as the Transcendent One, has become what man is, and has in this way bridged the metaphysical chasm between Himself and man. The writer of the Fourth Gospel said, "...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,...(John 1:14, R. S. V.). And Saint Paul wrote of Christ Jesus, "...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men"(Phil. 2:6,7. R.S.V.).

Through the Incarnation, also, God has become experientially one-with-us. The writer of the Fourth Gospel and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had a more profound conception of this experiential oneness than did the other New Testament writers, but if some of them did not stress it as much, and if others did not mention it all, none denied this corollary of the truth of the Incarnation. This means that men today, who walk with God, and whose ideal lives tend to become

frustrated by involuntary means, can be assured that the God who, in Christ, came down to be metaphysically one-with-us, went through frustrating experiences when He was in this sphere, and therefore knows our experiences on the basis of like ones which came to Him.

Since God, therefore, through the Incarnation, is both metaphysically and experientially one-with-us, and since, through the earlier conclusion, we know that natural evils are not in each instance His direct will, we can be certain that He will assist us in our efforts to prevent involuntary frustrations. Because of His metaphysical oneness, which oneness is a present reality since the Incarnation signifies a permanence of God's condescension, we can know that God is not the wholly There, the wholly Then, but the wholly Here, the wholly Now; and since He is this, we can be assured that we shall have His help in preventing involuntary frustrations. Further, because of His experiential oneness, we know that He understands both the strain of the task and the impending evil if it is not accomplishe God thus goes with us when we build dams and levees, or when, in emergency, we make a levee of sandbags in order to prevent the devastation of a flood. God goes with the pilots, out into the tornado areas hundreds of miles off the coast of Florida, for it is in the interest of an early knowledge of the coming wind so that preparations for it can be made. Yes, God goes with all who endeavor to prevent natural evils. Sometimes it is in order to give guidance, as when, through prayer, a person seeks to

learn which of alternative measures of prevention should be employed; occassionally it is through direct revelational assistance, as for the research scientist who needs but one key for the unlocking of a door which, when opened, will permit him to explore new territory and finally to learn a means of preventing some medium of human frustration; but whether God is with us for guidance, or for special revelational assistance, or for neither or these, a proper conception of the Incarnation assures us that He is always near and always humanly sympathetic.

In like manner, since God is metaphysically and experientially one-with-us, and since natural evils are not His direct will, He assists us when, natural evils not having been prevented, they flood in upon us. At such times, the God of natural laws and of the "fall" in organic creation becomes, through the provision of the Incarnation, the God who knows something about the particular frustrating results of those natural laws and of that "fallen" organic creation, and who is therefore able and willing to assist righteous persons in the high and holy art of transforming such frustrations into creativeness such as that of the blinded Milton in the arts so called, and such as that of many an ordinary person who has never achieved fame, but who evidences to a small group of friends an ennoblement of character which is to them a thing of beauty.

The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, then, has only an indirect bearing upon the armchair solution to the theoretical problem of why natural evil exists, but it has a

most direct bearing upon the solution of the life-situation problem of preventing natural evil and of reacting to it creatively when it befalls us.

This view of the Incarnation, coupled with the absolutism espoused in an earlier part of this chapter, makes conceivable the hope of most men of every age, that righteousness will finally triumph over all evil. John the Revelator expressed this hope when he wrote,

> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away(Revelation 21:1-4, R. S. V.).

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