Theological Thesis.

Title: The Doctrine of the Atonement
in the light of
Christ's Teaching and Ministry.

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List of Books.

In addition to the books referred to in the course of the treatise, the following works were read in connection with its preparation:--

The Articles on Atonement, Forgiveness, and Propitiation in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible.
Maurice: Doctrine of Sacrifice. (Theological Essays)
Robertson: The Sacrifice of Christ. (Sermons. Series III.)
Ency. Bib. Art. "Sacrifice".
Robertson Smith: Religion of the Semites.
Stevens: New Test. Theology.
" Christian Doctrine of Salvation.
Scott: The Fourth Gospel.
Ritschl: Justification and Reconciliation.
Dale: The Atonement.
MacLeod Campbell: The Nature of the Atonement.
Bushnell: Vicarious Sacrifice.
Scott Lidgett: The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement.
Moberly: Atonement and Personality.
Denney: The Death of Christ.
" Jesus and the Gospel.
" The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation.
" Jesus and the Modern Mind.
Sabatier: Doctrine of Atonement, and its historical Evolution.
Tymms: Christian Idea of Atonement.
Burton and Smith: Atonement.
Grenstead: Short History of the Atonement.
Hitchcock: Atonement and Modern Thought.
Swete: Forgiveness of Sin.
Simon: Redemption of Man.
Orr: Progress of Dogma.
Harnack: Essence of Christianity.
Bruce: The Humiliation of Christ.
MacKintosh: Person of Christ.
Muller: Doctrine of Sin. Tennant: The Origin and Propagation of Sin.
Green: Problem of Evil.
Orchard: Modern Theories of Sin.
MacDowall: Evolution and the need of Atonement.
Snowden: The Atonement and Ourselves.
White: Forgiveness and Suffering.
Rashdall: The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology.
Bruce: St. Paul's Conception of Christianity.

The relevant sections of many other works were also consulted. The translations relied on, for the most part, are those given by Franks.

Chapter I.

-:- PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS -:-

Preliminary Considerations.

The Christian religion assumes that, on account of sin, man is estranged from God; and proposes his reconciliation, through the ministry and sufferings of Jesus Christ. It is more particularly through the death of Christ that this reconciliation is conceived to have been achieved; and it is to this aspect of His work that the term Atonement is commonly applied. Though the word itself occurs only three times in the New Testament - in Rom.V.10; Eph.11.16 and Col.1.20. the idea which it expresses is frequently to be met. The various efforts made by theologians in the course of the ages to explain the nature of Christ's achievement through His passion on the race's behalf, will be traced in the next chapter. Here, it need only be said that while these attempts appear to have served their purpose for a time, noneof them has proved permanently acceptable. A profound change has overtaken the thought of the Church, since it was held that the Atonement consisted in the soul of Christ being temporarily delivered through death to the Devil, as a ransom for the liberation of the race - a change which finds the Anselmic interpretation of Satisfaction, and the/

the Reformers' interpretation of Substitution, if not quite so objectionable, yet more or less incredible. If the Abelardian simplification, on the other hand, commends itself to some by its moral transparency, its meagre content, and its lack of serious reference to sin, beyond being a demonstration of love, give ground for dissatisfaction to many. The Grotian attempt at re-habilitating the Reformer's doctrine certainly takes account of moral interests but it appears far-fetched, and in any case, encounters the invincible objection that if Governmental purposes required a penal example, they also required that the penalised should have been a criminal. If the one innocent person of the race is its chief sufferer, it is clear that He suffers for some other end than to serve as a deterrent to law-breakers.

The chief requirement of the modern mind with regard to the doctrine of Atonement is that it should be rooted in the body of doctrine which Christ taught and exemplified, and should arise ethically out of the vocation which He had adopted. Such a demand is irresistibly reasonable. Hence, practically all recent interpreters have sought to meet it. Although finality has not been reached, at all events the more offensive elements have been, or are in process of being, removed; and the lines have been indicated within which a satisfying and morally unassailable/

unassailable doctrine can be established. In any case, the Evangelic basis on which they found, is essential. There is no hope for any construction that builds on another, or introduces explanatory ideas from other sources, that are inconsistent with the revelation that is in Christ himself. Doubtless, every interpretation of the Atonement has some justification in the Scriptures, and in the experience of men. But that which is sought, and which alone can prevail with thoughtful people of our day, is the interpretation which is regulated throughout by Christ's own doctrine of God, and illustrated by His own example. It is nothing short of violence to subject the revelation which Christ thus gives to postulates otherwise derived, and to subordinate the open sense of a whole gospel to the uncertain sense of a few texts in the writings of St. Paul. It is on this ground of fidelity to Christ's disclosure of the Divine character, and the Divine grace as recorded by the Evangelists, that this discussion proceeds; and its aim is to present certain aspects of Christ's redeeming work which the writer thinks have not been sufficiently recognised in any of the numerous modern works that treat of the subject.

For this purpose, it is fortunately, unnecessary to enter upon a critical discussion of the New Testament.

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By common consent of those qualified to pass judgment on the case, the New Testament is generally trustworthy, and its religious ideas are fairly clear, in spite of occasional obscurities. Besides, the nature of the Atonement cannot be decided by the sense of a few disputed passages, even if one could reach a finally authoritative exegesis of them. It must be based upon a wider foundation, and shown to be dependent upon, congruous with, and emergent from the central conception of God which Christ came to unfold, and of which His bearing through the Passion is the completion and the demonstration.

Finally, although the doctrine of the Atonement presupposes that of the Incarnation, it is not necessary for our purpose to enter upon an exhaustive discussion of the mode of the latter. Like most theological conceptions, that of the Incarnation has suffered considerable change in recent times. It may still be permissible, but it is certainly not common, nor much unto edification, to speak of two natures in one person. No amount of protesting can prevent the use of such terms having unfortunate results, suggesting a composite Being who is neither God nor man. Hence, the necessity of abiding by the simplest view of Christ's personality that is compatible with His consciousness as/

as revealed to us, and with His ministry, resurrection, and enduring power in the life of humanity. It may satisfy all the interests at stake if we hold that Christ was so completely man, so fulfilled the ideal of God's creation in man, that God found in Him a perfect organ of His will, and a perfect medium of His self-manifestation to the world, so that in all His ministry as in His character, He was setting forth the holiness, the truth, and the grace of the Eternal. No doubt, a metaphysical problem remains in the back-ground here; but we need not made too much of it, inasmuch as we do not forget that it remains in the background of all personality and indeed, all existence. In the case of the personality of Christ, the problem may assume a special form; but if it can be solved at all, it is on the assumption that human nature is originally grounded in the Divine, and can therefore become the vehicle of a theophany without suffering violence, or ceasing to be itself; can in fact be itself most when most possessed by the Spirit of God. In any case, there is no hint of a dual personality, nor of mutually exclusive natures within the personality, in one word of Christ's; hence, we are obliged to think that He is the Son of God not in spite of being, but because He is supremely, the Son of Man.

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In Him we find human nature dwelling with joyful, unbroken assurance in the sense of God's loving presence, and consecrated to the doing, proclaiming and bearing the will of God. It is true that such a mode of existence is unique, entitling us to call it divine, in contrast with the highest recorded experience of any saint known to us; yet hardly at any point save one, can it be said that Christ's consciousness as indicated to us, passes beyond the bounds that commonly determine the reach and capacity of human nature. The exception is the references in St. John's gospel to the glory which Christ enjoyed with the Father before the world was, and other suggestions of His pre-existence to be found in the same work. It is common now-a-days to attribute the form of the chief ideas of the fourth gospel to the author rather than to Christ, and to treat it as a work of theological reflection rather than a strictly historical account. There is undoubtedly much in the work to support this view; yet, even on this view, one may well hesitate to suppose that the author put words into the mouth of Christ, which had no justification in His self-disclosure. It is not easily credible that any responsible writer would have, for example, appropriated the conception of the Logos and applied it to explain the life, power, and work of Christ, had the latter never indicated His/

His sense of a unique, eternal relation with God, and with the race. One cannot respect criticism that tries either to conceal, or explain away the central reality - the Personality that was so great, mighty, and wonderful that only ultimate ideas could be thought of, to explain or represent what He was. On the other hand, it is not necessary to suppose that Christ's consciousness was other than human, even if it contained such a reminiscence of a former mode of being, or reached a plane higher than that of any other man. Incarnation, if it be a reality at all, must abide by its own meaning -- that God really became man, and not something other than man. Though the human consciousness is finite, it is also "the form of an infinite content." We know that it is not bounded by rigid limits; and we know too little about it to say with assurance that it could not hold any memorial of a pre-mundane past, and remain human. Had not Plato his theory of Recollection, without imagining that it invalidated the process of acquiring knowledge? A similar process of moral obedience and communion with God, may well have given Christ His assurance regarding His original condition, as well as His confidence with respect to the future. If the light in which He walked was morally conditioned, as everyone sees it was; if temptation, faith, prayer, obedience, self-consecration,/

consecration, and self-sacrifice were His mode of experience, and the very means of His strength, vision, and peace, it cannot be said that His consciousness contained an element of which human nature as such is incapable, or was essentially other than human. Through that consciousness, God was so apprehended, and so revealed, that He is known once for all in His moral character, and in His purpose and attitude towards mankind; while the action and passion of Christ exemplify and attest the word of revelation. Nowhere do we find Him hinting, let alone claiming, that we are to believe Him to be the Son of God, except on the ground of His character, doctrine, and action. It is wholly the moral features of Sonship that He cares to present, and is thankful to find recognised even by the few. We may be certain therefore, that the supreme achievement of His life, whatever depths and heights it may compass, is not to be interpreted on metaphysical lines, or on hypotheses of His person that really remove Him from the category of man altogether; but rather along the line on which He was content to make all His appeals to men. It is therefore sufficient for our purpose of endeavouring to understand in what the Atonement consists, that we hold that Christ is the Son of God in the sense that He authoritatively and finally manifests to us God's character, and/

and God's will for our salvation, and thereby makes the Divine power available to meet our necessity. A more elaborate Christology may have its place and use in any full scheme of Christian doctrine; but Christ Himself was content to put the sum of it all in the simple affirmation- "He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father." If the meaning of His life can be so described, it can hardly be doubted that the meaning of His death can be ascertained without entering beforehand upon metaphysical speculations, although these cannot be excluded from a philosophic account of His Person, when all that is known of Him is taken into consideration. The permanent relation to the race which He sustains, the spirit which He bestows upon His followers, the judicial sovereignty which He exercises wherever He is known, and the place which He occupies in our conception of God, require a Christology that will take account of His place in the sphere of Being, as well as in the sphere of Revelation. That Christ exists eternally in God, that He is the spiritual Head of Humanity, that He is with His followers in all places - these are basal convictions of all Christians, founded in experience not less than in His own declarations; and such convictions if justified, presuppose a mode of existence on His part which Christology is bound to maintain against all who/

who would treat Christ as merely the vanished Hero of the spiritual view of life, or a God-intoxicated man who left an imperishable influence behind him in the thought of the race, or as one who simply lived and died to give His own consciousness of God, if it might be, to all who would learn of him. There is no escape from such metaphysics as may be necessary to declare and defend from age to age, the Church's faith in her ever-living Lord. But while this is true, it does not really touch the character, the ethical quality, or the essential purpose of the work which Christ accomplished on our behalf. What it guarantees rather, is the finality of that work, and its sufficiency for the end sought - the redemption of man. Those who hold the augustest conception of the divinity of Christ, both in the days of His earthly sojourn, and in His state of exaltation to the right hand of power, can add, on that account, little to the understanding of the doctrine of Atonement, which is concerned with spiritual relations and moral action, passion, and achievement. These, if sustained and undertaken at all by the Son of Man, so as through them to bring the redeeming knowledge and power of God to the children of men, must be intelligible in their own light, and mighty with the authority they can wield in their own right. If therefore, it be held that God was in Christ reconciling the/

the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and yet that Christ was the Man - Jesus of Nazareth, who was in all essential respects human, living by faith and not by sight, tempted in all points as we are tempted yet without sin, and proceeding upon His splendid adventure through the constraint of His knowledge and love of God, and of His compassion for His ignorant, alienated, and lost brethren, the main conditions are satisfied for the understanding of the central meaning of the Atonement.

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Chapter II.

-:- HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE DOCTRINE -:-

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Circumstances largely governed the order in which the doctrine of the Church developed. The first centuries of the Christian era were times of danger, misrepresentation, and persecution. Hence, the earliest Christian writings have a predominantly hortatory and apologetic purpose. The leaders had to defend the cause from ignorant and malicious charges, and to fortify their people to endure hardship and suffering. In these circumstances, the sacrifice of Christ, though always assumed to be the divine means of conveying the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, was most frequently set forth as the supreme example of courage, patience, and fidelity. Besides, in times of danger, salvation was apt to be represented eschatologically: it was to be looked for in the future rather in the present. Hence, loyalty and steadfastness were the main requisites. Further, there was a logical reason for the delay in facing the question of the rationale of the Atonement; namely, that it would necessarily depend on the view taken of the Person of Christ, since the nature and value of His work depend upon His relation to God and man. Thus, the tedious Christological controversy, with its absorbing interest and unsettling effects, prevented any serious attempt at providing/

providing a comprehensive doctrine of Atonement. Such an attempt must wait until substantial agreement had been reached on the presuppositions on which it could be built.

In the meantime, however, the Gospel was being preached. During the first two centuries, this was done with the minimum of theory. The New Testament statements regarding the efficacy of the death of Christ in securing salvation were repeated and amplified, but seldom elucidated and never co-ordinated into a systematic exposition. At first, the emphasis on the redemptive value and power of the Cross does not appear to suffer from this lack of illuminating interpretation. One reason for this is that the idea of Christ's work as a sacrifice to put away sin naturally prevailed. The idea of such a sacrifice was the most commonly accepted and regulative in the religious thought of the time; so much so that why it was necessary, or how it became effectual, was not even discussed. The influence of an ancient sacrificial system thus enabled the Church to have a tacit theory of Atonement while her thinkers were preoccupied with other questions, and endeavouring to interpret the same data on philosophical lines. This has to be remembered with regard to that early period. It is amply shown in the chief writers. Clement of Rome, for example, finds in the Cross the final proof of God's love. "Without/

"Without love, nothing is well-pleasing to God; in love, the Master took us unto Himself; for the love which He had towards us, Jesus Christ our Lord hath given His blood for us by the will of God and His flesh for our flesh and His life for our lives." (Ep: 1.49). Again, in the Epistle to Diognetus, we find the same appreciation of the exceeding kindness and love of God in taking our sins upon Himself, and parting with His Son as a ransom for us - "the holy for the lawless, the guileless for the evil, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal, that the righteousness of One should justify many that are lawless."

The conception of this writer is that the whole life and death of Christ are in the nature of a demonstration of love forming a great appeal to mankind on the one hand, while providing, on the other hand, that righteousness impossible for man himself, yet essential to cover his sins and secure his justification. Clement is unconscious of any incompatibility between these two aspects of the work of Christ, although separate theories of the Atonement were destined to spring from them.

During the Gnostic controversy, however, there is a remarkable failure to interpret the Cross as giving the supreme, saving knowledge of God. Justin, perhaps the most effective and representative defender of the faith during that period, describes/

describes Christ as the deliverer of man from the power of the demons by teaching him the truth concerning God so as to persuade and convert him from his idolatry and superstition. In common with the rest of the Apologists, he holds that salvation is through knowledge, and that the Christian has knowledge of the truth through the general revelation of God which Christ gave in His teaching. The death of Christ does not appear to them to give the final word of knowledge regarding God in His attitude to the world. When they refer to it, usually it is to state without explanation that it procures the remission of sins, heals, purifies and quickens the soul; or on the other hand, they show how it fulfils Old Testament sacrificial types and prophecies of a suffering Messiah, which fulfilment in turn, proves that Christ was divine; or again, they celebrate it as making an end of the tyranny of death in virtue of the following Resurrection (Justin Dial, with Trypho, and Apol. 1. 63). No doubt, these early Apologists were obliged to give a somewhat one-sided account of their faith by the nature of the controversy in which they were engaged; yet making allowance for this, one is surprised to find them attempting to set forth the Christian gnosis with such meagre and unilluminating references to the Cross in which St. Paul, whose works they must have known, saw that knowledge finally and gloriously set forth.

When we advance into the third and fourth centuries, we find some of the greatest minds of the Church in any age elucidating, and through controversy, formulating and developing Christian doctrine. Most of the conceptions of the method of redemption, with which we are familiar, are to be found in some form in these writers. It is far from the truth to say, as is often said, that the theory of Ransom from the Devil exhausts their contribution to the doctrine of Atonement. Indeed their thought is rich and comprehensive in form, though it is all too apt to be satisfied with abstractions. It starts with the dogma that, at his creation, man was endowed with a share in the divine Logos, in virtue of which he could live forever, notwithstanding the perishable nature of his body. The spiritual endowment was held to maintain the whole being in healthy, blessed, and permanent life. But through the machinations of the Devil, and by his own consent, man fell from his high estate, lost the spiritual principle that preserved him, became subject to corruption, and to the sentence of death which God had threatened would follow on his disobedience. "For man is by nature mortal, inasmuch as he is made out of that which is not; but by reason of his likeness to Him who is....he would have stayed his natural corruption, and have remained incorrupt. But men having despised and rejected the contemplation of God, and devised and contrived evil for themselves...received the condemnation of death for themselves, with/

with which they had been threatened". Again, "men having rejected things eternal, and by counsel of the Devil having turned to the things of corruption, became the cause of their own corruption." (Athanasius. De Incar. 4-5).

These are the presuppositions. The method of redemption is correspondingly twofold - the overthrow of the Devil's dominion, and the restoration to human nature of the preservative qualities lost by the Fall. The death of Christ is understood to secure the former object, while the nature of His Person - an Incarnation of God in man - provides the latter. Though some protested against the idea, notably, Gregory of Nazianzen, it was the general opinion that inasmuch as man had voluntarily placed himself in the power of the Devil, the latter had acquired a sort of proprietary right over him, even although in seducing man, his original action was considered to be as unjust as his subsequent sway was violent and destructive. (Iren. Adv. Haer. 5. and Aug. De Trin. 4. 13.). The suspicion of injustice and violence must on no account rest on God. Hence, the race itself is to be persuaded by love, while the claim of the Devil to some compensation for the loss of his ill-gotten property, is acknowledged. The price which in his pride, the Devil named was the soul of the Son of God, which was to pass to him through death. This was conceded; and inasmuch as the soul of Christ being of infinite worth, was more precious than the souls of all mankind, it more than squared the debt. But the Devil had over-reached himself/

himself. Lured by the humanity of Christ, which concealed His divinity as the bait conceals the hook, he imagined that he could hold Him permanently, and greedily seized Him. His victory, however, was short-lived; he could not hold his captive; and the Resurrection of Christ left him foiled and spoiled. (Origen. Comm. on Matt. 16. S. Gregory of Nyssa. Or. Cat. 22-26).

But picturesque as this release from tyranny looks, more is needed for salvation: the process of corruption must be stopped. This was understood to have been achieved in principle by the Incarnation in which the divine Logos assumed the nature of man in the Virgin's womb. The significance of this grand reality is developed with remarkable resource in the Eastern section of the Church, from Justin onwards. The statement of Athanasius, which has never been forgotten by the Church, tersely summarises the Greek view of the virtue of the Incarnation-" God became man in Christ, that man might become God". (De. Incar. 54). The solidarity of Christ with the race is emphasised; but it is a metaphysical rather than a moral solidarity. As Irenaeus puts it, Christ "recapitulates in Himself the experience of the whole race; and by virtue of the Logos, delivers it at every point from that which was its bane". The power of the gospel unto salvation, is precisely the power of the Incarnate Word operating upon the souls of men, curing them from the disease of sin, purifying them from its corruption, delivering them from its darkness, defeating the forces/

forces making for death, and conferring immortality. Thus, Christ is the new Head of humanity, Who, through His holiness and divine power, broke sin's long dominion, vanquished the demonic powers, restored the defaced image of God in man, and opened before him the gates of an immortal destiny.

In all this, one feels how much more the Church had experienced of the saving power of God in Christ than she could satisfactorily interpret. More particularly, the account given of His death as a ransom offered to Satan, which served, in spite of some vigorous protests, for a thousand years, appears to-day grotesque enough, although it is not so surprising when one remembers the demonology of the period, and the vivid sense of the Devil's personality then prevailing. Probably it excellently served homiletic purposes. Moreover, it cannot be denied that the death of Christ was the price which evil exacted for the redemption of mankind. The difference between the ancient and the modern interpretation is unquestionably more than that between poetry and prose; yet it must not be forgotten that some words of Christ concerning His own death, such as the Ransom passage, the description of the Good Shepherd, and the solemn words at the institution of the Supper, at least admit a transactional conception of its meaning. Moreover, Christ Himself had a very vivid way of speaking of the Devil, whose works He declared He had come to destroy, and of whom He finally declared "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing

in Me". Superficially considered, the most objectionable features of this earliest attempt to interpret the Redeemer's death are the acknowledgment of the Adversary's rights in man, and the tacit deception by which he is finally deprived of his prize. In the one case, the laudable desire to exhibit God's unimpeachable justice led to conceding too much; while in the other, the desire to demonstrate His superlative wisdom issued in producing the impression of fraud. Eventually, all this came to be repudiated: the rights alleged to belong to the Devil came to be recognised as wholly belonging to God. The modern objection to it all is deeper and more comprehensive, proceeding on the ground that it presents the great achievement of Christ in a world of metaphysical abstractions, and without regard to the human factors, the moral experiences, and the historical realities of the situation in which it took place. Rightly or wrongly, the Devil has ceased, in the opinion of many, to be anything but the personification of human wickedness; and all views that assume that he is a personality of immense power, second only to God, and that the Redeemer's conflict was primarily waged with him rather than with men's wills, are certain to be unacceptable to all but a few. It is a fair demand of the modern mind that theology should not require of it to accept an unverifiable speculative dogma which it finds difficult to believe. It is not less fair to ask that the work of Christ should be construed with reference to the historical and ethical situation in which He stood and accomplished/

accomplished it. If this is done, the final meaning of it all, which may connect it with other than human beings in their relation with God, need not deeply concern us. If it were important for us, presumably it would have been made plain. Similarly with regard to the significance of the incarnation for the salvation of the world, the conception of the Logos uniting with a human body, and reversing by its divine quality and power the process of corruption and the doom of death, may be legitimate; and obviously it founds on the Johannine writings; but it is a metaphysical or quasi-physical process that appears to be so described. The action of the Logos is comparable to a sort of radium action, cleansing corrupt humanity by its divine properties, with the minimum of connection with faith and moral conditions of any kind. In this way, the use of large terms with shadowy meanings tends to lose contact with human realities. The impression which Athanasius conveys in his justly famous treatise on the Incarnation is that redemption was practically achieved once the union of the divine and the human took place in the person of Christ. The ethical meaning and working out of this union in a mighty life of achievement and suffering in which the real value of the incarnation is revealed, hardly appears. The Logos formula is left to do everything. But salvation is not so easily attained as this would indicate; nor are men saved by believing in the mystical union of Christ with the race, simply because He took our nature upon Him.

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The facts of the world, the persistence and awful effectiveness of evil in human affairs and human hearts baffle and perplex us. It may be true that in Christ, the victory over it all was prospectively achieved (by the union of the Logos with the nature of man;) that in Him, our nature is shown to be capable of divinity. But our urgent problem is to relate the meaning and the power of the God-man and all that He accomplished to the lives of men in an intelligible and effectual way; to relate them to their consciences and their hearts so as to liberate them from the sense of guilt, and change their spiritual dispositions and outlook. The Greek forms of thought, liberal and captivating as they are, fail to grip the mind because they are not close enough to those moral experiences of which salvation really consists.

A marked change is appreciable when the more practical and juridical minds of the Latin Fathers proceed to discuss the doctrine of salvation. They too, were heirs of the Ransom theory, the Logos theology, and the Neo-platonic philosophy which so profoundly affected the mind of their Eastern fellow-Christians. But they kept closer to experience and the historic Christ than the latter, with the result that they raised more vital questions and dealt with them less speculatively. In particular, they have a far deeper sense of law, and of personal responsibility for its breach. In Cyprian, and more clearly in Tertullian, whose influence was second only to that of Augustine, salvation is an earnest, painful/

painful, ethical experience. He does not, it is true, discuss the death of Christ, beyond making it clear that for him as for St. Paul, it was central to redemption (Adv. Marc. 3.). But he deals with sin as a serious reality belonging to the moral sphere, and requiring moral treatment, whatever the underlying metaphysics of that treatment might be. (De Paen. 6. 9. 10.). If it is forgiven, it is not without penitence, involving for all the renunciation of evil. Further, in the case of those who fall into sin after their baptism, if they are to be restored to the fellowship of the Church, they must make not only public confession, but "satisfaction" as well, thereby enduring a certain penalty which the Church had attached to their particular offence. This "satisfaction" along with the Church's intercession, was held to be, not indeed the Divine penalty for the offence, but a disciplinary regulation, compliance with which would be taken as evidence of sincere repentance, and therefore a ground on which the penitent could be accepted by God, and received to full Church privileges once more. Later, this "satisfaction" became an integral part of the sacrament of penance, and the source of gross abuses in the Mediaeval Church. Yet, its original purpose was severely ethical. It meant that evil-doing is grave both for God and man; that its forgiveness, instead of being taken for granted, is possible only on moral conditions, when its gravity is recognised, and its reprobation signalised/

signalised by unimpeachable evidence of sincerity. The interest of this development of Church discipline lies partly in its moral earnestness, and partly in providing the conception of "Satisfaction" which gradually came to be used to interpret the work of Christ, and became famous in the hands of Anselm. From the beginning it was an ambiguous term, as it could easily come to be understood as the full and proper penalty for sin in the sight of God; whereas in reality, it was only an ecclesiastical appointment to test penitence, and help men escape the real punishment of transgression. In the history of the doctrine, the original ambiguity deepened, giving rise first to the Penal, and later to the Penitential theory of the Atonement. In the one case, Christ came to be regarded (as by Luther, Calvin, Edwardes, Owen and others) as enduring on the Cross the absolute penalty of the sins of the elect; while another line of interpreters, and very notably MacLeod Campbell, makes the work of Christ to consist chiefly in His full acknowledgment and acceptance of the divine Will, even when it exacts the death penalty for sin from the Holy One; and in His penitential confession of the sin of the race, along with His intercession on its behalf. These developments will be more fully considered later. At this stage, it is sufficient merely to observe the genesis of an idea that proved extraordinarily tenacious, and which provided a mode of interpreting the redemptive work of Christ which, in spite of/

of almost incredible perversions, had the merit of rousing the conscience to a sense of the enormity of sin and yet meeting its imperious demands, at the same time that forgiveness was assured to the penitent believer. There is no doubt that the Satisfaction theory, however erroneous it may have been, offered the Gospel for centuries on these terms, and that it was acceptable to great multitudes.

Still more remarkable is the change of thought, emphasis, and feeling met with in the writings of Augustine. His own experience of slavery to sensual passion, and of impotence of will to deliver himself, followed by a memorable conversion, gave him such close contact with the problem of salvation and its solution, that his works possess an exceptional measure of vitality and power. The supreme questions with Augustine were - How can a corrupt nature be cleansed and renewed? How can a will, bound and helpless, be set free and enabled to serve God? These are poignantly real questions, whether the Augustinian conceptions of inherited original sin, and the moral depravity of the race be accepted in full, or only in part and with reservations. In so far as human nature is tainted with evil, and the will-to-good is inhibited by demoralising habits, it matters little whether the evil heritage originated with Adam, and passed by concupiscence to his decendants; or it is regarded as moral failure in the evolutionary process of mankind, the beginnings of which can only be conjectured. The sense of guilt, it is often alleged, will/

will vanish, if philosophic evolution is accepted, with its view of man as rising out of brute conditions, with the most elementary ideas and practices of morals. But such a refuge is too shadowy and insecure to serve. No conscience is satisfied by such remote considerations, as long as personal responsibility for good or evil is admitted. Power is needed, not less on the one view than on the other, to deal with a desperate situation.

With Augustine, the grace of God bringing salvation from hopeless impotence is everything. This grace is conceived almost physically - an active energy proceeding from God through the mediation of Christ into the heart of men, to break his bonds and vitalise his will. It is this liberating, moralising grace that really justifies the sinner. The essential connection of this grace with the work of Christ is not satisfactorily shown. Indeed, Augustine maintains that "they are fools who declare that the wisdom of God could not otherwise set man free than by assuming man, being born of a woman, and suffering at the hands of sinners" (De Agone Christiano. 12.). Nevertheless, "no method could be more appropriate for curing our misery" (De Trinit. 14.). This fitness is shown first in the procedure taken to deliver the race from the dominion of the Devil. Like the rest of the Fathers, Augustine holds the conception of the Devil as a tyrannical slave-owner who is to be vanquished, yet compensated for loss of property; and/

and he is overcome "not by might but by righteousness, in order that men might value righteousness above might, not might above righteousness after the manner of the Devil". "What then" he asks "is the righteousness by which the Devil was conquered? What but the righteousness of Jesus Christ? And how was he conquered? Because, when he found in Him nothing worthy of death, he yet slew Him. And certainly it is just that we whom he held as debtors should be set at liberty as believing in Him whom he slew without any debt. This is the meaning of our being said to be justified in the blood of Christ". (De Trinit. 14).

Parallel with this, to us grotesque idea, of a legal cancellation of debt to the Adversary, we have the conception in Augustine of a unique sacrifice offered by Christ as mediator, to appease that wrath which lay upon the whole race, in consequence of original and actual sin. Free from all sin, original and actual, although in the likeness of sinful flesh, Christ is "made sin" or called sin, from having to be sacrificed to wash away sin (Enchir. 41.). This passage is exceptionally Pauline, speaking of dying to sin that we might live to righteousness, and describing the believer's appropriation of the benefits of salvation in the Sacrament of Baptism under the familiar figure of conforming to the burial and resurrection of Christ. But if all this was useful enough to the edification of the Church, it certainly fails to satisfy such questions as how the/

the mediation and sacrifice of Christ were related to God; what essentially Divine interests or requirements the sacrifice met; or how it averted the penalty of death, incurred as was held for the whole race in the Fall of Adam - which was the wrath in its final effect. Augustine is sure that the Incarnation itself, with all that comes of it, is the supreme manifestation of the grace of God, and asks the pertinent question - What is the meaning of the words "reconciled by the death of His Son?" Is it that when God the Father was angry with us, He looked upon the death of His Son for us, and was propitiated towards us? Unless the Father had been already propitiated towards us, would He, without sparing His Son, have given Him for us? (Enchir. 2.). There can hardly be but one answer. Christ's mediation is not to be understood to procure, but to give effect to, the Divine grace. His sacrifice is in line with, and fulfils the deep purpose of the lustral ceremonies of religion; and His appearance in our nature, and His whole work are peculiarly adapted at every point to heal our wounds "curing some by their similars, some by their opposites". (De Doctrina Christiana 1.). In describing the practical application and effectiveness of the mediatorial work of Christ, Augustine is extraordinarily versatile and felicitous. In particular, he is entranced by the humility of Christ both in His life and Passion. It is this lowliness of Him who was so high which breaks down the pride of man - his original and essential sin - and reconciles him to God. In spite

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of some passages in which Augustine writes as though the grace of God were independent of Christ, and He had been but the most illustrious example of its operation, (Contra Jul. 1) the great theologian keeps close to the picture of Christ given in the Gospels, and brings the doctrine of salvation into genuine contact with some of the fundamental necessities of men in the toils of sin. It is true that the only explanation which he admits for the extraordinary method of redemption is that it pleased God thus to deliver man. At the same time, he shows it so singularly well adapted for its purpose that another method would seem impossible.

Between Augustine (d. 430) and Anselm (d. 1109) there is no development of the doctrine that calls for attention. But with Anselm a definite and important stage is reached. In his celebrated treatise, (Cur Deus Homo) he proposes to give a full, scientific, and convincing account of the purpose of the Incarnation, and to rationalise the doctrine of it so clearly, that while the believer would be delighted and edified, the unbeliever would be obliged either to accept the demonstrated truth, or hold his peace. This is the character of the work from beginning to end; and while it follows the Platonic method of question and answer, it displays great dialectical skill and on its own premises, possesses considerable cogency. The fundamental ground taken by Anselm is that God's purpose in Creation cannot be frustrated; hence, the place of the fallen angels must be filled/

filled. This is to be done from the children of men, who also had been made for perfection and blessedness; but as they, too, have fallen into sin, they cannot be restored until their sin has been dealt with, as "it does not become God to leave anything in His realm unregulated". According to Anselm, man's sin, which consists in depriving God of that honour which is His due from every rational creature, is unconceivably serious, outweighing even the worth of all the worlds. Man ought not to disobey one commandment of God, though he believed that his disobedience would preserve the universe from perdition. How great, therefore, is the weight of human sin! Now, there are, according to Anselm, but two ways by which the situation can be met - either the sinner must restore that which he has stolen, and something more on account of the injury inflicted on God by his disloyalty; or, adequate punishment must be exacted. In either case, "satisfaction" would be made for the offence. In the latter case, the race would perish, and God's creative purpose would be frustrated - which cannot be. But in the former, there seems to be no less impossibility: man, guilty of an infinite sin, cannot possibly make an adequate satisfaction. Hence the necessity for One who is at once man and God; man, that He may act for man; God, that His action may have infinite value. Christ fulfils these essential conditions. He too, owed to God perfect obedience, and rendered it. But He owed not to die, death being the penalty/

penalty of sin. Christ however, elected to die at the hands of the wicked, for the honour of God, and thereby achieved a deed of infinite worth, owing to the infinite value which His divinity contributed to His person. In this honouring death of His Son, God obtains more than an equivalent for all the dishonour done to Him by the sin of mankind. Thus, satisfied, He is free to forgive the guilty who repent and accept the conditions of obedience and holiness: for "what can be juster than that He who receives a price greater than every debt, if it is given with the right motive, should forgive every debt?"

This brief sketch leaves out much that is of interest in Anselm's thought; but it is the skeleton of it all, and is sufficient to indicate the central ideas. First in importance is the double necessity which Anselm discovers for the work of Christ, namely, that God's purpose in creating man should not be frustrated; and that on the other hand, sin should not be condoned. Both necessities appear to him to be in the nature of God as the supreme rational and moral Being. The first, however, would seem to require the ultimate salvation of all men. Anselm is satisfied, apparently, with the opening of the way for all, and the salvation of some only.

The latter necessity, however, expressed in the two famous phrases - "Necesse est ut omne peccatum aut satisfactio aut poena/

poena sequatur" and "Deum non decet aliquid in suo regno inordinatum dimittere" brought severe criticism upon Anselm. He is charged, not without reason, with presenting God in the form of a Teutonic sovereign, extremely sensitive to personal affronts, and resolute to avenge them; while any disorder in his domain is intolerable. Without doubt, Anselm promoted the truth through his extraordinary conception of the gravity of moral evil. He realised as no writer on this subject had done before him that every sin is an outrage on the moral order of the Universe, of which God is the Author and Sustainer, and that there can be no salvation if the terrible situation which sin has caused, is ignored. Yet it must be said that Anselm thinks of God more as a Ruler than as a Father. It is true that a father who does not rule his household, is not a figure to which God can confidently be likened. If he were, we should have as God a being somewhat indifferent to moral evil, and in some other than moral relationships with His creatures. But none the less is God misrepresented when the interests of government take precedence of those of Redemption; when the dictum - "Deum non decet aliquid in suo regno inordinatum dimittere" governs the Evangelic word - "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life".

Moreover, it cannot be said too strongly that Anselm's solution/

solution of the problem is astonishingly artificial and unreal. An infinitely meritorious death, without vital or necessary connection with the preceding life, offered as a compensation to God, and out-weighing by its merit the demerit of all human sin, is mythology, and not theology. Written in the interests of maintaining the moral character of God in all His dealings with the race, repudiating also as unethical the idea of Christ's death being a ransom offered to the Devil, Anselm's work ignores all that Christ did, and revealed, and all those fidelities and constraints that led Him to the Cross, as though they had nothing to do with it. For anything Anselm suggests, and so far as his interpretation is concerned, Christ need have given no public ministry; and He might have appeared at the beginning of human history. All that was needed was the appearance of a God-man, who should somewhere have lived a perfect life, and somewhere have died a meritorious death for the honour of God. Besides, he fails to show how the Redeemer's work enters savingly into the hearts of men, construing it more as a theorem than a fact and an event in the moral world. It is not thus that anything that has reality for life and religion can be accomplished. Christ's life, and for that matter, all life may be fundamentally metaphysical, requiring metaphysical conceptions for its final understanding; but it is none the less rooted in facts of history and experience. Hence, we must deduce the meaning and appreciate the value of the sacrifice of Christ, not in the/

the first instance, from logical principles, but from its own interpreting context; from the self-revelation of Him who made it; and from the reports of those who had the privilege of His own explanation of the end He had in view in His whole service of man and God. It is strange to find so great a man as Anselm, and one so far in advance of his times in ethical ideas as scornfully to reject a hoary view because it outraged his moral sense, so satisfied with his own treatise, in which he completely fails to establish any vital connection between the sin of man, the death of Christ, and the Divine forgiveness. At the same time Anselm gave a new impulse to theology; for he indicated a profound necessity for a really divine redemption; he recognised that the death of Christ is of central importance in securing that redemption, and he brought the conceptions of satisfaction and merit to its interpretation, conceptions that long prevailed, and may, for many minds, possess real value, after their legal connotation has been discarded.

THE VIEW OF ABELARD. (d. 11.42).

Strangely enough, it was a younger contemporary of Anselm's who gave to the world the view that is most anthitetic to Anselm's. Abelard agreed with the more famous theologian in dismissing the theory that Christ's death was a ransom paid to the Devil. It was ludicrous

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to think of compensating the arch-seducer and thief, especially if the compensation was nothing less than God passing into his power. But is it not equally ludicrous, asks Abelard, to suppose that God should be offering Himself compensation or ransom-price? If such an idea is unreasonable, where is the Anselmic necessity for Christ's death? Abelard can find none. Moreover, God could freely have forgiven the sins of men, and delivered them from punishment, if He had so willed. In any case, the death by which men repudiated Christ, instead of providing for the forgiveness of their sins, adds enormously to their guilt, and intensifies the divine wrath against them.

Further, is it not cruel and unjust that anyone, not to speak of God, should require the blood, or be satisfied with the death, of the innocent, in order to become reconciled with the guilty? The matter according to Abelard, is much simpler. - "We are justified by the blood of Christ, and reconciled to God in this, that by the singular grace shown to us, that His Son took our nature, and persevered in instructing us, both in word and deed, even unto death, He more largely bound us to Himself by love, so that kindled as we are by so great a benefit of the divine Grace, true charity should hence forth fear nothing at all.....and so, our redemption is that supreme love manifested in our case by the passion of Christ, who not merely delivers us from the/

the bondage of sin, but also acquires for us the liberty of the sons of God, so that we may fulfil all things from love rather than from fear of Him, Who as He himself bears witness, showed us grace so great that no greater is possible. (Works. Bk. 2. quoted by Franks: Hist. of Doctrine. Vol: 1.188.). Simply stated, what Abelard appears to mean is that the Passion of Christ, being a supreme demonstration of Divine love, awakens responsive love in the sinner's heart; that this is all that is needed, in order that God may forgive his sins; and that this also straightway admits him to the liberty of the children of God, since "love casteth out fear", in which there is bondage. For the rest, the instruction and example of Christ suffice for our guidance and correction.

It could be shown that in the course of his Commentary on Romans, in which he thus writes, he here and there falls from his own simplicity, and makes concessions to other ideas in that formidable document. That however, is by duress rather than by choice. He is rightly regarded as the father of the so-called Subjective theories as Anselm is of the Objective ones. His enduring service is that he puts the Divine love where it belongs - at the heart of the whole process of redemption; and that he gives its due place to the influence of the Cross on the human heart, thus relating the saving work of Christ to the lives of men

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by the simple, ethical process of a response to an appeal. Nevertheless, Abelard fails to carry conviction with his great simplification for two reasons - he does not show any real reason or necessity for the death of Christ; and he fails to appreciate the gravity of the problem which sin and guilt create for man, and presumably also for God. The fact is that if sins are forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ, as Scripture repeatedly affirms, there is more in that sacrifice than can adequately be described by the Abelardian phrase - "a demonstration of love." That is there indeed, and is the greatest aspect of it; yet, a guilty conscience can never find rest in it, unless also it is assured that its offence has been fully measured and yet forgiven by that same love. This is the central difficulty for a mind morally awake and distressed. Abelard does not meet it, although when to the demonstration of love, he elsewhere adds the merits of Christ, due to His singular holiness, he shows that he is aware that something more is needed than the bare solution which he had offered.

It was the feeling that Abelard had ignored fundamental issues that roused Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153.) to oppose his views. He yielded nothing to Abelard in his estimation of Christ's example and the greatness of His love; but he considered that if these were all, there would be/

be no redemption. His words are:- "Three principal things I perceive in this work of our salvation: the pattern of humility, in which God emptied Himself; the measure of love, which He stretched even unto death; the mystery of redemption, in which He underwent the death that He bore. The two former of these without the latter are like a picture on the void". He points out that the Abelardian view is tantamount to a denial of original sin, and makes the baptism of infants a meaningless rite, since infants cannot appreciate a demonstration of love. In spite of both Anselm and Abelard, the Devil's claim is not yet exploded; for Bernard holds that the death of Christ achieved a two-fold objective basis for salvation in that it liquidates that claim, and at the same time is an acceptable oblation to God. In both senses, "satisfaction" is made; and sinners for whom it was made, obtain a standing-place before God. Bernard uses the idea of imputation - "Assignati est homini justitia aliena"; yet it is not only "aliena" since Christ is bound to the redeemed as the head is to the body. The believer is justified on the ground of his sharing in the righteousness of Christ. This sharing is conceived to take effect through the Eucharist, in which the life of the Son of God becomes that of the communicant. It is thus no bare imputation that takes place, but an imputation that is accompanied and justified by a mystical participation in righteousness/

righteousness. This conception goes far beyond anything in Anselm or Abelard. The importance of Bernard's contribution is partly due to its being made in opposition to Abelard's pungent criticism of preceding views and the latter's own simple and attractive theory, and partly to its insistence on an objective achievement in the death of Christ - an opus operatum - before its power could tell savingly on lost and guilty souls. It is disappointing that so vital a thinker as Bernard can only revive a discredited explanation; yet, even this explanation may well have been preferable to evacuating the passion of the Redeemer of all values except that of moving the heart, important as that value is. Moreover, in looking for that which satisfied God in Christ's spirit of holy obedience and self-oblation, and not in so much suffering endured, Bernard showed deep insight into the central reality, and is far in advance of those later exponents who like Luther and Edwards, saw the Atonement in the punishment due to sinners being inflicted upon their Substitute. "The Father did not require the death of His Son, nevertheless, He accepted the offering of it, not thirsting for blood, but for salvation, because there was salvation in the blood". (Tract. 8. Franks Hist. of Doc.). It is true that Bernard, following Augustine, considers that the salvation of man might have been accomplished even without the Incarnation; but this reverential gesture towards the/

the Divine omnipotence does not prevent him from saying that from the human point of view - which after all, is the only one available for men - the redemption achieved by Christ was necessary for man's salvation.

Hugo of St. Victor (d. 1141) and Peter the Lombard (d. 1160) are the next important writers. They make no fresh contribution to the development of the subject, but they both aim at a comprehensive statement of Christian doctrine; and they proved exceptionally influential exponents. Like so many more of ancient and mediaeval writers, Hugo safeguards the omnipotence of God by premising that He could otherwise have redeemed the race, had He so willed. All is therefore of the free grace of God. Still, the way chosen is best adapted to our necessities. Again, like most mediaeval writers, Hugo holds the Sacraments to be the practical instruments that convey the grace of God. (His chief work is on the Sacraments - his "De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei"). But these are themselves dependent upon the work of Christ. To explain this work, Hugo adopts the Anselmic principle - "Aut poena, aut satisfactio" and declares that Christ made satisfaction to God for the loss of man's allegiance, but modifies it to consist of His life of obedience; that He made satisfaction for the guilt of man by vicariously suffering death which is the/

the punishment of sin. Moreover, by the same process, Christ broke the power of the Devil over mankind. The whole position, as determined by Christ's intervention is thus summarised - "God was made man, that He might deliver man whom He had made, that the Creator and Redeemer of man might be the same....Wisdom came to conquer wickedness, that the enemy who had conquered by cunning be conquered by sagacity. He took from our nature a sacrifice for our nature, that the whole burnt-offering to be offered for us might be taken from what was ours, so that redemption might belong to us just in this very thing, that the sacrifice was taken from what was ours; of which redemption, we are indeed made partakers, if we are united by faith (through the Sacraments, of course) to the Redeemer, who is become our partner through the flesh. (De Sac. 6-8.) Of the practical experience of salvation, we have the following profound account - "Just as the spirit of a man, through the mediation of the head, descends to quicken the members, so the Holy Spirit comes through Christ to Christians. For Christ is the Head, the Christian the member. The Head is one, the members many; and there is constituted one Body through the Head and the members, and one Spirit in one Body....By faith, we are made members; by love, we are quickened...Sacramentally, however, we are united by baptism; we are quickened by the Body and Blood of Christ. By baptism, we are made members of the Body; by the Body of Christ/

Christ (in the Eucharist) we are made participators in the quickening (De Sac. II.2). It is all rather complex in comparison with the Abelardian simplification; but it is also more adequate to the facts of religious experience.

PETER THE LOMBARD. (d. 1160.).

Skilfully selecting from the most authoritative writers, Peter produced a compendium of doctrine which proved so acceptable that it continued to be a text-book in the Church for at least three centuries. Like the subsequent and more famous Summa of Aquinas, the Sentences are representative of all views rather than a self-consistent whole. The strangely persistent myth of Christ's death being a ransom paid to the Devil re-appears. In addition, the conception of Merit rather than Satisfaction plays an important part in the scheme: Christ's humility and obedience more than counter-balanced Adam's pride, with its ruinous effects in the race, and gained for Him the name that is above every name. This merit He could have achieved apart from death; for He might, by another sort of change, have passed from mortal to immortal conditions. But by dying, He gained a super-abundant and transcendent merit, which becomes available for those in whose interest He suffered, and procured for them deliverance from the Devil, from sin, and from punishment, as/

as well as entrance into Paradise. In some way that is not explained, the blood of Christ loosed us from the guilt of sin, and its final penalty of eternal death. This is precisely the point at which light is most required; but Peter has none to offer. As for the temporal and ecclesiastical penalties of sin, the penitent can depend on the merits of Christ supplementing and perfecting his efforts to give satisfaction.

But side by side with this vivid objective presentation, Peter sets the most ethical interpretations, in which the influence of Abelard is obvious. If the Devil held the race in bondage, its sins were its chains, and if Christ sets men free by His death, it is because, seeing Divine Love so signally manifested, they are kindled by it to love God in return, so that their lives are transformed. This really is their justification. Moreover, it must not be supposed that Christ's death changed God's attitude towards us, as though He had hated us, but now loves us. On the contrary, Peter here following both Augustine and Abelard, regards Christ's work as an exhibition of the Eternal Love, reconciling us who were enemies to God by changing our disposition to friendliness and obedience. It was doubtless this blending of ethical reality with picturesque theology that gave the Sentences their prolonged vitality and authority.

THOMAS AQUINAS. (d. 1274).

About/

About a hundred years later, a still greater systematizer than Peter arose in the person of Thomas Aquinas, in whose Summa the doctrine of the Mediaeval Church is set forth with great fulness. It is, like the Sentences, a compilation of all the most reasonable views that had prevailed in the Church until that age, and is as apt to confuse at some points as to enlighten. Nevertheless, it is a great work, and inevitably became the supreme theological authority until the Reformation, and remains supreme yet for the Roman Church.

In the third part of the Summa, which specifically deals with the work of Christ, the great Schoolman makes use of every category which had already approved itself to theologians, excepting that of Ransom from the Devil in the old, familiar sense. These categories are - Merit, Satisfaction, Sacrifice, and Redemption. On the general and speculative question, whether any other way of salvation had been possible, Thomas follows the Augustinian tradition in holding that God's omnipotence constrains us to suppose that it was, although we cannot imagine any other method so admirably adapted to secure salvation. Similarly with regard to the other speculative question, associated with the name of Rupert of Deutz, whether the Incarnation would have taken place if man had not sinned, Thomas gives judgment in the negative, even though he agrees that the Incarnation having/

having taken place, is the crown and flower of Creation.

Applying the above-mentioned categories to the work of Christ, Thomas emphasises the holy humility and obedience of Christ throughout His whole life and ministry, which by its very nature gave satisfaction to God; but in view of the love in which He suffered, the worth of the Divine-human life which He offered, and the woe which He endured, Christ's passion has the effect of making this satisfaction super-abundant, even for the sins of mankind! (Part 3. Q. 48). Again, considered as a sacrifice, it not only fulfils the ideal intention of honouring God, but as motived by love to God and man, it was especially acceptable to God.

In all this, we have the Anselmic conception of an objective Atonement, although very considerably modified and given richer content. It is purely ethical qualities that give value to the sufferings, as to the whole life of Christ, in the estimation of God. No doubt, quantitative language remains; but it is the language of the moral world all the time. Moreover, Aquinas does not leave the work of Christ an external "opus operatum" but develops the conception of the union of Christ with the Church, forming one mystical Person, so that all that Christ does and secures, belongs to all the members and is valid for them. This communion between Christ and the faithful is not an abstract thought, but is actually secured by a living faith on their part/

part, working through love, and conforming them morally to His likeness. (Q. 49) This is how salvation becomes operative both as a possession and as an ideal for each member.

Thomas' emphasis on this Pauline idea had a permanent influence on doctrine; and the faith that forms and sustains the union between the believer and Christ is a much more adequate account of the believer's experience than the thin Abelardian explanation that the sole instrument in salvation is the appeal of love, as manifested in the life and death of Christ. Conscience must find peace. Men conscious of transgression and unworthiness must be able to gain confidence that a career of righteous endeavour and victory over evil is possible to them, and that a power not themselves, is available for them. These interests are secured by the "unio mystica" which Christ Himself emphasises as essential to the spiritual life and fruitfulness of His disciples. Aquinas gave it the importance which belongs to it, though possibly, his interpretation of its mode of efficacy may be open to criticism.

In thus summing up the thought of the Church, Thomas represents the work of Christ in its objective and subjective aspects, even although at times it seems to be rather obscurely mixed up with the believers own efforts, as/

as though it only supplemented them. But, on the whole, it is clearly enough shown as satisfying God on the one hand, and producing saving effects in men on the other. If a becoming modesty hesitates to affirm that God's infinite resources could not have found another way of salvation for mankind, a not less becoming appreciation emphasises the suitability of the method actually adopted to secure the end desired. There is a great difference between this way of speaking and that of Duns Scotus and his following, who declared that not only was the Incarnation not in any sense due to the sin of man, but also that it is entirely of the good pleasure of God that Christ's work avails on behalf of sinners, and not on account of any merits it possesses to make it acceptable. God chose to accept it; that is all that we are entitled to say. But such a drastic simplification of doctrine, and such seeming reverence, if they appear to disembarrass the love of God, make it at last worthless. If God could have held anything as satisfying the conditions of forgiveness, He might as well have forgiven without any conditions at all. The Scotists thus evacuate the work of Christ of all rational importance. It cannot even be said, on their grounds, that there was any need for it. Aquinas, on the other hand, shows the suitability and the moral effectiveness of the way God actually chose without which men cannot be saved/

saved. Moreover, although the satisfaction made by Christ appears to effect a change in God's attitude to sinners, it is nevertheless generally maintained that this means of reconciliation proceeds from God's love; and if works of merit were required of all Christians, and satisfactions were required as proofs of contrition from those who were under discipline, there is no doubt that generally, Christ's work on behalf of all was regarded as indispensable, and having a Godward bearing as well as moral and spiritual effects on men. In practice however, this importance came to be obscured and even lost in the Sacraments, through which alone Divine grace was supposed to be infused in the participants. The mystical union itself came to mean less a fellowship of thought and purpose between Christ and His Church maintained by faith, than a physical community maintained by the Sacraments. A great intellect like Aquinas could expound this scheme in rational terms, and lesser men could dexterously defend it; but the rank and file could traffic in salvation as though it were a commodity in the market.

THE REFORMATION DOCTRINE.

The Reformation began as a reaction against the gross abuses connected with the sale of Indulgences. At first, Luther/

Luther did not aim at any serious re-construction of the Church's doctrine, but at the reform of abuses in the Church's practice. Soon, however, he was obliged to give a fresh formulation to certain elements in the Church's doctrine; and the effect was profound and far-reaching. In particular, the traditional conception of the satisfaction which Christ had made on behalf of men, which underlay, but for multitudes was lost in, the Sacraments, took a new shape at the hands of the Reformer. It is no longer to the injured honour, but to the inviolable justice, of God, that satisfaction is conceived to have been made. Himself a religious genius, who had proved the futility of all efforts to perform good works, such as would please even himself, let alone God; realising both with Augustine and with Anselm the exceeding corruption and gravity of sin; and finally, finding peace and a new life through simple faith in Christ, Luther proceeded to affirm the doctrine of justification by faith, and to denounce all laborious efforts at meritorious works. There can hardly be any doubt that a new conviction of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the severity of God's wrath against it, and man's helplessness and depravity had arisen, and was represented in Luther and the Reformers. Sin is no longer a matter of dishonouring or failing to honour God, as in Anselm; but rather the gravest offence to His eternal righteousness - so grave indeed, that its condign punishment/

punishment is inescapable, even as its corruption, destroying all moral health in man, makes the idea of all works of merit impossible. Hence, if in the mercy of God, sinners are spared the doom of eternal death, and are justified by faith, their justification is not gratuitous, but entirely dependent on the complete satisfaction which Christ made to the Divine justice on their behalf. This satisfaction consisted in His bearing, especially in death, the full onset of the wrath of God in a punishment equivalent to their sins. The Law of God demanded the death of every sinner. Christ, taking the place of men, pays the penalty of death for them, and so frees them from that grim obligation, since penalty cannot justly be exacted twice. "When the merciful Father saw that we were oppressed by the Law, and were held under the curse, and that nothing could free us from it, He sent His Son into the world, and cast upon Him all the sins of all men, and said to Him; Be Thou Peter, that denier; Paul, that persecutor, blasphemer, and violent; David, that adulterer; that sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; that robber upon the Cross; in a word, be Thou the person of all men who hast wrought the sins of all men. ConsiderThou therefore, how Thou mayest pay and make satisfaction for them. Then cometh the Law and saith - I find that sinner taking upon Him the sin of all men, and I see no sin beside save in Him/

Him; therefore, let Him die on the Cross. Thus, it attacks Him and slays Him. This being done, the whole world is purged of all sin, and expiation is made. Therefore, also, it is free from death and from all ills." (Luther: Comm. on Gal: 3:13) Here, one is clearly in the region of legal myth. Once such a view can be taken, it follows however repulsively, that Christ was of all men "the greatest robber, murderer, adulterer, thief, profaner, blasphemer.....in that He took upon His own body the things committed by us, to make satisfaction for them with His own blood." Apart from the grotesque violence of this conception, and the moral chiaroscuro it creates, the impression it gives is that Christ won salvation from a God, whose wrath would otherwise have destroyed all, an impression that remains in spite of the fact that Luther and the rest of the Reformers represent salvation as proceeding from the grace of God.

The way in which this substitution becomes valid and saving for men is through their faith in it; that is, their steadfast assurance that since God's justice has thus been satisfied, God's mercy operates unhindered, freely forgiving their sins. This faith is imputed to them by God for righteousness. (Aug. Conf. Art. 4)

It must be said that this justifying faith of the Reformers appears a very bare, intellectual instrument, with/

with neither passion nor vision in it - a mere acceptance of a certain legal status. This is due in part to the scholastic formalism which they continued to use in their discussions, but more to their determination to put an end to the misleading emphases and uncertainties, inherent in the Catholic view, in which human works of merit had come to form an integral and a really preponderating part in salvation. This interest is obvious in every credal statement of that period. The Augsburg Confession, for example, says - "Men cannot be justified before God by their own powers, merits, or works, but are justified freely for Christ's sake through faith, when they believe that they are received into favour and their sin forgiven for Christ's sake, who by His death has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness before Him." Although Luther and Calvin treated the whole life of Christ as one course of obedience, a distinction came to be made later between His active and His passive obedience, the latter being the penalty of men's sins borne by Him in the Passion unto death, so that they are set free from it; while the former constitutes the righteousness which is imputed to them.

This point of a justifying sentence being passed upon sinners exercising faith in the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, appeared to the Reformers to be the central issue. It/

It is true that they supplemented it by the doctrine of sanctification, under which good works have their place, though they are not regarded for a moment as meritorious in the sense of winning anything from god or obliging Him: they are fruits of the Spirit. But before such fruits could appear, the verdict of justification on the sinner who believed on the basis of the Atonement made in the blood of Christ and His imputed righteousness, stood with absolute validity.

Another question that deeply affected the whole aspect of the Reformation doctrine was that of the extent of the Atonement, whether it availed for all men or only for the elect. The orthodox Reformers with their theory of Predestination, limited its scope to the latter; while the Lutherans and later, the Arminians, held that it applied universally, although it could only be said to take effect in the case of believers. Controversy on this difference proceeded for three hundred years, in the course of which the more logical view of a restricted Atonement has been forced to give way before a conception of God with which it is felt to be incompatible.

Underlying the theology of the Reformers, it is not difficult to find the dualistic conception of God as on the one hand an inexorably stern judge, determined to punish transgression/

transgression; and on the other a gracious Being, in whom love is fundamental. Both Luther and Calvin insist that the scheme of salvation which they describe, arises out of the pure, unmerited grace of God. They seem to be unaware of the formidable difficulties to the acceptance of such a view, which their penal theory, and their doctrine of Predestination present. Gradually, however, the implications of their theory become manifest, both to their opponents and to their disciples. With the latter, the judicial aspect of the Divine nature gained complete ascendancy in their thought, until in the American school of Edwards, Hodge, and Shedd, the judge who must punish takes precedence of the Father who desires to save. Shedd even declares that justice is an essential attribute of God whereas benevolence is voluntary; wrath is the necessary antagonism of God to moral evil, whereas mercy is gratuitous. Hence, God must punish; and although He wishes to be gracious, He can only be so after the requirements of justice have been fulfilled through the penalties endured by Christ. (Dogmatic Theol. 37 ff).

The Reformers secured a priceless treasure for the spiritual future of the race, in disengaging the interest and attention of men from secondary to primary matters, from futile works of merit to the only Saviour of the world, and from bewildering and laborious processes to the direct and simple access of faith. They brought the soul once again

into/

into direct relation to Christ, and showed His sufficiency for salvation in the three offices of prophet, priest, and king; which is the strongest, the simplest, and the most comprehensive formulation of the doctrine of salvation that the Church has as yet produced. At the same time, it is clear that in their enthusiasm and with the perplexities of an unprecedented situation forcing them hastily to find new formulae, they sometimes gave an expression to their conceptions that was bound to rouse the spirit of criticism and even hostility, while their views on predestination and the nature of the Atonement could not possibly stand without drastic modifications, if they should stand at all.

THE SOCINIAN AND GROTIAN VIEWS.

Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) ranks higher even than Abelard as a destructive critic of the current theory of the Atonement. Taking the ground that there is in God no inherent conflict between justice and mercy, these being equally operations of His sovereign will, Socinus as a Scotist, denies that God is bound by any necessity to punish sin. If He were, pardon would forever be impossible. God is free to punish or forgive, as it pleaseth Him, as indeed He had been doing throughout the ages. But it is not possible to imagine that He can do both at once; for punishment/

punishment excludes forgiveness, and forgiveness excludes punishment. To conceive of the Atonement as a penal satisfaction to justice is therefore to destroy its meaning as a symbol of forgiveness. Again, the analogy of paying a debt for others is inapplicable here; for debt is an external matter which another may liquidate, whereas sin is a personal and inalienable matter which if it must be punished, can properly be punished only in the person of the guilty. In any case, the death of Christ cannot be proved to have had the same penal value as the eternal death of all mankind would have; so that on its own strict grounds of justice, the penal theory fails. Socinus consequently rejects the notion of satisfaction as a mistaken invention of Mediaeval theology. God did not require it; and if He did, Christ could not have made it, since His action had the character of duty; and in His sufferings, the divinity was not involved, inasmuch as God is impassible. He suffered as man only. But if it were conceivable that He could have suffered in His deity, who can accept the idea of God satisfying Himself through Himself? Further, an imputed righteousness is an absurdity which can only have been introduced to meet the demand for holiness of life, which the Reformers' one all-sufficient doctrine of justification by faith did not meet.

His/

His positive doctrine, which is set forth in his "Themata" amounts to little more than this - that Christ in His prophetic office reveals the will and the promises of God for our salvation, and seals them with His blood; assures us by His resurrection of God's care of those who trust Him; and by His royal power and intercession on high, maintains our cause before God, and preserves us from evil. Faith is required of all; but what it means is obedience to the Divine will as revealed by Christ. God naturally approves such an attitude. That approval is the only justification that can exist. As to the putting away of sin, this is secured by Christ through His proclamation of the Divine forgiveness and by His own holy example and suffering that bring men to repentance, and give them moral inspiration to righteous living.

The most serious defect of Socinus is his failure to realise with Anselm the gravity, with Augustine the corruption, and with morally awakened men everywhere, the guilt and the bondage of sin. Probably he had not had the kind of experience which fully reveals the problem, the divine solution of which is the Atonement. In his view there is really no atonement; God being perfectly free to punish or pardon, it is not needed. The blood of Christ simply ratifies the Divine forgiveness, and all the promises Christ made in God's name. In spite however, of the arbitrariness of/

of the Divine will on which Socinus takes his stand, and the shallow if brilliant rationalism by which he evacuates the work of Christ of most of the meaning that had usually attached to it, his intervention in the great debate had valuable and far-reaching consequences. He had an extraordinarily keen faculty for discerning untenable positions and indefensible constructions of thought. In particular, the criticisms that a conflict in God between the attributes of justice and mercy is incredible; that judicial penalty and forgiveness are mutually exclusive; that moral debt cannot be vicariously cancelled; that equivalence cannot be established between Christ's punishment and that which mankind deserved, according to theory, are irresistible. It is true that the Penal theory did not collapse at once; but it is also certain that the criticism of Socinus was immediately felt to be formidable, and eventually, it discredited the view of God's relation to mankind, on which the Reformation theology was based.

The first important reply to Socinus came from Hugo Grotius, an eminent Dutch jurist and politician. Although taking the position of Defender of the Faith against the Socinian onslaught, Grotius really plays the part of a reconciler seeking a compromise. The effectiveness of the Socinian criticism is seen in the new conception of the Divine justice on which Grotius founds his defence. His position/

position is that God as Moral Governor of the world is not bound, like an earthly judge, to administer the law with strict legality, whatever the consequences, but rather to administer it in such a way as will most conduce to the well-being of the subjects. "The true function of punishing does not exist for the sake of him that punishes, but for the sake of some community; for all punishment has for its end the common good, to preserve order, and warn by example." (Def. Fid. 2) Applying this principle, Grotius holds that the ends of God's rectoral government can be secured if a sufficiently impressive demonstration is given that He regards sin with displeasure and abhorrence, without inflicting punishment on all who deserve it. This demonstration is given in the death of Christ which is a vicarious punishment or penal example, in which the message of forgiveness is offered in a form that displays God's judgment on sin. There is no equivalence intended between the sufferings of Christ, and those deserved by mankind. The Law is really relaxed, being satisfied by the deterrent effect that this display of severity would exercise; while the grace of God, in accepting this display as sufficient, is cleared of the charge that having been fully paid for, it is no grace.

Unquestionably, Grotius rendered a valuable service to theology in helping to mitigate the dismal tyranny of legalism/

legalism, under which it was striving to set forth the Gospel. The substitution of a rectoral justice, seeking the welfare of mankind even in its punishments, for an abstract justice implacably seeking punishment for its own satisfaction, is a notable advance in ethical conception. Moreover, the denial of equivalence between the penal experiences of Christ and those deserved by the race, or by the elect, helped to deliver Christian thought from one of its most indefensible and unintelligible myths.

On the other hand the Grotian view in spite of its advantages over the Calvinistic, deals like the latter, with abstractions, and places, the death of Christ, not in its historical setting, nor in any organic relation with the purpose of his life, but as one might say, in the air. It is true that no one can seriously contemplate the Cross of Christ without seeing there what human sin intends and can perpetrate, and recognise something of its awfulness in the sight of God. But to see it thus judged is one thing; to see in it a penalty inflicted on Christ by God, to show what sin deserves, and so to deter men from it, is an entirely different matter. We are still in the region of Law, but such Law as men would be ashamed to administer, at least in a civilised community. If the death of Christ is to be given a specific meaning and importance in isolation from his life, and if as so isolated, it is intended to give a display of rectoral righteousness, nothing

could/

could be so confusing and embarrassing as the innocence of Christ. What kind of righteousness, private or governmental, can be displayed by the punishment of the one blameless person among the children of men? To start putting the world right by the infliction of a wrong, is not a method that can justify itself to the conscience or commend the ways of God to men, or honour law, or even suggest righteousness. The category which Grotius no less than Calvin uses, for the interpretation of Christ's death, is that of law; and it fails in the one case as in the other, although Grotius took a long step towards the light.

Later the Arminians modified the Grotian view to the extent that they treat the death of Christ, as a propitiation rather than a penal example, providing an honourable ground on which God can forgive without seeming to condone sin. It is treated, not as the motive but as the medium of the divine forgiveness; a medium which by its nature safeguards the claims of morality, and the public law of the Universe. It is not a penal death, yet it answers the ends of punishment. No doubt, there is an important truth in this view; yet the embarrassment remains that the primacy of Law in the minds of the writers leads them to interpret the supreme act of Redemption as having its first reference to Law, yet a reference that can only show that act as an expedient that does/

does not really satisfy the Law.

Among modern writers, Dr. Dale and Dr. Denney were the most influential exponents of this modification of the rectoral theory. The former, holding that the Divine Being in whom righteousness is alive, must either punish transgression or otherwise assert the principle that transgression deserves suffering and death, considers that the death of Christ is an act in which the ill desert of sin is set forth with as much intensity and energy as though the full penalty of transgression fell on each sinner. (The Atonement. 391ff) This is done by the voluntary acceptance of suffering by Christ, instead of its exaction from men. Leaving the glories of heaven, descending into the lowliest human conditions, and finally, after experiencing the last cruelties and indignities at the hands of men, He experienced that overwhelming desolation which is inconceivable unless it be that which the Sufferer declares it is - spiritual solitude, due to the actual withdrawal from Him of the Divine presence; that is, the tasting of death in all its horror, as the penalty of sin. This intense suffering Dale considers both to exhibit and to meet the inexorable claims of eternal righteousness, even more impressively than the infliction of penalties on all sinners would have done; and also provides the essential, objective ground of the forgiveness of sins. On this view, Christ came into the world to die for men, that they might be forgiven; and His death, as voluntary expiation, has at

least/

least equal value for the interests of eternal righteousness, to that which the infliction of the final penalty on all transgressors would have had.

Dale's argument is formidable, being fortified by a very skilful use of the relevant passages of the Scriptures. But it proceeds on a conception of abstract and inexorable righteousness, implacably demanding punishment for every transgression, which is in flat contradiction both with experience, and with the teaching of Christ himself. The whole structure, so "compactly built together", depends on the soundness of its foundation; and that is essentially unsound. The whole argument is vitiated by its premisses. If the teaching and example of Christ himself must ever be regulative for all our thinking with reference to forgiveness, Dale's presentation must simply be ruled out of court. Moreover, on Dale's own ground, it can hardly be shown how a righteousness which he is careful to prove to be as binding on God as on men, and which inexorably demands penalty for every transgression, can be satisfied with something so different from penalty as the voluntary suffering of an innocent person, even the most august person that ever appeared in the world. These are incompatibles that arise from essentially different conceptions of God.

Denney's/

Denney's works on the subject (The Death of Christ, Jesus and the Gospel, the Christian doctrine of Reconciliation, The Atonement and the Modern Mind) put the Grotian position in a way all his own. The sublime law of righteousness which governs Dale's argument, is represented by Denney in the more real form of personal, universal, moral relations between God and man. When men violate these relations, they experience a reaction against them, a reaction which they recognise arises out of the very nature of the Universe. The constitution of all things is moral. Man inevitably lives under that constitution; and when death overtakes him unreconciled with God, and a violator of that order which God has given to the Universe, its meaning is a sentence of repudiation upon him. Death is thus a judgment, expressive of the Divine reaction against sin.

In such circumstances, while God freely forgives, He must do so in such a way that the sanctity of the moral order is upheld. Forgiveness is free; but it is mediated through Christ in whose life and death the Divine order and constitution of all things are signally honoured. The Atonement is concerned not with the question of procuring forgiveness, but of providing it on moral terms; not with its freeness, but with its cost. With regard to St. Paul, the maintenance of this moral constitution of the Universe was the very signature of the forgiveness which he preached. "The

Atonement/

Atonement meant to him that forgiveness was mediated through One in whose life and death, the most signal homage was paid to this law. The very glory of the Atonement was that it manifested the righteousness of God; it demonstrated God's consistency with His own character which would have been violated alike by indifference to sinners, and indifference to that universal moral order - that law of God - in which alone eternal life is possible."
(Atonement and the Modern Mind. 51)

This extraordinary transformation of the penal-governmental theory succeeds in eliminating its most repellent features. It seems to be founded on sound exegesis of the Scripture passages involved. Without doubt also, there is that in the death of Christ which makes it manifest to all who intelligently regard it, that the sin which God forgives is a terrible reality to Him, deserving and receiving its final condemnation in the very act that attests the Divine forgiveness. It is unquestionable that the cost of forgiveness as well as its proof is represented in the blood of Christ. Nevertheless, Denney's interpretation, though Biblical, philosophical, and ethical at once, labours under the serious disability that it does not appear to arise naturally out of Christ's doctrine of God; nor is it readily suggested by anything that He says on the subject of forgiveness/

forgiveness. It must be said that if there is no suggestion in Christ's own description of the purpose of His life, that He came to avert the punitive wrath of God from a guilty race, neither is there even a hint that the specific end of His death was to declare that while God forgives, He can only do so in conformity with the moral constitution of the Universe. All that may be true; it may be a perfectly justifiable inference from the nature of the event; but the point is - whether the demonstration of this Divine necessity was the constraining reason that led Jesus to the Cross. If it was, one can only marvel that it is so effectually concealed in the records that give us Christ's conception of His mission in the world. It is hardly credible that He who was so anxious to reveal the truth by which men are to be saved, should have been at pains to conceal the primary meaning of His appearance in the world in connection with their salvation.

VIEWS PREVAILING IN THE PRESENT DAY.

The multiplicity of views prevailing at present, views that seldom conflict in their main principles, and are distinguishable chiefly by their emphases rather than by their cleavages, makes classification difficult. The Roman Catholic position, as defined by the Council of Trent, generally maintains the Mediaeval doctrine, and provides the/

the chief exception, not indeed on account of its central idea of Sacrifice, but because of the complex and confusing context of thought and worship which surrounds it. In Protestant thought, on the other hand, there has been a very marked development, due partly to a humaner view of God, partly to impatience with the imposition of non-Christian pre-suppositions and conceptions on Christian theology, and partly to the intense interest taken in the historic Christ, and the determination to find the final interpretation of His work in His own doctrine, and in relation to His declared end in life. Certain outstanding writers have been especially influential in producing and illustrating this tendency, namely, Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl in Germany, Horace Bushnell in America, and MacLeod Campbell in Scotland; while in more recent years, a large number of able theologians, such as Maurice, Moberly, Scott Lidgett, Hitchcock, Stevens, Sabatier, Tymms, MacDowall, Rashdall, Gore, Dick Fleming, have carried on the discussion. The aim of most of these writers is to free the doctrine of the Atonement from the nomistic form under which it has so long been expressed; to show its connection with the whole life and teaching of Christ; and to insist upon its ethical significance.

Schleiermacher (Der Christliche Glaube. Vol. II. 1) fundamentally/

fundamentally alters the approach to the subject. He abandons the formal region in which Protestant Scholastics had wrought out a new legalism, and holds that men are really redeemed, not by a sentence of acquittal being passed on them, on the ground that Christ has paid the penalty due from them, but by Christ's producing in them the consciousness of fellowship with God, akin to His own "God-consciousness." In order to be able to do this, Christ had to enter the fellowship of sinful humanity, which inevitably entailed suffering upon Him. His sympathy with the race, and His profound apprehension of human guilt and ill desert, reached their climax in His submission to death for their sake. In these sufferings, the goodness and holiness of Christ are manifested. As men contemplate them, they are convicted of sin; and as they are assimilated in spirit to Christ, they are liberated from the power of sin, and come to possess the filial spirit towards God. This is redemption.

It is clear that with whatever defects, this view is in close touch with the realities of Christ's own life, and with ordinary Christian experience. But there is one important particular in which, as Nitszch and Rothe pointed out, Schleiermacher neither met the need, nor explained the frequent experience of men, in that he failed to show how on his terms, a sinner, conscious of a sentence of doom/

doom resting upon him, can pass out from such a sentence into the liberty of a forgiven soul. The Penal theory, however objectionable on certain grounds, was strongest at this very point of real difficulty and importance; for it offered a forgiveness already purchased.

Albrecht Ritschl (1822-89) powerfully developed the line of thought opened by Schleiermacher. His great work on "The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation" has exercised a profound influence on subsequent theology. Possessed of great learning, Ritschl subjected the various theories to a searching criticism, and denied that there is a wrath of God to be propitiated before forgiveness can take effect. Those who are to be saved must owe their salvation to the Divine love. Wrath may apply in the case of those who reject all overtures of grace and persist in sin; in which case, propitiation is not required. The righteousness ascribed to God in the Old and New Testaments has been misunderstood; it is not that of an inexorable judge, but the self-consistent activity of God on behalf of the salvation of His chosen community, and is identical with His grace. Ritschl, further, takes advantage of the results of contemporary investigations into the nature and meaning of the sacrificial system of the Jews, and holds that that system presupposed a community already in a covenant of grace/

grace with God; so that the particular sacrifices could only define certain conditions which the people must fulfil in order to enjoy the Divine presence. The sacrifice was not a penal act executed on a substituted victim; nor did priestly mediation exclude the people; rather, it represented them before God.

The meaning of Atonement is to put an end to the sense of separation between God and men due to sin, of which guilt is the index; and the bringing of them into filial fellowship with God, which is eternal life. This was the one object to which Christ's life was devoted, and for the realisation of which He was uniquely endowed. Possessing an unexampled knowledge of God, enjoying an unbroken fellowship with God as His Father, and exercising the redeeming power of God, He was qualified, and He laboured, to introduce the disciples into a similar relationship to, and a similar experience of, God. Once introduced, these form a community of people possessing the filial spirit, and are the nucleus of the kingdom of God, or the Church. All the work of Christ, treated by Ritschl under the orthodox Protestant categories or offices of prophet, priest and king, is set forth as relative to the establishment of this divine kingdom, and not to any pre-conditions of forgiveness. Further, Ritschl insisted that while all that Christ was and/

and accomplished ministered to the salvation of mankind, nevertheless, it was for Himself a personal self-end. That is to say, that Christ saw His vocation, as founder of the kingdom of God, under the form of duty. Thus, merit is excluded in its theological sense, along with the conception of works of supererogation on which it is based. If we use the term "merit" - as we may - to signalise the unique value which Christ's work possesses for all, we must not forget that that work was for Christ himself an ethical vocation. His sufferings, therefore, are incidental to this vocation, and are not to be understood in any other connection; presumably not in such a connection as that of a Law demanding satisfaction, or Moral Realm requiring regulation.

It is alone through membership in this community of the filial spirit, and not as solitary individuals, that men experience the saving, reconciling effects which proceed from Christ. Justification is the religious description of the acceptance of sinners into this fellowship; reconciliation, that of their experience when acceptance of God's saving purpose displaces their former distrust and antagonism. Inasmuch as the love of God must be behind all saving action, no satisfaction is required. The divine wrath could not conceivably apply to those whom God foresaw as members of His kingdom. Besides, a guiltless/

guiltless person could not regard his sufferings as penal; nor does it appear from the records that Christ so regarded His sufferings; but rather it appears that they are the sufferings of One who was entirely loyal to His vocation; and they are so described by Himself. His death is the crowning of a life of perfect sonship, in that He accepted it when it became clear to Him that it was necessary for the institution of the kingdom.

The importance of Ritschl's view can hardly be over-estimated. Not only does he take his stand upon the Scriptures, but he brings the whole activity of Christ, including the Passion, into an intelligible sphere in which religion and ethics interpenetrate and support each other. The salvation which Christ achieved for the race is shown by him to have been no formal plan, nor drama of reconciliation enacted in a region of thought which men can scarcely appreciate; but the ethical attainment of One who, in virtue of His knowledge of God, and the insistent sense of a mission arising out of this knowledge, to found God's kingdom in the world, proceeded with His task in spite of all opposition, until it was accomplished.

This ethical realism of Ritschl is of the highest importance. There is much that is obscure, and not a little that is defective in his presentation. Especially defective/

defective is his description of the appropriation by the believer of the benefits which Christ makes available. He seems to deny any contact between Christ and the individual soul, except through the fellowship of the Church. No doubt, it is through the mediation of the Church that the knowledge and the power of Christ are related to men and maintained among them; but Ritschl must mean more than the obvious by his insistence that membership of the community is the one means of salvation. He really excludes that mystic fellowship between the soul and Christ, in which multitudes have found their most enriching experiences, and which is the nerve of their liveliest religious feelings. One can only wonder that a thinker who is ever anxious to keep religion to its own proper sphere should also deprive it of its most vital connection - that of the individual with Him in whom his life is rooted.

But in spite of all defects, Ritschl has rendered high service to theology by his insistence on the ethical nature of the whole work of Christ on behalf of the race, and its inherent unity and consistency from beginning to end. With whatever modifications, it is on this basis alone that any credible construction of the meaning of His death can be erected.

MACLEOD CAMPBELL'S THEORY.

The

The same ethical interest governs the famous treatment of the Atonement by MacLeod Campbell, who, though impressed by the logical consistency of Protestant orthodoxy, revolted from its harshness, and particularly from its obscuration of the Divine Love, through its penal theory of Christ's death. Owing much to Erskine of Linlathen, and possibly owing the suggestion of the basal conception of his treatise to some phrases of Jonathan Edwards (of all men) Campbell made a weighty contribution towards a worthier doctrine. (The Nature of the Atonement) His approach to the subject is indicated in the following sentences - "An Atonement to make God gracious, to move Him to compassion, to turn His heart toward those from whom sin had alienated His love, it would indeed be difficult to believe in; for if it were needed, it would be impossible....The Scriptures do not speak of such an Atonement; for they do not represent the love of God to man as the effect, and the Atonement of Christ as the cause, but just the contrary - they represent the love of God as the cause, and the Atonement as the effect." "The first demand which the Gospel makes upon us in relation to the Atonement is to believe that there is forgiveness with God. This we must be able to believe to be in God toward us, in order that we may be able to believe in the Atonement...If God provides the Atonement, then forgiveness must precede Atonement; and the Atonement must be the form of/

of the manifestation of the forgiving love of God, not its cause." (pp 18-20)

Having thus put first things first, Campbell enunciates a second principle of interpretation, namely, that the Atonement must be understood, not on a priori grounds, nor from the earlier phases of religion, nor from the typical sacrifices of the old dispensation, but by its own light, as the Divine method of carrying out the Divine Will to save us from our evil condition, and to bring us to a condition of well-being and blessedness. Accordingly, Campbell fixes on Christ's fulfilment of the redemptive will of God as the essential key to the right understanding of all. Partaking of humanity, the eternal Son is in relation to God and man at once - a relation of love to both. It is out of this two-fold relationship, and its requirements that the work of Christ proceeds, and can be understood. The manward aspect of His work consisted in revealing God as the Father, and His attitude towards His unworthy children. Faithfulness in this service entailed suffering on Christ because of the sinful condition of men, and their hostility. It was owing to His perfect sympathy with God and with man that Christ's sufferings were what they were, and not because of any penalty inflicted upon Him to satisfy Justice. These sufferings are "the expression of the Divine mind regarding our sins, and a manifestation by the Son of what our sins are/

are to the Father's heart." In other words, they were due to the reaction of a holy, loving spirit to the sin and sorrow of men. On the other hand, Christ recognised the righteous wrath of God against sin, and was at one with God in His judgment of it. But the condemnation of sin which He uttered would take the form of a perfect confession of our sins, when He was dealing with God on our behalf - "a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man." This vicarious penitence Campbell holds to be the essence of the Atonement. It involved death for Christ; for death is the final expression of God's judgment on sin; and a perfect Amen to that judgment could not fall short of the experience of death. But not less ethical must be our appropriation of salvation. If we are to be justified by faith, it is only when our faith is "the Amen of our individual spirits to that deep, multiform, all-embracing, harmonious Amen of humanity in the person of the Son of God to the mind and heart of the Father, in relation to man - the Divine wrath and the Divine mercy, which is the Atonement." (225) Thus, Christ becomes a quickening spirit to believers, imparting to them the same attitude to God's love and holiness, which was realised in His own sacrifice. This is real salvation and eternal life.

A good deal of criticism has been directed on Campbell's central/

central conception of a vicarious penitence, partly on the supposition that penitence cannot be vicarious, partly on the ground that if it could be, it is as objectionable from an ethical standpoint, as vicarious penalty. Nevertheless, it is impossible to feel that Campbell is anywhere far from the very heart of the truth. He seeks above all to do justice to the spirit of Christ in its travail for men, and in its loving loyalty to God through the whole course of His ministry. If in any sense whatever, Christ bore the sins of men and died for them, the idea of vicariousness cannot be ruled out, although it needs to be supplemented; as it is in Campbell's doctrine, by the faith of men, and the consequent reproduction in them of the mind of Christ. If His sympathy was such that it is said of Him that "Himself bore our sicknesses, and carried our sorrows" it is not too clear why penitence for our sins should not form an element in it, and even be its most constituent element. At all events, it is in this region of Christ's self-identification with the will of God and the responsibilities and condition of men, involving Him in all the labours and sorrows of His task, that there is any hope of understanding His work on behalf of the race.

BUSHNELL'S VIEW.

Horace Bushnell has the honour of giving what is perhaps the/

the most impressive, as it is certainly the most eloquent, interpretation of the redemptive work of Christ to be found in the English language. Especially in his "Vicarious Sacrifice" he expounds that work as proceeding wholly from the Divine love, which by its nature, is sacrificial and vicarious, as the love of a mother, missionary, or any ministering moral being illustrates. "The true and simple account of His sufferings is that He had such a heart as would not suffer Him to be turned away from us; and that He suffered for us, even as love must willingly suffer for its enemy...He scarcely minds how much He suffers or how, if only He can do love's work." Rejecting the idea that Christ came to satisfy any violated order of justice, or in the interests of rectoral government, Bushnell insists that Christ "yielded up Himself and His life even, to an effort of restoring mercy," that He bore our sins in just the same sense that He bore our sicknesses; and that once it is realised that love is an essentially vicarious principle, the rationale of Christ's life and sufferings is as clear as it is glorious.

The purpose of all is equally clear and glorious - the salvation of men from their sins. To effect this, what is needed is not a ground of justification, but a moral power that can proceed upon men, to regenerate, liberate, and sanctify them. Nothing more is required, nor is anything more/

more found in the Scriptures. "His work terminates, not in the release of penalties by due compensation, but in the transformation of character, and the rescue in that manner, of guilty men from the retributive causations provoked by their sins. He does not prepare the remission of sins by a mere letting go; but He executes the remission by taking away the sins, and dispensing the justification of life. This one word - Life - is the condensed import of all that He is, or purports to be" (Vic. Sac. 383) This unitary conception does not mean that the work of Christ has no bearing upon the interests of the eternal law and the Divine government. According to Bushnell, this ideal, eternal law is independent even of God, whose righteousness consists in being subject to, and bound by, it. His government, with its penalties for transgression, has for its end the enforcement and the reinforcement of this law, and the repair of its broken sway. Hence, legal enactments and deterrents have the same purpose as redeeming sacrifice; so that justice and mercy can have no opposing claims. Moreover, Christianity instead of abolishing, makes more serious still the aspect of the penalties due to sin both by its doctrine of future judgment and the deeper guilt of those who reject Christ, in comparison with the guilt of those who transgress an impersonal law. Bushnell has no difficulty in showing that only when the sacrifice of One in/

in whose holy heart the eternal law was ever honoured, does its moralising work in the hearts of men, can that obedience proposed both by law and government, be attained. That is the only way in which the work of Christ as vicarious, either satisfies law, or secures the ends of government. The idea of a penal satisfaction offered by Him for the race; or again, that of an example to deter men from sin, in the Grotian sense, is out of the question.

Bushnell experiences some difficulty in harmonising his view with certain sacrificial terms and ideas, such as expiation, propitiation, and atonement. Rejecting the substitutionary in favour of the lustral view, of the Old Testament sacrifices, he shows that the result agrees well with his conception of Christ's work. Expiation he considers to be purely a pagan idea, and rules it out. Atonement is doubtless, the reconciliation of God to the offender; but this is an accommodation to the point of view natural to the sinner. Similarly, propitiation "is an objective conception by which that change taking place in us, is spoken of as occurring representatively in God;" a psychological process familiar to all in many other connections.

Justification also is no formal discharge due to the imputation to men of Christ's righteousness, but the actual investment/

investment of the soul by the divine righteousness, in consequence of its restoration by the moral power of Christ, to its right and normal relation to God.

Of all writers on this great subject, Bushnell presents the most consistent and the most comprehensive view. No serious interest is ignored; and all is brought clearly within the region of ethical reality. His explanation of certain Scripture passages as objectifications of mental states has been adversely criticised; but some such explanations are inevitable on any theory. The Bible is not a book of scientific formulae. It uses popular language; and if it speaks readily of sunrise and sunset, it may also ascribe to God changes that really happen in the worshipper. In any case, Bushnell's explanations accord well both with common psychological processes, and with moral and religious reality.

Chapter III.

-:- CONCERNING -:-

-:- SIN AND THE MORAL ORDER OF THE WORLD. -:-

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It is an imperative demand in the nature of man that he always act in accordance with his sense of right or duty. No element in his nature is more fundamental and constitutive than conscience. It is as a moral being that he exists; and it is in the service of ideals that he reaches his supreme glory. He takes for granted that the world is constituted to support his moral existence no less than his physical. To speak the truth, act fairly, fulfil his covenants are indefeasible ends of his being which he instinctively believes the system in which he is placed is designed to enable him to fulfil. Nay more, it is part of that same intuitive conviction that falsehood, injustice and treachery on his part will not escape punishment; the nature of things reacts against those who violate its purpose. Attempts have been made to account for this characteristic of human nature by the motives of fear and self-interest; but they break down completely before the fact that conscience deals not less imperatively with past misdeeds than with contemplated courses of transgression. It is as easy or as difficult to account for the moral as for the purely intellectual or aesthetic qualities of man; they have all had some development; but also they are original data in the entity of/

of man's nature. Here as elsewhere, evolution pre-supposes something that can evolve; and the nature of that which is at the beginning is only truly known in that which it finally becomes.

The central conception in conscience is the idea of justice. It seems to be as much a form of the mind as time or space. To that extent at least, the intuitive school of ethics can appeal for complete vindication to the surest tribunal - the verifiable history of the race. In the earliest period of which we have any trustworthy evidence, we find man's action governed by the sense of justice, however rudimentory. The "lex talionis" is its crudest form. Doubtless, the range within which the principle operated was often circumscribed enough, sometimes not beyond the blood-community to which one belonged. Moreover, when the social unit was not the individual but the family, or the tribe, justice was long satisfied by exacting its dues from the offending unit, without narrow regard to individuals. These might be personally innocent; yet they were liable to punishment for the misdeeds of some of their people, as also they shared in their success and prestige. It is difficult to believe that the spirit of justice was ever content with this rough and ready method of expressing itself, any more than it is content to-day with seeing whole peoples caused to suffer through/

through the evil schemes of those in power over them. The importance, rights, and interests of the individual must long have been felt, before open claim was made on their behalf. Every advance made in civilisation and religious conception brought them out more clearly still, while the sphere of morals steadily extended until it embraced the whole life, with its authority supreme over all. In ancient Israel especially, it was part of this general postulate of justice that happiness and prosperity should attend the righteous, while misery and confusion should overtake the wicked. The assumption was that the nature of the world in its totality is such that it suitably approves, sustains, and rewards moral action; and equally disapproves and punishes immoral action. Although in polytheistic religions, superstition tends to confound the moral judgment, it does not appear in any nation to have displaced this regulative conception of a moral universe, in which a man ought to receive from the Gods according to his deserts. When it appears, as it does, in Greek reflection, that this is not the case, and the immortal Gods are unjust, the woe and tragedy that ensue are overwhelming. Without faith in a moral order even if it can be maintained only with difficulty, the mind dwells in permanent shadow, and all its thought is weighted with the deadliest pessimism. In monotheistic Israel, where the righteous will of Jehovah was accepted as the moral order, and the world as its instrument, the Mosaic legislation/

legislation as well as the Prophetic teaching of later times, proceeds on the same basis of thought, repeatedly affirming that the obedient will be rewarded with prosperity, the disobedient with punishment. Indeed, so effective did this conception become that the corollary was readily if mistakenly drawn from it, that all suffering and misfortune are punishments of sin. The Book of Job is the refutation in Israel of this popular though unwarrantable view. In Greece, the idea of divine injustice is distressing and paralysing; in Israel, it is intolerable. It is true that neither in Job nor in the Psalms that are vexed over the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity of the righteous, is a proper solution of the problem reached; but in the former work, the suggestion is powerfully offered that God's ways and wisdom are great, and that life, including even its calamities, should be taken in a great spirit. The moral world, it is hinted, no less than the physical, may well have its sublimities, among which Job's sufferings are likely to find their explanation, and God's ways their vindication. Such suggestion would seem to be the intention in massing together the descriptions of impressive natural phenomena as we have towards the end of the Book, the contemplation of which leads Job to repent of his wild words against God. Anyhow, we end still within a moral universe; indeed, Job ends all too happily. The only result of the long and passionate discussion is to demonstrate that the moral order

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is neither so simple nor so superficial as it had seemed, that two and two do not always make four in it, and that shining prosperity is not necessarily the index of high character, nor disaster the index of obliquity. Nevertheless when at a later stage, dire calamity overtook the nation, the prophets invariably applied the old nâive formula, interpreting it as punishment due to wicked conduct. It was only when the conception of the suffering Servant arose - such as never dawned on the Greek mind - who suffers for sins not his own, that a profounder estimate of life than that assumed in the Law, and by the earlier prophets proceeds to interpret the mystery of suffering- a mystery which is still regarded as essentially moral in character, and to be understood only in connection with the highest ethical destiny of the people. It takes us deep down below the surface of life, where redemptive personality and suffering give, as it were, a new dimension to the moral order of the world, or require a new conception of it. The Servant would doubtless be among the first to affirm that order, believing that if there is no invariable equation between virtue and prosperity, the divine constitution of the universe is designed for righteous ends; and that if it does not openly and uniformly reward the righteous, it will in the end overthrow or disappoint the wicked. The Servant's own case is a voluntary sacrifice for transgressors, pouring out/

out his soul unto death for their sakes but in the end, dividing the spoil with the strong. If there were a permanent contradiction between the experience of men and their moral ideals, if the nature of things and the principles of society finally sustained evildoers, and disapproved of the good, it would be difficult, if indeed it remained possible, to believe that the God of Creation and of Providence is a serious moral Being. There can be no moral imperative except in moral conditions, and with the assurance that the underlying purpose of all things is moral and therefore a sure and unseen partner in all moral enterprise.

If we look for light on this complex subject to Christ who ever lived in a world of moral conviction and Who sustained moral action of the purest kind, what we see at first is not re-assuring, namely, that on account of His superior goodness and the ignorance of men, He suffered repudiation and death at their hands. Here it would seem that the moral order refused to support its noblest son, and that God had forsaken Him. That, however, was but for a moment and before His life and teaching could make their appeal to the world on their own merits, undistorted by the prejudices and passions of the day. Soon after the worst had been accomplished that men could do, the Gospel went forth into the world, confident that its message alone could meet the moral necessities of mankind; that it was profoundly congruous with/

with the nature of man and the obligations of life; and that Christ is and deserves eternally to be, the Lord of the race. Ever since, humanity has been learning, and latterly through bitter experience and appalling catastrophe, that this Lordship is not a sentimental term, but an authority that must become increasingly effective in the affairs of the world; that civilisation itself may perish through lack of moral power and unity, which in turn is due to failure or refusal to Christianise public ethics and politics. The only salvation for the higher life of the world is now seen to be the incorporation of the spirit of Christ into its great councils, and the resolute application of it to the solution of social questions and international problems; all which is clear proof that not only is there a moral order of the world, but also that defiance or neglect of it is fatal, whereas the future fortune of the race will depend on the success with which it will give effect, socially and internationally, to the ethical principles of the Gospel. Moreover, Christ in spite of the unrighteous fate which was close upon Himself, never ceased to call men to the service of the kingdom of God, which if they only sought it first, would be accompanied with all necessary material comfort and gain. He declared that retribution would speedily overtake the nation for rejecting its day of visitation, and refusing to make use of its spiritual privilege. He

therefore recognised a world-wide moral order which however patient, does not fail to act, for Israel's case must be regarded as typical of all nations similarly behaving.

It appears that in a world so disordered with sin, supremely moral personalities are apt to cause such a disturbance of conventional standards and such temporary resentment as may prove fatal to themselves, though not to their gospel; that the lot of individuals seldom corresponds with their character; that indeed, the more conscientious a man becomes, the less likely is he to reach that external success in the world which often rewards less scrupulous men. The meek, the pure in heart, and such as hunger and thirst after righteousness and seek not the praise of men, notwithstanding all things are theirs, are likely to find themselves often handicapped, in comparison with those who have no spiritual interests that seriously embarrass self-seeking. On the other hand, to transgress fundamental laws, or to offend social convention is usually visited with penalty and loss; while the perpetration or toleration of great social wrong, such as exploiting or enslaving helpless races, reacts with terrible effect on the guilty, even though the judgment tarry, as in the case of the American slave-trade. The inference one draws from this condition of affairs is that moral laws are essential to and constitutive of Society; but that the social conscience is comparatively feeble/

feeble and sometimes helpless to give effect to its judgment, Hence, Society usually tolerates much that its enlightened conscience disapproves. Nevertheless, it is clear that Society is a moral entity that must ever grow in moral power commensurate with its knowledge, resources, and responsibilities, if it is to avoid disaster. Although public judgment and action must ever fall behind those of the more enlightened members of the community; though even a large and influential body within a community can thrive for a time with comparatively low standards of conduct, the fact remains that wherever moral ideal and inspiration fail, there Society begins to disintegrate, lose its influence with other peoples, and its opportunities for even temporal success, whereas the nation that acts on a high plane of ethical conduct, tends to establish itself in the world because it gains the respect of mankind. Right-doing is the surest shield of a people, wrong-doing their worst enemy. The world has reached the stage when an act of gross injustice done by the representatives of any State, immediately resounds and reacts throughout the nations and raises the menace of war. Thus, in the open life of mankind, we discern the presence of a universal moral order, ever supporting those who love righteousness and hate iniquity with the assurance that whatever their own fate, their cause is immortal and destined to final triumph; slow to wreak vengeance on the unworthy; never operating with the punctilious scales of formal justice; and sometimes revealing its/

its finality with overwhelming effect.

Again if moral idealism is admittedly the only pathway for mankind if it is to avoid the inferno of horror and suffering with which recurring wars threaten its life on the earth, it is plain that a moral order of life and action is not only existent, but supreme in authority over all. But if, as Plato declared, the State is but the individual writ large, we may expect to find the same authority supreme in the personal life. Here, indeed, moral reality, if not so impressively illustrated as in some public events, is more deeply felt, entering into the very texture and convictions of life, and brightening or darkening all its prospects. Experience shows that every act of conformity with one's moral ideal tends to fortify, uplift, and gladden the personality, giving it a feeling of assurance, peace, and confidence regarding life in general, whereas, every act of disloyalty to the ideal, whether by transgression or neglect, tends to enfeeble, darken, disturb and depress it. The literature of the spiritual history of man confirms this as the normal experience of the race. From beginning to end, the Bible consistently witnesses to it, depicting the sinner as undergoing a process of moral decay that if continued, must end in death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die". On the other hand, it sets forth righteousness as the very breath of the soul, and all its

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strength and glory. However perplexing it may be that even for a short time, the wicked may outwardly "flourish like a green bay tree" there is never any suggestion in the Bible that inwardly his condition is prosperous, or his lot enviable. The life of the righteous is considered to be life indeed, in spite of persecution and affliction, carrying within itself its high and holy sanctions, satisfactions, and securities. The truth is everywhere patent: man is made for God and righteousness. Whenever he lives in accordance with this creative destination of his being, he experiences peace and joy; his mind is full of light; and all his powers are harmonious and confident. Whenever he is at cross purposes with the destiny foreordained in his nature, he undergoes a process of demoralisation, in which his whole being suffers, the disastrous end of which is adumbrated in the most final and hopeless term in human speech - death.

But now, the question arises:- How comes it that with such patent and terrible disadvantages following it, sin is universal, while, on the other hand, righteousness as the very life of man, is so grudgingly and so uncertainly followed? The theory of a Fall - whether pre-temporal as held by Origen, and in a modified form by Müller; or in Adam, as elaborated by Augustine and held by the western Church generally, including the Reformers - in consequence of/

of which human nature is infected with an evil taint, and a powerful bias towards wrong-doing, indicates the gravity of the situation rather than helps in understanding it; and its hold on the minds of men, at least where thought does not fear the ban of ecclesiasticism, is increasingly precarious. The reasons for the progressive abandonment of this view are serious. Among them are the following:-- If man was created pure and good, as the theory assumes, his disobedience at the very first temptation, whether in a pre-mundane existence or in the Garden of Eden, is almost incredible. Again waving the extreme improbability of such an event, it is more than questionable that moral taint can pass from parent to child, like physical characteristics. But again, if such were possible, the proper basis for it is the Traducian theory which holds that soul and body are propagated together, and derive wholly from the parents. This view, originally held by some of the Stoics, and adopted by Tertullian, has found little support in modern thought. If it had been acceptable, it would be more logical and convincing to say that Adam was responsible for the sin of his descendants than to hold them guilty of his sin. Such considerations are in themselves sufficient to deprive the theory of the Fall of most of its usefulness. But more destructive still of its authority is the doctrine of Evolution. Built upon unshakable foundations/

foundations of fact, supported by many kinds of evidence, and purged of some early errors, this conception of the method of Creation has come to possess, for most educated people, the authority of a genuine revelation; and has effectually destroyed the supposition that there ever existed an original human pair, with the spiritual endowments and the physical environment attributed to them in theological dogma. It has transformed the whole outlook on human origins. The story of Adam and Eve, partly legend and mostly parable is singularly beautiful and profoundly true; but its truth is that of symbolical representation, and not that of historical fact and event. In what conditions man became aware of a divine will or moral law as authoritative over him, will probably never be known; but it is no longer possible to suppose that they were those of the garden of Eden. Anthropology opens a different vista, in which we see man, already not an individual but a race, emerging out of animalism, possessed of a rudimentary moral ideal with some religious conception behind it, as an integral element of his nature, but extremely different indeed from the picture of himself, his surroundings, and his task, given in the Creation narrative in Genesis. History, as a whole and in spite of temporary lapses, shows him either striving, or obliged, to bring ever-widening spheres and interests under the power of his moral ideal,/

ideal, an ideal which insistently claims to govern his whole world of thought and action. In such a process, it is not easy, if indeed it be possible, to suppose that man ever stood in relation to the divine law as he is depicted in the story of the Fall; that is, in perfect innocence, without any confusing or predisposing past and clearly understanding the prohibition of certain conduct as the will of his Creator, yet disregarding the injunction at the first invitation to do so. What is indicated, rather, is the sway of natural instinct, the gratification of animal appetite, and the influence of gregarious habits preceding the stage when his consciousness began to include the conception of God, and to be aware of some moral imperative. The conditions of his moral enlightenment demanded by any theory of Evolution are far removed from those in which the Scriptures depict his first experiences of life, and his sudden and inexplicable collapse. To continue doing things which had long been habitual, and were at one time as innocent as they were necessary, after they had become injurious and were recognised as contrary to the will of God, must be considered serious and sinful; nevertheless, it must be differently judged from the action of a newly-created person who had had no history, and was surrounded by no Society to dispose him to act in any particular direction. If in this connection also, the Scriptural principle is true, that first comes the natural, afterwards that which is spiritual, we are led to think/

think that in all probability, the original sin of man was not a mysterious and inexcusable disobedience to God at the first instigation of an evil spirit; but rather a failure on his part to order his life in the light of a new revelation, and to accept the authority of a holy duty, in place of a discredited and harmful usage. This view of the matter has the support of ordinary experience: the child does without offence and instinctively things that at a later stage when the moral consciousness has been awakened, would be sinful. Further, it has the valuable recommendation that it reasonably accounts for the bias towards evil, and for both the presence and the feebleness of the will-to-good in man. It is frequently with reluctance, and sometimes with pain, that children are able to take a moral step forward, such as curbing the acquisitive or repressing the combative tendency. Instead of considering their difficulty as clear evidence of their depravity, we may more reasonably regard it as due to the persistence of natural tendencies and attitudes that were at one time necessary in order to establish the race in the world, but which now seem to be in excess of the requirements. These gather force in every life before the law that must govern them is appreciated. The frequent and not too surprising result is that when the law is declared, it is apt to be resented; and when the law is defined as the will of God, the resentment may, and often does, turn against Him.

Evidence in support of this view meets one on all hands; for example, the sexual relationships of human beings, which are commonly considered an extremely important sphere of morals. Here, irregularities cause incalculable social distress. Besides, the confessional literature and the monastic movements of the Christian Church, signalise concupiscence as though it were the root-sin from which all other evil flows. Not to speak of the more sordid aspect of the matter, which is patent to everybody, we find that the modern novel is preoccupied with the same interest; while the difficulty of regulating the youth of our public schools and colleges reminds us of the intensity and permanence of the problem. Yet there is no need to attribute the phenomenon to a revolt against divine authority, or to an inherent corruption of nature; its main cause is perfectly intelligible, and as physiological as hunger; while its force is at its height before the nature of life can properly be realised or moral wisdom appreciated. There seems to be neither understanding nor justification of such a handicap on the moral life except that which the Evolutionist advances, namely, that an insistent and powerful sex impulse was necessary to secure the race's propagation and survival, in spite of all catastrophes that might overtake it. The race must succeed physically, or Creation itself would fail. But when in consequence of stable conditions of climate/

climate and a measure of civilisation, life becomes comparatively secure, it is clear that not only must sex relationships become more regular and stable, but sex impulse itself must be needlessly strong, unless it gradually declines in force. Hitherto, its diminution has not been observed with any certainty. If to-day we realise that certain housing conditions make sexual morality almost impossible, we are obliged to assume that owing to the progressive character of man's life upon the earth, time was when his morality in this respect was as rudimentary as his dwelling. If, therefore, it be the case, as so many convergent lines of investigation and evidence indicate, that the race of man rose out of lowly animal conditions, it appears to follow that the very characteristics that today are his moral problem, such as passionateness, acquisitiveness, pugnacity and deception, were once and not so very long ago, the necessary means of his success in the struggle for existence, and have behind them a tense and complex history, that largely accounts for the otherwise mysterious tendency to evil in the individual and the race.

If this be the way in which thetruth lies, the sin of the race may, at first, look much less heinous than theologians like to allow. But it is not what some theologians consider an adequate sense of guilt that matters nearly so much as what can be successfully brought home to the individual conscience as guilt. Reflection may show that there is nothing to be feared from the Evolutionary view of the subject. It must be remembered that no theory

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is more calculated to destroy all sense of personal guilt than that of Augustine, which postulates a nature already utterly corrupted, and a will already enfeebled and biassed against God in the case of every child born into the world. No interest, human or divine, is really guarded by exaggeration or distortion of the truth. Augustine defeated his own purpose, by making man at once predestined to sin, yet guilty of sin. It is not possible long to feel responsible for the inevitable. Besides, the endeavour to force a sense of guilt by arguments that lack in candour, and would never be employed to make out a case against a man in the common affairs of life, only rouses resentment, and tends to cast the gravest suspicion on all theological reasonings. It must plainly be said that men cannot be guilty of their inherited nature, but only for such deeds as they perpetrate in defiance of a recognisable law, when another course is genuinely open to them. This is precisely the merit of the Evolutionary view as opposed to the Augustinian, that it brings their own sins home to the consciences of men, whereas the latter, by assuming a depraved nature and an impotent will, in every human being, in effect makes sin guiltless. If the Evolutionary view allows for the precedence and the power of animal appetites, functions, and development, before the emergence of the moral ideal and the spiritual interests of man/

man, it also postulates the revelation to man, at some stage, of a challenging and commanding ethical ideal or will of God, in the light of which his whole conduct required to be reviewed and adjusted. The imperativeness of this ideal cannot be argued away by reasonings based on the existence or the derivation of tendencies opposed to it. Never is peace secured by disregard of it. A sense of worthlessness, depression, and hopelessness is its consequence, and offers the most impressive of all testimonies with regard to the obligatoriness of the moral standard whatever its history, or the strength of the opposition to it. Man's condemnation, not less on the Evolutionary hypothesis than in the judgment of Christ, is that light having come into the world, he preferred darkness to it; that is, to continue in the old way, though henceforth it offended his conscience. No man can so live without a genuine sense of guilt. When Christ made His pronouncement regarding the moral condition of the leaders of Israel, that they refused to come to the light lest their works should be condemned, He clearly assumes their power to have acted differently; in fact, some of them were not willing to hear Him. To suppose otherwise would imply that His holy sorrow, indignation, and disappointment were unreal or unreasonable, either of which is incredible.

An instructive analogy may be seen in the present condition of the world. Hitherto, war has been accepted as one/

one of the normal and necessary functions of every state. It cannot be denied that whatever evils - they are obviously many and terrible - are inseparable from war, it has been a great and necessary instrument of civilisation, securing protection, freedom and unity for peoples; clearing away bad conditions to make room for better; and maintaining certain ideals of justice and liberty in effective operation in the world. The influence of war on character is complex. Its evil effects are only too patent; yet it would be difficult, if it were possible, to maintain that without the discipline of war, the essential qualities of courage, fortitude, perseverence, chivalry, and magnanimity could have developed in the race as they have done; or, that man could have become the formidable and splendid creature that, in certain respects, he undoubtedly is. The deep respect in which a great soldier is universally held, is due not merely to the intellectual brilliance which he may have displayed, but also to the heroic qualities of his character and actions - heroic qualities which are always moral, even if in other respects, the standard of military morality be none too high. It is not easy to see how the soldier-virtues, without which man is ever contemptible and incapable of any moral greatness, could have been developed and secured as a permanent resource for the race, except through the long curriculum of adventure, privation, and peril associated with warfare. But now the time has come when

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owing to the increasing interdependence of nations, and the terrifying destructiveness of weapons, war threatens to destroy civilisation itself. We have before us the amazing spectacle of the highest inventive genius, and the most accomplished skill of the race, engaged in producing instruments of destruction, before which the imagination quails, as it sees rain falling from clouds of aerial navies that can poison and obliterate whole populations, and curse the fruitful earth with utter barrenness. Hence, the most urgent and imperative obligation of this new world-situation is that a substitute for war, as the final arbiter of disputes, should be found and established. The moral ideal of most thoughtful and sane men now includes as an integral element in it - an element which absorbes most of the service of some of the leading men of the day - the deliverance of the world from the menace which looms heavily over its future, if it simply continues in its old path in this respect. A new ideal has thus arisen, taken form, gathered power, and acquired great authority throughout the world. The formation of The League of Nations is a momentous step in the political and moral evolution of the race; and the nation that will refuse to move in accordance with the new ideal, because it likes the old ways, and the new demand is troublesome and deprivative of pride, is likely to doom itself to political isolation, and the withdrawal from it of those ethical inspirations/

inspirations and general confidence of mankind, that are essential to a vital and progressive people. Doubtless, the nations will long require considerable military forces to ensure that the authority of their laws is obeyed within their own bounds, as well as in the world-sphere, in which they agree to take joint-action. But such use of force marks an enormous moral advance on the comparatively recent past, when dynastic and predatory wars were commonplaces of history, and were accepted without surprise or question. It may be said with the utmost confidence that unless the moral light of man is going to be quenched, and the ethics of the jungle, after having been discarded at the cost of infinite pain to many generations, resume their sway, wars of spoliation are forever done with, because they will not fail to bring on the nation guilty of such an attempt, the wrath of the other nations. Moreover, it is no longer possible to think of the permanence, let alone the development of civilisation, except through the common acceptance by nations of world-law, instead of arbitrary national will, to decide questions that might embroil the world.

The situation therefore is peculiarly instructive for the light it throws on the evolution of ethics and the development of conscience. In the case of many people, it means a sudden development inasmuch as they had been living, some of them contentedly enough, in the old order, which both recent experiences and recent/

recent scientific inventions, have forced them to abandon as fatal for the world. It also shows that the evil in the situation consists mainly of the instinctive tendency of all creatures as of all communities to adhere to past ways and methods, although changed conditions clearly and urgently demand a re-adjustment. It might be argued that a heritage wrought into man's ways by the necessities of his earlier history must be innocent. In point of fact, it is far from innocent. Action calculated to defeat the new order that is struggling to displace the old that has taken an unimaginable toll of life and wealth and tears, leaving a legacy of woe in the world which several generations will not be able to exhaust, must weigh heavily on the conscience of all but the most callous. The only moral ground for opposition would be a conviction that the new would not be an improvement on the old, and, therefore not worth the dislocation it would cause. To enjoy the commendation of conscience, man must ever live by faith - a necessity that involves loyalty to every new revelation of the way in which man must walk, if he is to progress morally. Wherefore, there is nothing to be feared from an Evolutionary theory of ethics as though it destroyed guilt. On the contrary, it demonstrates it more movingly and visibly than its rival.

At the same time, such a view of sin has certain effects of its own - for example, without lessening the gravity of evil, it/

it accounts for it without the aid of myth; it fixes responsibility where it really belongs; it distributes responsibility with some regard to circumstances and with the discriminating conception of different degrees of it, instead of alleging one, universal, overwhelming condemnation in which differences do not matter, if they can be said to exist at all. All may be guilty; but it only confounds the moral sense to declare that they are all equally guilty. Further, in that it represents evil to consist essentially in adherence to ways that have already had an innocent history, when they are no longer innocent, it presents the moral order of the world as something in the nature of the world that is unfolding itself before a growing moral power and vision in the race. On this view, the moral order is not something different from the natural order, or an inexorable though arbitrary law imposed upon it from above, and always hopelessly above man's capacity; rather is it the central requirement and meaning of the natural order itself, if it is to attain its fulfilment. In every instance, the ideal appears in the closest connection with practical problems and in a sense, may be said to emerge from these. The federation of the nations in the interests of universal justice has become an urgent ideal only because the former chaos has proved fatal on a scale that has thoroughly alarmed and ashamed the more responsible peoples of the earth. Similarly, in all directions, the/

the moral demand is in the closest connection with experience; and it seeks to bring all interests of life under the governance of the loftiest conception of the ideal.

This is a more real way of conceiving of the matter than the idea of an arbitrary law, divine though it may be, commanding human nature to behave in a certain way, or suffer dire penalties. Statute law can ordain anything, and appoint any penalties as the price of its transgression. But the supposition that God's law can ever be thus arbitrary, or other than a positive statement or injunction of the ideal relations that ought to hold between moral beings, because they are moral beings, and of the inevitable consequences of their distortion, cannot be seriously maintained. It is because of the essential and constitutive connection of law with life, that it is capable of expression in one commandment, viz:- "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all they strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself" - a commandment which is not less a revelation of the untimate nature of reality, than an authoritative utterance on human duty.

Finally, there is accord between this view of sin and Christ's general teaching as well as His attitude to men, and more especially to the outcasts of Society. We do not find Him denouncing sinners because they have broken law.

His/

His first approach to them is through the proclamation of the imminence of the kingdom of heaven, calling on men to repent that they may be able to receive it. He chooses a band of disciples to whom He proposes to disclose the most intimate secret of the kingdom, that they may become its evangelists to the world. He is rarely concerned with sin as the transgression of commandments, regarding it usually as the destroyer of vital relationships, pauperising life itself, and bringing upon men darkness and confusion, isolation and despair. He is moved with great compassion towards the multitudes, not because they were lawless, but because they fainted and were like sheep without a shepherd - hungry, worried and wearied, without a sense of either security or destination. The love of money, anxious pre-occupation with the world, disloyalty, ingratitude, self-righteousness abuse of privilege, love of praise, lust, covetousness, hatred, wilful disobedience to the light of truth, were the principle forms of sin to which He referred. Whatever degrees of guilt attached to them as breaches of divine law, their most deplorable aspect to Him was the false relation to God of which they were all manifestations, and the consequent degradation of life to which they witnessed. He conceives of His own vocation as primarily the revelation to men of God as their Father in Heaven, so that coming to Him in the primal relationship of children and abiding in His love, they might/

might have life abundant and eternal. When all is allowed that may justly be said about the preparation for Christianity both within and without Judaism, the fact remains that the conception of God, of the mutual relations between God and mankind, and of the ideal of life issuing from these, which Christ unfolded in His personality, in His doctrine, and in His passion constitute a new revelation. What it urgently demanded of men was a change of mind, so as to estimate life, and adjust conduct in accordance with it. Here was no imposition of a new law, but a fresh and final exposition of the holy order in which alone the life of man comes to its real kingdom, and attains to its ordained purpose and felicity. Instead of His proposal being unnatural or arbitrary, what it intends is the fulfilment and crowning of life, by establishing its proper relationships, placing it in its true moral environment, and so creating and releasing its spiritual power. This condition of souls is what He considered the Universe at its highest to be constituted to bring about and sustain. Such is the moral order. Undoubtedly, to sin against it is never without penalty, inasmuch as the transgressor not only misses the highest blessedness which it is in the nature of things to yield him, but also suffers the derangement, loss of confidence, of moral power and peace which opposition to the central purpose of life is bound to bring upon him. Defiance of that divine intention/

intention which is a constitutive and regulative element in human nature, and is manifest in the unquenchable ideals of truth, justice, love and beauty, cannot escape its consequences. But it does not follow, nor does it in fact, appear that the foolish transgressor or even the hardened rebel, is punished, or must be punished, in order to maintain the majesty of an offended law, or even to mark the gravity of his misdeeds against an infinite Being of sublime holiness. His loss of life's highest privileges, joys, and hopes is sure and relentless; but it is because he places himself outside the pale within which the spirit of man flourishes through the adoption and the pursuit of those ideals that are inseparable from the knowledge of God. These ideals are the real sustenance and wealth of the spirit of man. Whatever excludes him from that region of thought and aspiration, volition and experience is bound to bring the most serious consequences upon him. As a spiritual being, he is bound to live by some kind of ideals; and if these are debased, and rendered incongruous with the divine purpose, which underlies life, and with a view to which the human faculties are what they are, they become not less destructive to the spiritual life than adulterated food, long continued, is to the physical. Such is the nature of life, that only those who strive to live in harmony with what they must regard as the will of God, have access to the sources of inspiration, moral/

moral power, joy, and hope; while those who disregard it experience the miseries of a bad conscience, and the spiritual paralysis and final doom that it entails. This is how the universe interprets itself in the human consciousness. Clearly, it is a moral order that the universe is designed to secure. But there is nothing to prove - and there is much of the contrary import - that God is otherwise interested to penalise sinners either in a legal sense, or for governmental purposes. Indeed, the patent fact is that He is long-suffering and forgiving, and causes His sun to shine upon the evil as well as the good. Often enough, men who are morally callous flourish outwardly, although even in the outward sphere, if tendencies rather than brief episodes are observed, the importance of moral qualities and moral interests cannot be ignored. To become morally contemptible, is not commonly the way to the most external sort of fortune, since that can usually be achieved only on the basis of the trust of society. Such trust however, can be maintained on a rather restricted and elementary moral code; whereas qualities that rank high spiritually, like humility, desire for righteousness, and self-sacrificing love, seldom distinguish or assist the builders of fortunes in their enterprises. But the building of fortunes must on no account be made the supreme test of the moral quality of the universe. This, as we have seen, is to be looked for in the responses and reactions of the universe within/

within the soul of man according as he has dealt with the moral ideal, which in some form or another, has unfailingly insisted on presenting itself to him in his commerce with the world.

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Chapter IV.

-:- CONCERNING -:-

-:- THE DIVINE BEING -:-

and

-:- CHRIST'S REVELATION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER. -:-

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Before coming to the essential subject of this chapter, it may be advisable to indicate the bases of theistic faith, apart from the Christian revelation, as recently considerable discussions have been proceeding regarding these.

Although the existence of God is not capable of logical demonstration, serious doubt of it appears to be rare, in spite of occasional attempts to justify that attitude. The idea of God has the same sort of necessity for the mind and is evidently as native to it, as that of time or space. The late Edward Caird was never tired of showing how in the intellectual realm, God is essential as the unity of subject and object, without which, thought is impossible. This consideration, though a somewhat elusive one, has great cogency for all who perceive it. Although it is but the irreducible minimum as an account of the divine Being, it means something to faith if it can be shown that without God, the process involved in the simplest act of thinking would be forever impossible. If such a foundation is made/

made secure, theism is really unassailable; although on the other hand, if God were no more than an intellectual medium through which the mind can all unconsciously it may be, perform its operations, the content of such theism might be of little practical value. But the foundation is important, if a valuable structure is to be erected upon it. If therefore belief in God is so rational that without Him, thought itself is impossible, there is something like a rock on which to build the house of faith.

But the idea of God springs up naturally and spontaneously from man's commerce with the world long before it is reached as the result of elaborate reflection on the nature of life and experience. However crude it may be among primitive people, and however abstract among reflective people, it arises in both cases from the immediate necessities of their respective experiences of the world. Necessarily, however, it is with the more mature results of reflection that we are most concerned, as in the long run, only these can stand. Important if not chief among these, is the apprehension that the whole circle of intelligible reality is a universe, everywhere instinct with mind; that in so far as it is material, it is ruled and bound by inexorable law; its infinite complexity is maintained in majestic unity and order/

order; and its amazing properties and powers are combined with what must be called matchless skill. In presence of such a universe, even the Agnostic is reverent; nor is he likely to be moved by the criticism that after all, it is men who find all this in the Universe, and that if their minds were different, they would find it different. No doubt, they would. But then, as the human mind is what it is, the question is whether we are entitled to believe its report, as far as it goes. For example, does it deceive us as to the unity and orderliness of the phenomena of the natural world? If so, in what does it give us any reliable information? Are we justified in believing the doubt cast on the credibility of the mind's presentation of the nature of reality? Why we should not believe that our minds can tell us the truth even if it be not the whole truth, has never yet been shown; nor indeed can it ever be, as in the attempt, the argument discredits itself, since it makes all intellectual processes and conclusions equally unreliable. Such intellectual nihilism is futile. We have no reason to doubt that the mind gives us a genuine account of the nature of reality, and is itself designed expressly for the purpose of interpreting the nature of things. Accepting it as such, we find all that is apprehensible, instinct with mind; a coherent, harmonious/

harmonious, system which must be considered the product of mind inasmuch as it cannot account for itself; the material cannot produce the mental; the natural cannot produce the spiritual. The chief ways in which the Universe impressed the reflective mind with a sense of God were long ago formulated into the three famous arguments - the cosmological, which finds the universe an unbroken sequence of causalities, and can not resist the inference of a first self-existent, all-sufficient Cause; the teleological, which finds the Universe a system of means adapted to ends, and cannot resist the conclusion of a final End in which all minor ends are justified; and the ontological, which argues from the universal existence and necessity of the idea of God, to His objective reality. With these three arguments, and most of all with the last, Kant dealt severely. Yet, even for himself, his criticism was not final. Practically, it did not prevent him from making his celebrated confession that the two magnitudes which moved him to awe and admiration were the starry heavens above him and the moral law within him. But why the starry heavens should so move the soul of the chief critic of the cosmological and the teleological arguments is hard to see, unless it be that the arguments are only invalid in form, and represent, if they do not demonstrate, the truth. Like life itself, the/

the ultimate reality manifested in the Universe cannot be caught by the logician or the analyst; yet it makes a profound theistic impression, which no theorising, be it never so pure, can refute. It is true as both Kant and his disciple Ritschl declare, that though we follow the cosmological argument to a first Cause, and the teleological to a final End, in neither case do we find God; the idea at either end does not transcend that of the world-substance regarded as the unity of all causes and ends; and that in any case, what we get is less than God, and we require to introduce the idea of God to make up the difference. It is also true with reference to the ontological argument, that between the idea of God and the objective existence of God, there is no necessary equivalence; the idea may be necessary to our thought, but it does not follow that God exists on that account. Ritschl thinks, of course, that we arrive otherwise at the knowledge of God; and that we needlessly expose ourselves to destructive criticism by arguing along such lines. It may however, be said, not without confidence, that if we could imagine these Scholastic arguments, with their grounds in nature and the mind of man destroyed, it is difficult to see how we should have the least interest in religion, or in any God there may be. No glory of the heavens by day or by night, no vision of the power manifested/

manifested in Nature nor of its marvellous adaptations of means to ends, would suggest any idea of God to our minds; the sun would be a ball of fire, raising no question as to its origin; the starry heavens would provoke no wondering speculation; and the contingency of the world - its utter impotence to account for its own existence, would be an unknown consideration. Similarly, the question of a final meaning or value of all that we see would not arise; and the idea of God, divorced from Nature, if it existed at all, need have no greater vitality than that of a ghost. But this is to imagine the human mind to be other than it is, depotentiated of its noblest functions, and reduced to bovine insensibility. The history of religion amply repudiates every scheme of thought that denies the sacramental aspect of the Creation. It is not in vain that all religions have the closest connection with Nature, or that Isaiah exclaims - "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." It seems therefore that there is more in these lines of argument than either Kant or Ritschl allows. They are in fact, instinctive, and not irrational on that account. They represent man's profoundest reasons for his belief in God/

God. Without those promptings of the mind by the Universe which give rise to these arguments, who can say that we should have any interest in or knowledge of a Divine Being? True, at the best, they come far short of the Christian conception of a Heavenly Father. Nevertheless, to see the earth as even the footstool of the Almighty, or better still to recognise all things as through Him and for Him, is in itself a great matter, and a pre-condition to the higher revelation. The arguments aim at scientific demonstration through logical processes. In this, they may not succeed, however they may be refurbished. Still, as Häring puts it - "They will not fail to make an impression....if they claim to rank, not as demonstrative proofs, but as geniune indications of God, the force of which can hardly be overestimated, when they are combined with certain needs and obligations of the inner life". (The Christian Faith, page 152).

A similar conclusion follows from the Moral argument, which postulates God to account for Conscience, with its tremendous authority in the life of mankind as well as the moral interests and values of life, generally. Although the more metaphysical considerations of the former arguments seem to be immediately inevitable, both from the nature of the mind and of the Universe, the moral demand for God, though perhaps slower to formulate itself, has/

has no less cogency once it is made. Whatever factors have entered into the development of Conscience - property, family, clan, and national interests; regulative enactments for the defence of these; socially useful customs; laws with penalties for their violation - the fact remains that it is a progressive ordering of life on a moral basis that such development implies. However far back we may try to discover man, as soon as we find him, he is possessed of some form of moral ideal in authority over him. There is nothing known of a non-moral type of man. On the other hand, if we look at the life of humanity as it unfolds itself before us, it appears that unless the nations moralise their mutual relationships, entering into covenants of justice, restraint, and peace, disaster will follow disaster until they are reduced to helpless poverty, misery, and despair. This moral aspect of individual life and of Society is as much a datum as life itself, being an inherent characteristic of it. Instead of supposing that Society accounts for it, through prudential considerations, we should be nearer the mark in saying that it persists in spite of Society, and its efforts individually, and sometimes collectively, to destroy it. To no other interest of life has such violence been done from the beginning; yet instead of weakening, it waxes ever stronger, extending its authority beyond individual to corporate action, requiring the submission/

submission of Civilisation itself, if it is to escape ruin. If the mind, contemplating the contingency of a marvellous Universe, can only find rest in the thought of an eternal, self-existent Being, capable of its creation and maintenance, it needs Him none the less to account for the presence of this categorical imperative in the individual, and its ever-increasing imperativeness in the life of the race. The final reality therefore, must be a moral Being, to explain the fact and the authority of the moral aspect of life.

These lines of thought are inevitable if we are to arrive at reasonable conclusions regarding the nature of things. Even when they do not carry their full weight they tend to issue in a vague form of theism. In the case of some philosophers, it is hard to say what they mean by their final Being, the Absolute. Sometimes, it is an unknowable Existence, beyond the phenomena of the Universe, before whom, however, it is well to be reverent; sometimes, it seems to be but the sum of all things, visible and invisible, in which mind is somehow diffused, without having a central consciousness; sometimes, it is a bare and formless abstraction, "a ballot of bloodless categories" which almost might as well be called Nothing as the Absolute. It is difficult to include such views under any form of theistic belief, without appearing to compromise/

compromise it; yet, these views all have something more than their vagueness and their abstractions to commend them as in a sense, theistic: they admit that mind is of the essence of all things. That is a crucial admission, as much more must be admitted along with it.

The chief difficulty of philosophy in dealing with the final reality is to conceive of it in the form of Personality, on the ground that personality implies limitation, and cannot even know, or be conscious of, itself, except as it stands outside of all that is not itself, and enters into relations with it. This objection is taken very seriously by competent metaphysicians. Nevertheless, one may venture to say that in spite of the solemnity with which it is advanced, it looks more formal than convincing. If God were one being more in the universe, the force of the objection would be very great; but if His relation to the Universe is unique, if it be the case that "in Him we live and move and have our being" the case is different, as relation cannot mean limitation when relation itself takes place within the Being who is alleged to be in danger of this limitation.

Again, the objection suggest that the greater the personality, the more exclusive it must be; or the more numerous its relationships, the more limited it is. But/

But so far is this from the truth that the very opposite is nearer it. It may be conceded that formally, a relation appears to be a limitation; yet, if we consider it in reference to human life, we see clearly that there it is as often a liberation. To establish the relation of knowledge with a number of sciences, is to give the mind a wide range within which it can operate. It is ignorance that really limits. Moreover, one sees that the greater personalities are precisely those who enter into many relationships with the life of the world; who enter into the lives of multitudes, often even to help bear their burdens and carry their sorrows. The freedom in which they are really interested is not some unconditioned abstraction, but an opportunity to realise their moral powers in the service of their fellow-creatures. If a man could fully enter into and appropriate the whole truth unfolded by all science, philosophy, ethics and religion; if he were connected with a large number of societies to which he could communicate for their inspiration and uplifting all that he knew, he would be greatly free in the only sense in which freedom is of interest to a serious human being. If indeed, there be an Absolute whose glory it is to be incapable of the limitation involved in sustaining relations with the Universe, he is a supernumerary in which few will see much reality, let alone the final.

If/

If there be an Absolute whose glory it is to be in vital relation with every part of the great Whole, whose infinity of relations really constitute His absolutism, we have all reason to be interested. There is, moreover, nothing particularly rational in the conception of an unrelated, otiose, ultimate Being, which must be treated as an impersonal Mind. The idea of an impersonal Mind, capable of such an achievement as the Universe, exercising volitional power, showing the most impressive wisdom in adapting means to ends, regulating all things by laws that are never repealed or modified, belongs to the realm of fancy rather than to that of philosophy. If mind is there, are we not bound to think of it as existing in the only form, and with the characteristics which identify it as mind, namely the personal form and characteristics. The most diffused form of mind known to us is public opinion; yet none of us ever makes the mistake and calls it philosophy, that it arises like fog out of a marsh. We know that it is entirely the creation of individual minds. If therefore, we are obliged to conclude that the Universe is the product of Mind, must we not take the further step and say that the Absolute is a personal being? It seems to be the most reasonable conclusion that can be reached from the nature of the mind of man, and the impressions which the totality of things makes upon it.

It is strange that at this stage in human thought, there should be in some quarters a reversion to pluralism. It is not as though any new factors had been discovered in the nature of the world. The phenomena on which it is based were always visible enough; yet monotheism prevailed in spite of them. Such a view is opposed to the very idea of a Universe, requiring rather a multiverse. But every phase of Science promotes the thought of a profound unity pervading the multiplicity of phenomena, whether material or mental. The conditions at the poles are widely different from those that prevail within the tropics; yet they equally belong to the same system and obey its behests. If in the moral world, the confusion often appears so dire as to suggest a plurality of powers, seeking incompatible ends, it is enough here to say that this solution belongs to the childhood of the race's reflection, and brings back that irrationality which it was the triumph of mind to banish. There is no wisdom, or thoroughfare to any finality in this direction. Again, to suppose with the author of "God, the invisible King" that the Absolute is a veiled, sinister being, who may possibly defeat the good God and His soldiers in their efforts to establish a moral order, is but to re-introduce the naïveté and impressionism of superstitution. This

Veiled/

Veiled Being is of such questionable character, is there at all in fact, because there are such things as earthquakes, shipwrecks, fires, famines, pestilences, diseases, and wars. But this is exactly the reason why the ancient world believed in many baleful deities, including the Furies. It is not any real advance on polytheism to invent an Absolute in whom ample room must be found for this mob of crude divinities. The mistake is that of looking in the wrong direction for the character of the Absolute. If we exclude man's conscience as an organ of knowledge concerning the final nature of reality and consider the Absolute as the Sum of all the forces of every kind that we think we encounter in the world, and have to do with the whole creation, we may well arrive at the Wellsian conception; but if we regard moral reality as it exists in the human conscience, as it appears in human history, and as it is represented in Jesus Christ as in its nature supreme, then we must also say that the moral ideals of the mind of man at its purest are the true lines to follow, if we are to interpret with any likelihood of success the character of their inspirer; for these ideals are not the product of man's intelligence, but rather make man what he is. The plain fact is that the sublime victory of goodness over every form of evil that assailed it in the life and sufferings of Christ is but the presentation/

presentation in time-conditions of that which is eternally real and unassailable, - the unity and the surpassing goodness of God.

But within the periphery of the Christian faith, which properly limits this discussion, misconceptions of the character of God and His attitude to the world are not infrequently met. Such misconceptions, wherever held, not only tend to false views of life and duty but alienate the thoughtful, create powerful prejudices, and expose the Gospel to needless criticism and antagonism. It is important that the way of life should be cleared of needless obstacles. It is no disparagement of the religion of Israel to say that the essential thing in the Christian religion is the new revelation of God which Christ gives in word, deed, and suffering. Conscious as He is of fulfilling law and prophecy, He is even more conscious of making an original and essential contribution to the knowledge of God. Deeply versed in the Scriptures, and well aware of the qualities and action therein ascribed to God. He nevertheless considers Himself the bearer of a unique presentation of the divine character. According to the best canon of criticism, no word of Christ is more certain than that in which He claims an exclusive knowledge of God as the Father, (Matthew, xi. 27) It is the Son's peculiar privilege to possess this knowledge, and His peculiar service, to/

to make it known. His conscious contrasting of Himself with the teachers of olden time, His doctrines of unheard-of generosity, requital of evil by good, humility and self-denial are all rooted in His new doctrine of God, which He set forth with a clear sense, both of its novelty and of its importance. It is of little account in this connection that in several passages of the Old Testament, God is called the father of the nation; or that His pity is likened unto that of an earthly parent, inasmuch as the idea did not come to be developed further. Indeed, in the days of Christ, the religion of Israel was little better than an arid formalism - burdensome cultus of law and ceremony, as different as it could well be from the expression of the relations of children towards a Father in heaven. The conflict between Christ and the Pharisees, who represented the official religion, was irreconcilable, because it was due to incompatible conceptions of God. Some attempts have recently been made to set forth Pharisaism in a favourable light; nevertheless, when all allowance is made for its more creditable aspects, the record of the New Testament cannot be set aside, nor can its criticism be turned. The clear fact there established without the possibility of controversy is that Pharisaism, with all its seriousness and piety, was the deadly enemy of Christ, its enmity being largely due to ignorance of the/

the Divine character which Christ was exhibiting to the world. Moreover, when about to face the final issue of His difference with the religious authorities of the nation, Christ pours forth His soul in prayer, His supreme satisfaction is on the ground that He had been able to declare the name of God to the little group of men whom He had chosen to be with Him. (John xvii.) We must believe that if we have not the ipsissima verba of this prayer, we have at least, the sense in which it was understood; from which nothing is plainer than His consciousness of setting forth God before these men, and through them, before the world, in a character hitherto undisclosed. Since Ritschl's day, it has been maintained that Christ's supreme concern was with the coming of the kingdom of God. This is obviously true; yet this way of stating the truth may mislead, suggesting that the kingdom is a certain form of Society rather than, in the first instance, a condition of souls. manifestly, such a kingdom as Christ sought to establish could only come through some great and moving change in the public idea of God. The latter alone could be the efficient means to such an end. Hence, Christ's concern to reveal God's character, to exemplify His attitude to sinners, and to declare and attest the nature of the ideal and enduring relationships between God and man. Only as this process of revelation prospered/

prospered, operating mightily in the minds of men, could the kingdom come. Conscious that He knew God in a sense not given to others; that He abode in the love of God; and disclosed the divine attitude to mankind, not in word only, but as well in the whole bearing of his life, Christ does not hesitate to claim the importance which really belongs to Him. It is only as men will see the moral nature, the saving purpose, and the unfathomable love of the eternal Father in the Son, that they will have that knowledge of God which is equivalent to eternal life. It is not therefore difficult to understand the joy with which He heard the confession of the disciples - "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," (Matt. xvi. 16ff), and the glowing prospect which He saw opening up before Him in consequence of it. The same holy joy pervades His intercessory prayer, in which the words occur - "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world...I have given them the words which Thou gavest me; and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send me." One remembers also the extraordinary contrast which Christ sees between the type of religion for which John the Baptist stood, and that which He himself is instituting; the least in the kingdom is greater than one of the greatest spiritual personalities/

personalities of all time.

Enough has been said to show that in spite of fulfilling Law and prophecy, Christianity is not a revived and purified Judaism, but essentially a new religion, for which, of course, Judaism was a valuable and it may be, an indispensable preparation. There is hardly anything in the new, which in some form or in germ, was not to be met with in the old religion. Yet, the priorities and emphases of each are so different as to make them different religions. In nothing is the difference so decisive as in the conception of the divine character that dominates each. Whatever may be regarded as of subordinate importance, this must be guarded as the very treasure of our faith - the new name of God, which Christ lived and died to make current and glorious in the earth. Legalism is clearly at an end. The relations between a loving Father seeking to save that which is lost, and His children, can not possibly be expressed in its terms. The soul that sinneth - it shall die; but it shall die through rejecting the love that would forgive and save; and this love is beyond law and its restrictions. There are many valuable helps towards the interpretation of the New Testament in the Scriptures of the Old, as the one was directly preparatory to the other. Nevertheless, the lower/

lower can never adequately explain the higher; nor must the idea of God, which Christ was chiefly concerned to present, be obscured, whether by Old Testament descriptions of God's character, or by a sacrificial system and ritual processes based on these. The presentation of God given in Christ's teaching and example, must be made the criterion of every theological construction that aims at being Christian, whether that be concerned with the doctrine of the Atonement, or any other that involves the Divine character. Whatever violates the picture of Him drawn by Christ and shining in His own personality, is inadmissible; whatever obscures or distorts its features must be removed. God must be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Though He may be more in moral glory than it was possible for the Son to show in the sphere, and during the brief period, of His earthly ministry, He certainly cannot be less; nor is it possible to think of Him as capable of such action as would be offensive to, or inconsistent with, the spirit of Christ. There may be much in God that is not specifically revealed in Christ; yet we must hold that the unrevealed is governed by that which has been manifested; and that the divine nature is through and through such as is reflected in the face of Jesus Christ. We cannot take any other ground than that of considering the presentation of God which/

which Christ makes as regulative of our conception of Him.

Taking it as such, we say first that He is the Absolute, the Lord of heaven and earth (Matt. XI. 25) but of such a character that love, of which our purest human analogies are but faint reflections, must be considered as determinative of His essential being, and necessarily governing His attitude to the race. The vastness and complexity of the Universe revealed to modern people can make no difference to His interest in His children, or lessen His power to concern Himself with individuals. We learn that the tiniest of creatures falls not without His providential care; the most helpless infant is not unrepresented or forgotten in His presence; His is the bounty that satisfies the fowls of the air, and every living thing; the beauty that adorns all; and the magnanimity that blesses the fields of the churl not less than those of the good. Moreover we are assured that if men would understand Him and be like Him, they must freely, and of the heart, and without guarantees or compensations of any sort, except that of gaining their offending brothers, forgive each others' trepasses, not once but as often as they are asked; that is, they must have the spirit that forgives. This is determinative in the teaching of Christ. Both in the prayer which He taught His/

His disciples, and in the parable of the Unforgiving Debtor, it is made conditional to our salvation; the unforgiving man, it is clear, can have neither lot nor place in the kingdom of God, inasmuch as he is a stranger to the spirit of love which governs all that belongs to that kingdom. Finally, God's will for the whole world of mankind is the establishment of moral harmony between them and Himself; and there is joy in heaven when even one sinner is restored to this condition. This harmony that, in the first instance, is intended by the kingdom of heaven, shows itself in righteousness, peace, and joy, and gives promise of all manner of excellencies of character and action. Another way of describing this condition is "eternal life" - life that not only lasts forever, but deserves by its moral quality, to last forever, partaking as it does in the divine life itself.

If we now consider the action of Christ for confirmation of this doctrine of God, we find it at every point. It is the final significance of that great compassion that characterised His ministry; the blind received their sight; the untouchable leper found One who both touched and healed him; the social pariah and the Magdalene met One who pitied and forgave them, calling them effectively to a life of honour; the child is invested in a new sanctity; the sorrowful are comforted by/

by the presence of One before whom death itself becomes transformed; the poor obtain a gospel; the Samaritan and the Gentile find a friend and an advocate; the wild victims of evil are restored to sanity and happiness; and as for the great multitudes, mercy reaches them through sacraments of nourishing and healing as well as through instruction. With regard to His friends, Christ loved them even to the end, with a love they never doubted, though it did not shrink from correcting them. Not even Judas could turn that love into scorn. In all this, Christ was making visible, vital, and unmistakable the love of God towards His children, even the most degraded of them. He was incarnating and practising the grace of God. Through His whole activity, He seeks to make the people and His disciples realise that it is God who thus blesses them through Him, as He does nothing of Himself, but as the Father shows Him. He is never content until they recognise this, and exercise faith in God. Nor does He draw the line at the forgiveness of sins: He conveys it with quiet assurance; and those who receive it, rejoice in the liberty of the children of God. Towards the hostile leaders of Israel, He sent forth appeal after appeal for a nobler idea of God until finally, in view of their increasing hardening and hostility, He pronounced upon them the sternest judgment ever passed on men; yet

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even this was but the wounding of the faithful and true Witness; and though it was severe, we cannot think that its purpose was other than good; for if they on whom it was pronounced appeared to be beyond salvation, there were others to whom their exposure would be an arresting and illuminating warning. Finally, the message He sent them by His apostles was a message of forgiveness, after they had done their worst. (Acts 111. 19-26.) If such is the testimony of His doctrine and of His action, it is even more conclusively shown in His passion, in which His self-sacrifice culminated. By common consent, it is in this passion we must find the supreme revelation of God. The first fact to realise in connection with it is that it was the passion of one who possessed power beyond that which is given to men. The story of His temptation is meaningless, unless He could have achieved earthly ascendancy and glory. Whatever we make or fail to make of His miracles, there is no escape from the conclusion that according to the Gospels, the sudden fame of Jesus was founded upon them. "Immediately, His fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee." (Mark i. 28ff.) So embarrassed was He by the multitudes that were attracted by His miracles that on several occasions, He was obliged to get away from them secretly. Moreover, His disciples, whom He had been careful/

careful to teach the principles of the kingdom of Heaven, in contrast with popular misconceptions, and to inform on several occasions with solemn emphasis, of the necessity and imminence of His death, refused to accept the plain meaning of His words. Their attitude, in spite of His warnings, is intelligible only when we remember that they had seen all His mighty works, knew His power over Nature and death itself, and felt that His authority was mighty in whatever direction He might care to exercise it. To think of Him in the fulness of such unexampled power as about to die, was to outrage all their feelings, born of a great experience in His company. So, perhaps imagining that His strange prediction of impending death was another of His vivid metaphorical pictures, they went on hoping for a sudden manifestation and triumph of His power, in setting up a visible sovereignty in the land. Only the dire negation of the event could convince them; and even then, they were more confounded than convinced. Moreover, Jesus himself confesses, when His enemies are about to seize Him, that if He cared to ask for them, and it were consistent with His vocation, countless angelic legions would be given Him. (Matt. xxvi. 3.) However we may insist on the complete humanity of Christ, it is not possible for us in any interest to evacuate His person of those exceptional gifts and powers, which were at once the chief instruments/

instruments of His early fame, the confidence of His disciples, and the measure, though not the only measure, of His sacrifice.

That a person possessing such powers as could have secured for him immunities, privileges, and glory in the world, should have chosen a path that led to obloquy, rejection, and death indicates a dimension of moral being that is hard for us to estimate: still harder, when we consider His bearing throughout the whole shameful process of the trial to the last cry from the Cross. The peculiar glory here is that, under an unparalleled strain, the temper of the Sufferer did not alter in the least towards any one, or towards all. He continued in His own holy love, in the spirit of compassion and forgiveness, to the very end. Not once did the shadow of resentment appear on any utterance of His. At the same time, He was conscious that in this passion, He was finishing the work which the Father had given Him to do, and glorifying His name by this final revelation of it.

If the spirit of this sacrifice gives us the supreme truth regarding God, we may well have confidence; for herein is love indeed - not a sentiment, but a profound, resolute, unalterable purpose of grace towards men at their worst, a purpose that carried its bearer through the darkest horror/

horror of their sin, right on to the sundering of body and spirit, so proving its sublimity and finality. We do not go beyond what is amply authorised by the statements of Christ himself when we insist that the reality which faces us here must be regarded as regulative of our thought of God's moral being. If Christ shows us the Father as He is, in the intimate, exclusive knowledge of the Son, and if the Son's supreme service by which the Father's name is especially declared and glorified, be the Passion - as the Fourth Gospel so emphatically asserts - it follows that we must bring all our conceptions of God into conformity with that which the Passion sets forth concerning Him. The main lesson of it which is open for all to read is, not that there is love in God; but rather, that God has the quality of love central, determinative and permanent in all His being, and in all His purposes. Wherefore, to suppose that in God, there is a sort of conflict between justice and mercy; or again, to attribute to the former attribute a primacy over all others, (as Dr. Dale does) so that God must ever be just, but need not be merciful; or finally, to think of God as obliged by the moral law of the Universe, which visits sin with penalty, to act otherwise than in love, is in effect, though usually not in intention, to deny the essential teaching of Christ, exemplified in His deeds, set forth in matchless parables, and above all, proved/

proved in His final tribulation. No one can even suggest that in the life of Christ, law or justice embarrasses or is superior to the principle of love. There we see as in no other person the power and beauty of ethical simplicity, all action being the issue of one profound, unchanging attitude of love to God, and man, even in his degradation, and in spite of his cruelty. If in this respect, Christ is not giving to the world the very heart of the Eternal, and the final truth concerning the moral being of God as in every aspect and attribute directed by a loving will, it must be confessed that the holiest light of the world turns into twilight, adds to our confusion, and is itself inexplicable. But the Christian faith is founded on the Son revealing the Father; and it is with this faith that we are dealing, and its implications. Therefore, in our idea of God however easily we may be led along certain lines of speculation, we must not do injustice or less than justice to the most commanding utterance of the divine, given in the whole course of History. Theology, while anxious to maintain the closest alliance with philosophy, believing that finally the whole world of truth is self-harmonious, must nevertheless be loyal to her own facts, and particularly, insist that the knowledge of the glory of God is "in the face of Jesus Christ." She cannot hold any conception of God which obscures that ethically He is Love; or any theory of the Atonement which is not clearly founded in/

in the doctrine, and confirmed by the life of Christ. That which came last in revelation is forever first in importance, so that whenever we think of God, we are bound to think of Him as Love devoted in utmost sacrifice that the wicked may be turned to goodness, the lost restored to moral fellowship with Himself, and that instead of the anarchy and misery that have so long prevailed among the children of men, there should be an ordered Society redeemed from evil, in which the spirits of all should be enlightened and guided by the spirit of God, and joyful in the doing of righteousness.

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Chapter V.

-:- CONCERNING -:-

-:- CHRIST'S GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM. -:-

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One of the hardest perplexities arising out of any view of Christ's death that attributes to it a necessary placatory value, precedent to forgiveness, is how to account for the fact that He Himself proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom of God, without any such reference to His death. In all the Sermon on the Mount, in all the parables of the Kingdom, in all the instances of His dealings with individuals, there is not one indisputable allusion to such a necessity for His death. In certain of His parables, He clearly forecasts His death: but He presents the event as on the one hand due to the wickedness and folly of those who perpetrate it to their own undoing and fall from privilege, and to His own fidelity as the good Shepherd, who will defend His sheep with His blood. It has been boldly stated in recent years by a distinguished theologian, that Christ died that there might be a gospel to preach*. The statement is true, of course in the sense that the sufferings and death of Christ focussed His teaching, and became a mighty dynamic at the heart of it. But surely it/

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*Dale: The Atonement, page 46.

it cannot be allowed to mean, even though the author meant, that prior to His death, Christ had no gospel for men. Are we to suppose that when at Nazareth, after reading the great, evangelic passage in Isaiah, He declared - "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" He had no power there and then to make it good; or that His concentration on preaching to the multitudes and teaching His disciples, did not matter to any great extent; that the whole ministry, of which He felt the importance and the pressure so much that He said- "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: night cometh when no man can work"- had no saving efficacy, unless what it derived unknown to men, from an event in the future? Such a supposition imposes a condition on our faith such as few can accept. It is necessary that people should believe that Christ was in earnest at all times, before they can believe in Him at any time. We cannot have a gospel through His death, unless we are sure that in His life, He was setting before men a way that was really open, and offering them a forgiveness that was really available for them. When He went forth to men with what He called the gospel of the kingdom of God, with its new conception of God and of His purpose; and, again, when He sent forth seventy missionaries throughout the country with the same good news, the presumption is that it was a serious proposal

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on His part; that He thought it offered a genuine opportunity to all to enter on a new relationship to God, and to begin a new life to God's honour and their own salvation. In this appeal, there neither was nor could be any reference to such a doctrine of the Atonement as has been formulated by the Church. Yet, it is incredible that the appeal was not seriously intended. The body of doctrine that has come to us in the records of the Gospels, came to that generation as the spoken word, the object of which was primarily to convert men to a new idea of God, that would introduce them to a new experience of God, thus initiating the kingdom of God in the world. This does not imply that at any time, Christ thought that His truth would make an easy conquest of men. If the Sermon on the Mount embodies the earlier type of His doctrine, it already intimates the persecution of His followers, and requires a loyalty that shall not fear men, or shrink from death itself. Even without the ample evidence of His parables and prophetic warnings, we could not suppose that He who knew what is in man, anticipated a universal and speedy acceptance of a call that made such high demands on character as His made. Nor can it be forgotten that at a very early stage of His ministry and in His own town of Nazareth, He was made to realise the deadly power of prejudice with which He had to reckon -/

reckon. On the other hand, if He had considered His mission to Israel hopeless from the beginning, and knew quite definitely that a summary rejection was awaiting Himself and His message, it is hard to know what to make of the earnestness and urgency with which He proceeds, setting forth the principles of His new revelation as though all depended on it. If it be supposed that His purpose was to challenge and force the evil in society to declare itself and do its worst, that it might be defeated and atoned for once for all, it is quite impossible to understand His grief at Jerusalem's rejection of His many efforts "to gather its children together". No word of Christ's is more in keeping with His character or better authenticated. Unless it implies that Christ had hoped for a different issue of His message and ministry, from that which was then impending: unless, in fact, it means that He had expected an acceptance of the gospel of the kingdom which, in spite of opposition, would have been sufficient to charge that national life with new spiritual ideals, give it a new moral direction, and save it for God's purposes in the world, we can hardly be sure of anything that Christ can ever have meant by any word of His.

The same interest appears in Christ's polemic with the rulers. Although His appeal which by its nature and purpose/

purpose had to be general was not specifically addressed to any section, He considered that the Scribes and Pharisees, owing to their official position and the influence they commanded, had a special responsibility with regard to it. They were the natural leaders: and their support or opposition would tell powerfully. As their opposition became manifest, Christ had much to say regarding their spiritual condition, such as their preference of darkness to light, of external piety to purity of heart, and of the praise of men to the approval of God. But He makes the further complaint that not only will they not enter the kingdom of God themselves, but they will also prevent others from entering. Occupying the authoritative seat of Moses, they were everywhere blocking the way. It is not possible to read Christ's vehement invective against them, without recognising in it the indignation of one who was experiencing a partial frustration of purpose through their opposition. This controversy with the leaders of Israel is unintelligible except on the hypothesis that Christ had a message for the nation; and that He had hoped for a reception of it from the rulers different from that which it was receiving. Had their united opposition been a foregone conclusion from the outset, the withering indignation which flames from Christ's denunciation of their attitude is unaccountable. Whatever its/

its final effect upon doctrine may be, it is essential to insist on the ethical reality of Christ's life and ministry, on the perfect sincerity of His appeal to His own people in the first instance, and on the patent evidence that He was grievously disappointed. But if He had no gospel to preach, if there could be none until after His death, all is confusion and darkness.

These considerations do not lessen - they may well enhance the significance of Christ's death. What they do is to give it its necessary context in the moral sphere, to connect it immediately and organically with that for which He lived and laboured - the establishment of God's kingdom in the world. They inevitably suggest such questions as what would have happened had a majority of the rulers accepted Christ's doctrine, and thrown their influence on His side; whether in that case, He would have been put to a violent death; and if not, what the effect would have been on our doctrine of Atonement. These are neither fanciful nor irrelevant questions. They are directly prompted by the grief and disappointment with which Christ faced the final issues of His life. With such a source in the mind of Christ, they cannot be waived aside. It may be useless to try to answer them. Certainly such an attempt is not contemplated here. But the fact

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that they are so strongly suggested provides a necessary caution against the assumption that exactly what happened must have happened, if we were to have any Atonement at all; and they confirm the justice of the demand so insistent in our day, that the death of Christ be interpreted first of all with reference to His own mind, and that one purpose which manifestly inspired and controlled Him from beginning to end.

But the objection will hardly fail to be made that on such a showing the death of Christ is but a historical episode; that as such, it can have no final significance for the interpretation of God's mind towards men; and that it cuts away the basis for any reliable doctrine of Atonement for the sin of mankind.

The first reply that must be made to such an objection is that what ever the consequences may be, the truth and sincerity that appear in the life of Christ must not be compromised. If He who claimed to be the Truth, knew that He had no possible gospel for men until He should have died for them, and yet appealed to them as if expecting them to receive His word, and denounced those who rejected it, what credit remains for any doctrine that may be constructed on His death? We are bound to go even further/

further than the Ritschlian position which firmly insists that the general good which Christ sought for men had for Himself the importance and constraint of a personal end; in other words, that it had for Him the authoritativeness of duty. We are obliged also to say that the form in which He sought that end - calling upon men everywhere to repent, to have great faith in God, to live simply and without anxiety from day to day, to forgive injuries, to overcome evil with good, to love one another - assumes that He believed that such a course of life was practicable for all; and that, without waiting on any future achievement of His.

With regard to the objection itself, it may be said that it is based on a strange and untenable view of history. The great events that constitute history are not meaningless. It is in these, if anywhere, that meaning is to be found, and light cast on the enduring realities of universal life. No doubt, there are multitudes of episodes in history, that have no outstanding importance. But the reason of their unimportance is not that they are historical happenings, but that those to whom they happened represented nothing of vital, universal concern. Multitudes of people had died in the heart of Africa, leaving things largely as they had found them, until one day a white man of a character unique in these regions, was found dead on his knees beside his/

his humble bed. The death of David Livingstone, so fitly completing his sacrificial life, was an event of first-rate importance for Africa, the full meaning of which remains to be unfolded in the spiritual history of that country. The truth is that the greater the personalities, the greater is the significance for mankind of all that befalls them in the world. Their experience may indeed be said to reveal and illustrate the essential meaning of life and history. Therefore, instead of imagining that the death of Christ was a mere episode, we have reason to suppose that, in view of the circumstances under which it was perpetrated and borne, and as the final experience of the supreme personality of time, it may well have what has been claimed for it from the beginning - a universal and absolute importance. For no one was ever so clearly and so unswervingly the embodiment and illustration of a life of truth, holiness and love; nor did ever any one have such consciousness of God as He; so that in all that He does, He is but an organ of the Divine will, expressing the holy love of the Father for His children. Such a consciousness of God imposed its own obligations, and set for Christ the imperious vocation from which He never wavered - even to seek to introduce others to the same kind of knowledge of God and of the life that issues from it as He himself enjoyed. Proceeding with this high task by instruction/

instruction, persuasion, and the commendation of His own example, He finds that He is dividing society into two classes - friends and enemies, the latter steadily hardening into the resolution to destroy Him. Under that menace, and with eyes that saw into the dark abysses of the human heart, Christ could only continue to set forth the way of life, although latterly He gave more attention to the instruction of His disciples than to public teaching. When at length the crisis arrived, it was one that was charged with the ultimate antagonism between light and darkness. There was nothing here of the accidental. An episode in history, of course; but an episode in which the nature of history itself is set forth; in which the heart of the Eternal is uniquely revealed, and the moral condition of the race is exposed. Every generation of Christians, in spite of confusing theories, has had the insight to see the Divine faithfulness and love in the bearing of Christ, and to read their own sin in the opposition to Him. Whether in the realm of nature or of Society, great historical events are revelations of their respective constituent forces, and as such, have a universal and permanent validity. An earthquake or a revolution is not merely an episode: it is much more an apocalypse. There is no reason to suppose that a similar importance may not attach to a historical event, the forces of which were spiritual. If such were not the case, we should have to conclude/

conclude that spiritual life is anarchic; that the experience of the loftiest personalities has nothing to teach the rest; that there are, in fact, no universal moral relations between God and man. But as such a doctrine is impossible, and the lives of exceptional men are of greatest interest and importance when they are most representative, the way is clear to hold that the action and passion of a unique historical personality may well be in the nature of a sublime revelation, valid and final for all mankind. This is the contention and the assurance of the Church to-day as it ever was, declaring that in the historic Christ, in His ministry, passion death, and resurrection, God's grace towards mankind has been signally set forth, and sealed forever. Yet, none the less, it was in His dealing with the situation into which His own goodness and the malignity of men had brought Him, so carrying His work forward to its ultimate test and triumph, that the final experience and bearing of Christ have their absolute value. Whatever objection may be raised to it, that of discounting it as merely historical has no force, and cannot be maintained. There is no reason why the historical should not be the eternal here as well as in other directions. It is a question of interpretation.

It is necessary, therefore, to maintain on the one hand the reality of Christ's gospel to His own contemporaries, the sincerity and hope with which He proclaimed it, the disappointment with which He realised that if many were called, few were chosen; and on the other, to find in His voluntary/

voluntary sufferings the continuation and proof of the reality of His message, and His unfaltering fidelity to it, even unto death. Without such close connection with the ethical conditions of His vocation, His work as a whole cannot be understood: its unity is broken; its order reversed; its content loses reality. That, however, does not in the least prevent us finding meanings of universal importance both in His doctrine, and in the final stage of His ministry. Rather, it enables us to do so. Moreover, it is clear that when the Apostles obtained their gospel, it was none the less through a process of reflection on the facts of His life, death and resurrection, even though they had the assistance of the spirit of revelation. It is true that they make little reference to the life of Christ, when declaring the various meanings they attached to His death. The exigencies of their converts which occasioned so many of their writings, appeared to call for exhortations based upon the fundamental doctrines of the faith, summarised without much argument. But as we have been furnished with the data contained in the Gospels, we cannot set them aside; nor can we help seeking to bring our final doctrine of redemption into harmony with the mind of Christ as it is revealed in His own teaching. We are as free and as bound as they were reverently to declare the irresistible inferences that our minds draw from all that we know of Christ. It may be

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that we shall come to substantially identical conclusions; yet we must come at them by our own processes of thought, emphasising those aspects of the truth that seem to us most vital and important. For us, it is axiomatic that Christ would not Himself have preached, nor would He have sent forth others to preach, if there had been no gospel to proclaim; that He would not have appealed to the nation, if He had known beforehand that the nation was helpless to respond, and would surely reject His message; and that His death is, in the first instance, that of the faithful Witness, whose whole action, whatever more it was or implied, never fell below the ethical level. Such axioms are different from the comprehensive one with which doctrine formerly started - that in Christ we have the God-man coming to avert by a propitiatory death the wrath of God against a sinful and perishing race. That indeed, may still be, in a certain sense, the conclusion of the whole matter; but to put it first has the effect of giving the impression of unreality to the whole of Christ's life before the Passion, and to divorce the spiritual from the ethical. We are still able and bound to say that He died for all; that He died for our sins; that He hath delivered us from wrath and curse; but we say it because in a certain historical situation in which the forces of evil in human society reached an unparalleled climax, representative of the worst that can ever be done by men, He bore and defeated them in an answering

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climax of divine goodness that is ever representative of God, in His attitude to the race. The conflict was precipitated by Christ's character, in which the purpose of founding God's kingdom in the world was the unalterable and all-inclusive motive. He did all that was possible to win men for the kingdom, by word, deed, and example, and when they prepared death for Him, He resolved to undergo it at their hands for the same end, believing that in His death even more clearly than in His life, men would see what He meant, and what God through Him, intended for them. This is surely the meaning of His saying that if lifted up, He would draw all men unto Him. It is true that as He approaches the end, He feels that He is fulfilling prophecy and going a pre-destined way; but never so that He is not a free agent, or has to act without regard to the ethical situation. The hour of darkness is at hand; but it is being prepared by the children of darkness, and He waits until they have fully worked out their design. Christ died for the sins of the world; but He was led to that momentous issue by the deliberate resolve of sinners to destroy Him. We see therefore in the life of Christ the progressive unfolding of divine Love, rising to meet every emergency which the sin of men devised for Him, until at last that Love submits to receive the fate of repudiation and death which enmity decreed for Him. It is not possible to assign its essential value to His sacrifice, unless its connection with its/

its context is thus maintained.

Another question arises here, that calls for some attention. It is contended that Christ's appeal to the nation, and His manifest sorrow at its failure to respond, presume that at one time at least, He thought that Israel might be saved for God's purposes in the world. If He thought that such a consummation of His ministry was possible so that He took His stand upon the possibility, and addressed His fellow-countrymen with a view to its realisation, can the fundamental importance commonly attributed to His death as necessary for salvation, really belong to it? It has been the assumption of an influential and evangelical school of theology that it was the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary that made it possible for God to forgive both those believers who had lived in pre-Christian days, and those who came after the event, inasmuch as to the mind of God, an event foreseen is as valid as one that has actually taken place in time. But what if the prophet who was so much greater than Jonah had seen Nineveh's repentance repeated in the case of Israel? Christ's allusion to the remarkable Old Testament story indicates that the parallel had presented itself strongly to His mind. In such an event, it is hard to suppose that His death would have been encompassed under conditions of violence, injustice, shame, and cruelty. Doubtless, He would still have/

have died; since that experience is the hardest in the human lot which He had fully undertaken, and it is in connection with it that sin bears most severely on the human soul. Nevertheless, the circumstances of His death might have been different. This possibility that appears to have seriously engaged the mind of Christ, and for a time at least, inspired Him with hope, cannot be summarily dismissed. It serves to caution us against an assured dogmatism, based upon unverifiable assumptions, and unchecked by all the data that belong to the subject. The suggestion of this consideration is that the mere fact of sin in the world did not of itself necessitate the kind of death that Christ died, but rather that the fierce intensity of that sin, as manifested by the leaders of Israel, brought it upon Him; so that, instead of a general repentance, a hardening of heart and a hostility reckless of consequence, confronted Him. If repentance on a large scale had taken place, we cannot say assuredly what specific doctrine of Atonement we should have had; but we can see that some of the data for it, and possibly, some elements of the doctrine itself, would have been different from what they are. It is not to be forgotten in this connection that "The Lamb was slain from the foundations of the world", that the principle of redemptive sacrifice is eternal in God; yet, it is wise not to assert too confidently that the Atonement would have taken exactly the form it has taken, irrespective of the attitude of the Jews to Christ; while on the other hand, to say that their attitude could not have been different, since it was required to precipitate the great event, is to beg the whole question. Each of these assumptions does violence to the facts, presented in the life of Christ. We are therefore obliged to take the facts themselves,/

themselves, and to interpret them as faithfully as we can.

One thing that may confidently be said is that, whatever the possibilities may have been, the situation as it developed and finally confronted Christ, required the supreme sacrifice which He made to meet it. If the evil in society was so resolute and malign as to insist on His destruction, He must face and bear its onslaught in unchanging holiness and love, if He is to be true to Himself, and represent God's victory over evil. In other words, the spiritual condition of men being what it was, and Christ's character and purpose being what they were, nothing short of His death at their hands could have exhausted and mastered sin, and revealed the incomparable grace of God. Moreover, it seems to be within our right to say that such an event, once it has been accomplished, possesses an eternal validity. Historicity, instead of depriving it of value, is the very hall-mark of its supreme worth and permanent reality. There is nothing fortuitous about it. Human nature, under the challenge of an unexampled presentation of goodness, declares its utmost wickedness. Reality faces reality; and the historical conflict is but the exposure of timeless truth. That is surely a sound enough foundation on which to build doctrine. The addition of buttresses that have the effect of introducing an element of masquerade into the life of Christ is not a strengthening but a weakening of that foundation.

The first conclusion, then, is that Christ lived to proclaim a gospel and died to confirm it. The confirmation, achieved through an unexampled passion, absorbs the essential meaning of that gospel, and attracts universal attention. Nevertheless, without the preceding word of the Kingdom, the confirmation would have been unintelligible. The word interprets the passion; the passion illustrates and establishes the word; both coalesce into one divine message. It is necessary to keep this connection in view in all interpretations of Christ's death. It is the only sound basis on which to erect a doctrine of Atonement that can grip the minds of thoughtful people.

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Chapter VI.

-:- CONCERNING -:-

-:- REPENTANCE AND THE REMISSION OF SINS -:-

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It has been assumed in every form which the Legal theory of the Atonement has taken that the Passion of Christ, is in the nature of an indemnity for the breach of divine Law, and the dishonour to the divine Majesty which sin of every kind involves; that without this indemnity, the wrath of God against sin could not have been turned aside, nor mercy have come into operation. The Law of God, it was asserted, must be upheld at all costs. All infraction of it must be met with punishment. The terrible experiences of Christ in His Passion are of the nature of this punishment, due by mankind, but voluntarily undertaken by Him on behalf of the race, or at least on behalf of the elect members of the race; the effect being that the holiness and majesty of the Law that follows every transgression with penalty, having been vicariously vindicated, God is thereby free to forgive all who turn to Him in penitence. This view has been subjected to the severest criticism, and so effectively that its cruder forms have been abandoned. These need not detain us, as they are not likely to be revived./

revived. Nevertheless, the essence of the view persists in the powerfully argued works of such recent theologians as Dale and Denney and Forsyth. The chief strength of these arguments is the scholarly exegesis of the New Testament passages which bear directly on the interpretation of the death of Christ.

It cannot be denied that there are important passages in the Pauline writings especially, that appear most easily to yield the interpretation which these writers give. But exegesis, however accurate, cannot be considered decisive of such an issue as is here involved; for exegesis is concerned with words and their traditional meaning and associations. It was perhaps inevitable that the terms which Jews would use to interpret the death of Christ, should be borrowed from the familiar ritual of their sacrifices. But that cannot be allowed to dictate the sense in which His sacrifice is to be understood. A great change of opinion has taken place among scholars as to the significance of the Jewish sacrificial system itself; especially as to whether the victim was intended to take the offerer's place, as formerly suppossed, thus appeasing the wrath of the Deity. Modern interpreters examining the Old Testament critically, appear on the whole to have abandoned the view which considered the victim a substitute for the offender. They hold/

hold that as blood was anciently regarded as possessed of supreme purifying powers, the object of shedding so much of it in sacrifice is to render the people ritually holy; and that the victim after the shedding of its blood, was treated as a gift well-pleasing to God, or a symbol of the fellowship that existed between Himself and His people. It is not forgotten either, that on the great Day of Atonement, when the ritual reached its highest power of significance, the animal which symbolically bore the sin of the people, was treated as accursed, and instead of being offered on the altar, was driven away into the wilderness out of the sight of men. This feature of the proceedings is clearly of great importance, in its bearing on the interpretation to be given to the altar victims. It seems conclusively to rule out the view that these were at any time regarded as sin-bearing substitutes for guilty men. Moreover such atonement as was made, excluded the case of those who were considered deserving of death: they were put to death. Only the less heinous offences could be atoned for. But even if the case were otherwise, and the altar victims were more clearly indicated as standing for the forfeited lives of the offerers, we could not regard such ritual as determinative of the meaning of the Redeemers sacrifice. At best, it could only point

to/

to something so much more excellent than itself, that we should have to look elsewhere for its rationale. Therefore, exegesis, however brilliant and scholarly, is not final in the treatment of this question, even though one were prepared to forget that the same terms, used in connection with a spiritual religion, may be far removed in meaning from that which they carry in the externalism of a ceremonial worship. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews did not forget this latter consideration. The shadowiness of the old institutional order is strongly emphasised by him; and although he follows its suggestions in his appeal to a Jewish community, he does so with extraordinary freedom, using the familiar cultus as an illustration of the final realities of the New Faith, without imposing its restrictive meanings on the latter.

But above all this, it must be definitely said and steadily maintained that the interpretation of the death of Christ cannot be made on any narrower basis than that of the whole body of His own doctrine, supported by His example, along with such Apostolic references as are to be found in the rest of the New Testament. Of these data, the former portion cannot be depressed out of sight. On the contrary, any view of Christ's death that is demonstrably inconsistent with His own general teaching concerning/

concerning God and Forgiveness, is thereby inadmissible. Now, it has already been shown that not only is there nothing to indicate that Christ was conscious that His self-sacrifice was primarily intended to vindicate Law, but the burden of His teaching concerning God and His attitude to sinners, appears definitely opposed to such a supposition. Never once does He give the impression that there was any legal difficulty impeding the action of the Divine mercy. The difficulty which He encountered and repeatedly deplored was of another kind - the impenitence and the unbelief of men, while exceptional faith in God gave Him peculiar satisfaction. He himself forgave sins, without reference to any conditioning sacrifice. The Gospel of the kingdom which He personally taught and commissioned His disciples to teach, knows nothing of it. If such an obstacle to the free movement of the grace of God existed on the side of God, it is more than remarkable that it should find no place any where in the whole body of doctrine concerning the kingdom of God, or of the forgiveness of sins that can be attributed clearly to Christ. The references which He makes to His impending death, not excluding the "ransom" passage and the solemn words instituting the Supper cannot be made to yield a sense foreign to the mind of Christ as revealed in the rest of His/

His teaching. There is no statement of His which indicates that His death is necessary because the law of God demands satisfaction. Besides, if the case were otherwise, and the contention of the Satisfactionist writers from Anselm onwards were well founded, certain unfortunate effects would appear to follow:- the supreme work of Christ would have to consist in the placating and turning away of something in God which must have been hostile to sinners as such. Indeed, this is precisely the effect which the doctrine of substitution has had, both over the minds of those who accepted and of those who rejected it. But on the other hand, it has to be remembered that, according to Christ himself, there is the most complete accord between Himself and the Father; that He does nothing of Himself, but all that He does is as the Father shows Him. Even Saint Paul whose statements provide the view in question with its main support holds that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them". There is nothing which so fills the mind of the great Apostle as gratitude for the grace of God. But grace is no longer grace, when it is presented as an arrangement in which, the divine wrath having been completely met, and all the demands of the divine law having been satisfied, the good-will of God is free to operate/

operate savingly upon the children of men. Whatever the case may have been in past times, it is no longer possible to present such a scheme of salvation before men and expect them to accept it with wondering gratitude. The truth is that not only is it self-contradictory, but its legalist form destroys the impression of grace, without which there is no gospel. Such misrepresentation naturally creates prejudice, and is a serious disservice to the Christian faith. Again, if satisfaction of the Law's penal requirements were Christ's chief work, not only might He have appeared at any time in history, and among any people, making His late appearance in the fulness of the times astonishing; but - what is more serious - it seems to cast suspicion on the sincerity of Christ's appeals to the Jewish nation. We have already seen that He appears genuinely to call that nation to repentance and faith, and to the new type of life that is placed before all in the Sermon on the Mount. That at an early stage in His ministry, He realised that His message was not going to receive general assent, is clear. That it could only make its way through bitter persecution and probably the death of its early advocates, came later on to be apprehended. There is no difficulty in seeing how Christ should have begun to preach the good news of the kingdom hopefully enough to the people, then began to measure the opposition to His message, and thereafter came to the/

the conclusion that His own death by violence and at no great distance, was involved in the cause which He represented, not because any law of divine justice demanded it, but because the ignorance and the wickedness of men opposed Him, and the truth which was in Him and the love which would not refuse to suffer death if need be, constrained Him. That which He came to reveal must not be compromised, but must shine clearly through the final test of suffering and death, if these be God's will for Him. No one however, can miss, the note of profound sorrow and disappointment with which Christ recognises that the nation, which He would fain have gathered under His loving protection, had rejected Him and had exposed itself to the wrath of the destroyer. Could He have thus bewailed the situation if He had not genuinely expected a different result; if He had not offered His gospel of the kingdom of heaven in the hope that it would have prevented the calamity which He now sees to impend? He recognised indeed that the Son of Man was going as prophecy had indicated, yet this does not assuage the grief with which He sees the tragedy of the situation. Confessedly, the consciousness of Christ is a great deep, concerning which wisdom suggests that our judgments should be given with not less caution than reverence. Yet, if we have to form any judgment upon it/

it, we are bound to give weight to that which He enables us clearly to see rather than to that which can only be imagined. We find Him speaking as though the situation which had developed out of His ministry were breaking His heart, as if the treachery of Judas, for example, were a deep disappointment to Him, and as though in His own mind, even at the last moment, there might be another issue possible than that which confronted Him. There are clear elements in the thought of Christ as He approaches the supreme crisis of His redemptive ministry. They are all intelligible, on the assumption that He had other anticipations of the end of His ministry, that though He should suffer, Israel might be saved. But if the supreme object of His ministry was to make satisfaction for the sins of the world in the sense of undergoing punishment enough to compensate the divine law for all dishonour done to it, not only is there no statement to that effect, but His profound grief and disappointment are hard, if not impossible, to understand. There is no natural or ascertainable connection between such a construction of His self-sacrifice and the most evident elements of His own thought at the time. It sounds foreign and unreal when we read the tense and tragic story of the Passion, so full of human interest, so strained with the conflict between divine goodness/

goodness and diabolical wickedness. In this tremendous drama, the action and passion of Christ has, indeed, an absolute value for both God and man; it has an objective and permanent reality for all who appreciate it, since through it alone they effectively believe and are assured of the forgiveness of their sins. But to interpret this supreme reality in terms of Law, other than that of love to God and man constraining Christ, is to introduce an element of confusion and darkness into it, for which there is no warrant in the one context that is of chief importance for its understanding - the revealed mind of Christ Himself with regard to His sufferings.

But the question now remains to be faced - Why is the forgiveness of sins so closely associated with the death of Christ, both in undoubted statements of Christ Himself, and of so many of His apostles. Without a satisfactory answer to that question, one cannot understand some of the most fundamental passages of the New Testament. The Gospel will also appear obscure and confusing at the very point in which its supreme interest lies. If a reasonable account of this relation can be given, and it possesses the essential merit of being in harmony with Christ's own gospel of the Kingdom, it will not be without some value for such as desire a unified view of their faith as/

as a whole. Such an answer may be reached from a consideration of the moral conditions of forgiveness itself.

The great difficulty with regard to forgiveness has always lain in man's inadequate realisation of the nature and gravity of sin, and in his consequent failure to repent of it. There is no exaggeration in saying that until the coming of Christ, the essential malignity of sin could not be exposed, since the best were tainted by it; that therefore penitence for it could only be superficial, so making forgiveness precarious, and often even impossible. If forgiveness consisted in the removal of penalties arbitrarily devised in order to discourage evil-doers, and so conduce towards the well-being of all; or, if it were the generous forgetting of all affronts to the Divine Being involved in all sin, the case would be different, the problem easier; for in both instances, forgiveness would be possible as soon as it became evident that the forgiven would be on the side of the general moral order and the honour of the Divine Being. The past in such a case, might be overlooked, provided there is anything in the Divine method analogous to that which is divinely enjoined on mankind. But it is a deeper and more difficult matter than this. Forgiveness fundamentally means the abolition/

abolition of the moral barrier that sin creates between God and man, and the restoration of right personal relations between them. The idea of the removal of penalties, or of the ignoring of insults, or of the cancellation of a debt, or of the acquittal of a criminal is not only a partial, but also a low and inadequate conception of what forgiveness means, and of the result achieved through it. The peace and happiness of the reconciled, the awakening of the filial spirit in place of a hostile or servile attitude, the fellowship with God which is life eternal -- all this in which forgiveness consists and is recognisable, is not indicated by such descriptions, although it need not be denied that there is something corresponding to them in the experience which they endeavour to describe. But the categories are too formal, too external to give a really true account of a profound experience on man's part, and an act of tender and redeeming grace on the part of God.

This being the case, the first condition of reconciliation, on man's part begins to exist only when he becomes seriously troubled by the existence and the nature of the barrier that separates him from the sense of God's favour, and he is prepared to seek its removal. In other words, forgiveness is possible only for the penitent. But impenitence is the common condition. Even in the case of those who are in a measure morally awake and sensitive, what they often feel most depressing is the inadequacy and

the mixed character of their regret for evil done. The truth is that few conditions are rarer than repentance towards God; for this means the sorrowful acknowledgment and the resolute repudiation of an act or a habit, a desire or a purpose in which the conscience detects evil; repudiation, because of the evil detected being heinous in the sight of God, and not merely discreditable to oneself and unfair to others. Men may recognise a moral order, requiring of them to deal fairly with all interests, to act justly in all their social relationships; they may regard this order as divinely sanctioned, so that the breach of it is felt to be both a social wrong and a transgression of a solemn ordinance. But while such recognition has its value, it is a partial and inadequate sense of the nature and the gravity of offence. It was doubtless, this that moved Anselm to ask - "Considerasti quantum ponderis peccatum sit"? If men go further and acknowledge the right of God to their love and loyalty, it is a distinct advance in the only hopeful direction. But the common sequel to such an avowal shows how much more that is essential is lacking. The practical denial of this fundamental obligation, the ease with which it is ignored, or treated as mainly irrelevant to the business of life, the levity with which men proceed in a godless if outwardly respectable course, their satisfaction/

satisfaction with a career of self-seeking and self-indulgence, the absence of discomfort because of failure, neglect, or short-coming in duty - all this shows, perhaps not less than grosser violations of the sanctities, the profound problem that is involved in the forgiveness of sin.

More vividly than any other history, that of Israel shows the desperate hold that evil has on the nature of man, and the incompetence of law-giver, priest, and prophet to release it. Knowing the great, positive all-inclusive commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself," having its bearings and implications detailed with great care, with lively penalties attached to their transgression, Israel lamentably failed to attain the filial spirit. The pure and lofty ideal set forth in the Law remained largely inoperative in the national life, although some men of rare insight and piety like the author of the fifty-first Psalm, and practically all the major prophets, reached a sense of the nature and seriousness of sin as poignant and grave as anything that can be found in the New Testament, except when the conception arises that the redeemed personality is a temple for the occupation of God so that the defiling of

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it is the gravest sacrilege. There is a sense in which it is true that the most glorious literature in the Old Testament - the works of the prophets - is also the most depressing. It seldom or never has occasion to point to any time in the whole history of the nation when the conditions of the Divine Covenant with Israel were approximately observed by the nation, and its despair is only relieved when it sees afar the day of a new Covenant, when the Law would be written on the hearts of the people, and a divine kingdom would be established by the moving influence of a great, suffering Personality - "the Servant of the Lord."

Apart from Israel, the conception of sin as a malign and fatal condition of the soul of man was on the whole but feebly apprehended. The Gentile nations were, of course, nothing if not religious. They were not without many an impressive witness to the authority of righteousness. But it was often mingled with confusing superstitutions. The will of gods was seldom clearly communicated by their interpreters to the people; and when it was, often it was easier to fear than to respect it. When however, it could be respected and had its echo in the conscience, it was understood to have exceptional significance, and its transgression to carry a solemn and awful liability to punishment. This was commonly looked for in the outward evils of life, and/

and in the grievous experiences awaiting the guilty in the realm of the Dead. But it does not appear to have been recognised with any clearness that hardening of the heart, hatred of goodness, or the moral torpor which is indifferent to good and evil, are among the most severe and hopeless consequences of wickedness; or that wickedness itself reveals a moral condition which, without considering remoter issues of it, is alike terrible and pitable. When an apostle, writing to a typical enough community of the Gentile world, could say- "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins" or could have described the conditions that were general in the more enlightened and the proudest nations of the earth as he sets these forth in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he indicates plainly enough the extreme seriousness of the problem of man's general moral condition. Their own moralists too like the Jewish prophets, only serve to show the impotence of the best men of the race to intervene effectively in the moral life of their people.

Now the supreme object of redemption is the deliverance of mankind from the power of sin through reconciliation with God, and fellowship with Him, "as dear children walking in love". Or, it may be described as the establishment of the kingdom of God among men, with its supreme gift of eternal life. However it may be described, in the nature of the/

the case, there can be no hope of such a spiritual transformation as it involves, until men, seeing and hating themselves as they are, earnestly desire to be different, and have reason to believe that they can undergo a spiritual change for the better. More than this, there can be no adequate realisation of the heinousness of the sin that so easily besets all so long as it is considered as either breach of Law or failure to comply with its ideal requirements. Even when the Law is identified with the will of God, it remains a cold abstraction, making severe demands for which only a few of the nobler sort of mind can become enthusiastic, though like Saul of Tarsus, they are well aware that it is holy and good. Further, the Law as such could never make human iniquity recognise its own meaning; for it failed to show the best that is in God, in its attitude to the worst that is in man. As long as the will of God was expressed for the most part in prohibitive statutes, the heart of man was apt to be resentful, as towards a Sovereign, seeking to enforce an exacting authority. There were indeed great qualifications of this conception of the relation of God to mankind. His goodness and mercy, His long-suffering and forgiveness, His repeated appeals to His people that they should return from their evil ways that they might have true life in His favour, were the themes of many prophets and psalmists. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the final result/

result of Jadaism was Pharisaism, while the first results of Christianity were the Apostles, proclaiming the good news of salvation throughout the whole world that was open to them. The contrast between them could hardly have been greater, whether in their thought of God or in their character. The difference was entirely due to the revelation of God which Christ gave through His doctrine, action, and passion, followed by His resurrection. However true it may be that most elements of Christianity are to be found in Judaism, and that Christ came to fulfil Law and Prophecy, it is even more true to say that the change which He effected in men's conception of God, of His relations with and purpose for the race, of sin and righteousness, of life and death, and of human destiny hereafter created the greatest revolution in human thought that the world has ever experienced. It is hard to imagine how such a change could ever have taken place, except as it has actually happened, namely, through the revelation of the Father, given by the Son in our human nature. If it could not otherwise have been secured, perhaps here we come upon that divine necessity for the Incarnation and the Passion, which the Penal theorists have found in the obligation resting on man's Substitute to expiate man's guilt. The obligations which such love as is patent in the service and the sufferings of Christ imposed upon Him may well have been, as constraining as those considerations of the public interest that a judge of/

of inexorable rectitude might feel in dealing with a criminal. It is not possible to believe that God can be free from such obligations. To do so would involve disloyalty to the highest conception of God that has come to us. It is the finest evidence of the moral quality of a man that he treats obligations of honour as not less imperative than those of law. When the prophet understands God to say, "I have made, and I will bear" he doubtless did not imagine that this was inconsistent with the Divine sovereignty, but rather than it was a worthier conception than that of an irresponsible monarch, who might or might not intervene savingly towards those whom, whatever their wickedness or their folly, He alone could help. But the ancient word spoken by the prophet towards Israel, God has uttered towards the race when Christ assumes the nature of man, lives in it a life of perfect sonship to God, and brotherliness to man, and at last dies in it, quenching the bitterest malignity of sinful men in holy, forgiving love.

This wonderful life of Sonship, culminating in the achievement on the Cross is the supreme instrument for the preparation of that mind in men on which forgiveness can be bestowed. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" His meat and drink was to do the will of God and declare the Name of God - that which God is and intends/

intends for mankind. He devoted Himself to this one interest in His doctrine, and examplified the doctrine in His perfect filial attitude to God, in His mighty ministry of compassion and healing, and finally in maintaining the same sublime attitude towards God and man through the solitude and agony that came to be His final experience of life in face of the deadly hostility of the rulers and the horror of the moral situation of which He was the victim. The comparative failure of all His disciples to understand or support Him, the treachery of one of them, the callous wiles of the representatives of religion, the distortion of justice, the needless cruelty and mockery indulged in, the wild cry for a murderer's release, and for the torture and death of Him who was not only innocent, but a constant benefactor, if only through His healing ministry -- all this "hour and power" of darkness could hardly have appeared more revolting, or more calculated to provoke in a sufferer a storm of protest, a reaction of anger, scorn or despair. But Christ met its impact by a quality of goodness as illustrious as the militant wickedness with which He was surrounded was intense. No change came over His attitude to God, who had appointed a lot so hard, a cup so bitter. Towards man, not only did Christ in His great trial maintain the love which He had taught in word and shown in deed, but He manifested an intensive development of it

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that borders on the incredible -- He prays for them out of His agony. Had He complained of their ingratitude, or expressed indignation at their injustice, He would still have remained blameless, and would only have done what the best human judgment would have approved. Had He been silent in face of such treatment, not through anger but because all words are inadequate to meet such iniquity, such silence might well have been considered a singular signal of moral purity and elevation of soul. But when He is found passing beyond all such ranges of thought and feeling into one in which He actually makes intercession for the transgressors, men can only stand in awe and worship before that which is divinely holy and morally sublime. They see the Worst, having done its utmost, only succeeding in evoking the innermost goodness of the Best. Malignity has thus been met and mastered by a holy love that appears so unqualified, and so triumphant over all that opposed it, as to be final. Such love can be nothing else than the love of God in Christ Jesus, the Lord.

Here, then, in the matchless quality of the sacrifice of Christ is the power of God that can bring sin-hardened and guilty souls to repentance; for where else or how can they see themselves as they are in the sight of God, or recognise their ordinary selfishness, worldliness,/

worldliness, and cowardice as hostility to God, or realise the inexhaustible patience and love of God towards them even in their sins? If this revelation fails to bring them to some sense of their condition, it is hard to imagine anything that is likely to succeed. It was surely to this public exposition of divine love that Christ himself was alluding when He said- "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Or can it have been to the effect which His death would have on men when it would be explained as meeting and satisfying an avenging Law, or creating a supererogatory and infinite merit which might be credited to a spiritually bankrupt race, or providing an example of Divine severity in the interests of the moral order of the world, lest forgiveness might be mistaken for laxity and issue in laxity. However law, merit and morality are served and secured by the sacrifice of the Cross, none of them is its first interest, but rather to give repentance, remission of sins, and reconciliation with God, repentance being the indispensable condition of these latter experiences. It never was Law, or readiness to presume upon the Divine mercy that stood, nor is it either of these that stands, between God and man, but the wicked heart of unbelief, with all the corrupt interests that bind, blind, and harden it. Hence, the primary necessity for what Bushnell would call "a power to proceed upon" that wicked/

wicked heart to expose, judge, break, and humble it, so that from it may arise a cry for the remission of its sins, and for restoration to God. This is what Christ was chiefly concerned with in His life; and in addition to the high probability that His death was a moral necessity that issued consistently from His supreme life-interest, the fact is plain that His Cross and Passion deal with it mightily, and can so be interpreted simply and intelligibly. The first and last effect of the contemplation of the sacrifice of Christ upon a serious moral being is of a moral kind. To suppose that the supreme work of Christ in His death is to remove otherwise unsurmountable obstacles, on God's side to the forgiveness of sins owing to God's own law that the wages of sin is death, and the relation of this law to the Universe, only darkens counsel, and distracts attention from the simplicity and reality that are in Christ with respect to sin and its forgiveness, and from the nature of that "power of God unto salvation" which arises out of the presentation of His Cross as the final exposure and condemnation of sin on the one hand and the exhibition of all-bearing, all-subduing, all-forgiving love on the other. In so suffering at the hands of men, Christ brings the light of Eternal holiness and love to bear, with intense and moving power, upon the guilt of their hearts; gives them/

them self-knowledge; awakening the spirit of penitence within them; conveys to them by the very fact that He so suffers for them the forgiveness of God; and effects their reconciliation. Thus was He delivered for our offences - to put an end to them; thus did He die, that we might live. This account does not exhaust as we shall see in the following chapter, the meaning of the Cross; but it is the chief significance of it. Whatever aspect of it may be neglected, this aspect must ever be in the fore-ground.

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Chapter vii.

-;- CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH -:-

-:- CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. -:-

It is a strange, and in some respects, an unfortunate fate that befell the Gospel of Divine grace in that it ever came to be described in terms of Law; and that in celebrating the liberty of those who so receive it as to be able to walk, not after the flesh but after the Spirit, a legal conception should have been used. For so long as such a term as "justification" is employed, the implication remains that those to whom it applies have a legally valid status before God. This again assumes that the supreme interest governing the relation between God and His children is of a judicial nature; and that there is no standing-ground for sinners in the love and mercy of God until the interest of the divine Law is first secured.

There is little difficulty in seeing how St. Paul, with his Pharisaic training, used the conception of "justification" apart from the Law, since justification by the Law was the great question for everyone who took Judaism seriously. He clearly meant to say that the result which Judaism aimed but failed to secure, was in fact obtained through faith in Christ. As he never forgot his fellow-countrymen in all the churches to which he wrote, it was natural,/

natural, if not inevitable that he should appeal to them along a line which was central to their thinking. If to be free from condemnation and to be considered righteous, were the object which they sought through their observance of the Law, Paul shows that it is impossible of attainment that way; whereas those who were "in Christ" by faith, had already reached this condition, and one even more satisfactory. (Rom. VIII.) But St. Paul would have been the last to set up one form of legalism in place of another. He teaches that through Christ, men are forever delivered from the bondage of a nomistic religion; they are brought into the household of God; they are children and heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ; their lives are governed by the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit is, there is liberty. This status is conferred upon them by the pure grace of God, mediated by faith. For apologetic purposes, the Apostle borrows the term "justification" from Judaism; but the relation which it describes is really superseded in the religion which he preaches. The idea of justified children of God is not self-consistent or a happy one. It is composite and rather confusing, the one part deriving from a legal, the other from an ethical relationship. It may be replied that the one is precedent to the other; that first comes justification, afterwards, adoption. But no such stages can be discovered in spiritual experience. Whatever happens, it/

it is not recognisable as a graded process, begun on the basis of law, and passing into the region of liberty. Moreover, there is absolutely nothing in the Gospel as Christ proclaimed it, or in the view of God which He lived and died to unfold to the world, that warrants the description of believers as justified people. The whole appeal of Christ to men is based on His knowledge of God as the Father who seeks to save His lost children; in whose presence there is joy at the repentance of one sinner; and who is ever represented as waiting to respond to the faith of men. Exemplifying this Divine attitude, Christ calls on men to believe on Himself, to come to Him for rest, to follow Him for life and light. He blesses them in God's name, assures them of the forgiveness of their sins, and tells them to go in peace. His more intimate disciples He treats as special friends, shows them the mysteries of the kingdom, opens His very heart to them, spends great pains on their instruction, makes intercession for them, and loves them to the end and beyond it. To think of these disciples as justified, or of God as justifying them, is to drop into an alien category of thought. No doubt, they were justified, if anyone cared to state the position in such a stiff, formal, and inadequate manner; but they were so much more than justified that the latter idea does not even occur in the Gospels, unless that of the penitent publican who prayed in the Temple, any more than it would occur to one who should

want/

want to describe the fellowship of friends, between whom love and loyalty determine all relationships. St. Paul's pre-occupation with the law both before and after his conversion - in the one case painfully trying to keep it, in the other, to account for its temporary intervention - along with the profound and tenacious interest of his fellow-countrymen in it, led him to adopt this nomistic conception of "justification" to describe relations between God and man that are wholly due to and sustained by love.

A similar preoccupation with Law was at the root of the Reformation doctrine. Luther's intense search for peace on the basis of good works prescribed by the Church, led him to despair; out of which he was able to emerge only on the wings of faith without works. Coming to have practically the same experience as St. Paul's he naturally used the Pauline terms, though with special emphases of his own. The value of his discovery cannot well be over-estimated. Once more, the soul of man is delivered through Luther from the paralysing burden of a complicated, confusing, and corrupt religion, and restored to the simplicity and dignity of living by an all-sufficient, all-comprehensive faith in Christ. Yet, strange to say, the Reformers while loudly proclaiming their liberty, fell into a special legalism of their own. It is true that

no theologians held more strongly than they did that redemption originated and proceeded from the unmerited grace of God; yet, they also conceived of it as a redemption in which all that the Law demanded of the elect, was fully discharged by Christ before it was available for men. Hence, a perfectly valid legal work, fully satisfying the Divine justice, was set forth as accomplished by Christ on the Cross, on behalf of every believer; and this finished work, accepted by the believer, was the ground of his justification.

Few changes in doctrine are more noticeable than the obsolescence of this celebrated conception. It is hardly to be found in recent theological literature, in spite of Ritschl's famous treatise. Nor does it appear to offer to the preacher a useful method of setting forth the Gospel. The idea does not seem capable of making contact with the minds of people of these times. The chief reason for so great a change is in all probability, the increasing concentration of theological thought on the mind of Christ himself, rather than on the Apostolic formulations of the faith. Now, in the record of the Evangelists, not only is there no such idea as that of justification, but the ideas that are there are not readily compatible with it. These ideas, as we have already seen, pre-suppose a God who is not apparently concerned with justifying/

justifying anybody, but rather with welcoming sinners who repent. With whatever reverence Apostolic thought is to be regarded, it must not govern or obscure the teaching of Christ himself. Nor can it successfully be contended that Christ's message ought to give place to that of His apostles. It is true that His death made a difference; but it is a difference that cannot be held to disturb, let alone reverse, His own revelation of God. On the contrary, it is the climax and the seal of that revelation. It is because modern theology has become more faithful to this principle of interpreting the death of Christ as the culmination of His presentation of God to the world, and at the same time as the perfection of His own ethical sonship, obedience, and loyalty in His vocation, that legal concepts like justification have waned from the theological firmament. They are felt to be unreal, foreign, inapposite, belonging to a system of thought which failed to do justice to the ideas of the Christian religion, as it is declared by its Founder.

At the same time, it must not be forgotten that multitudes have found, and doubtless some will always find, the legal interpretation of Christ's redemptive work, as discharging their guilt, the first source of their peace. People morally awakened from a career of godless living, are susceptible to grave fear of the wrath of God. The urgent question/

question with them is how or why they may be forgiven their evil past, unless the responsibilities in which they had failed so lamentably, both towards God and man, have been fully met, so that they may honourably go free from condemnation. Or it may be put thus - How can they begin afresh until they have the assurance that the past has been adequately dealt with? This is for many, if not for all, a vital matter, and can hardly be ignored by any expositions of the work of Christ that keeps in view its saving purpose. It is precisely here that the Substitutionary and Penal theories offered a solution which satisfied many, although it may not satisfy so many in our day. The opus operatum, the finished work of Christ, in which He was understood to have honoured the claims of Divine Justice, even to the last penalty of death for the sin of the world, was understood to cancel all that stood against sinners, and so to clear the ground for a fresh start.

It must be said however that this demand is itself largely the result of certain false emphases or misrepresentations of the Atonement, which have prevailed more or less since the days of Anselm. When God's fundamental relation to the children of men is conceived as that existing between a monarch of infinite dignity and subjects who owed Him the debt of absolute obedience, or it is

conceived/

conceived as that of a judge who must administer a universal law that must punish all offences in the person either of the actual offender or of a substitute, conscience will require from those holding such a view that their moral debt be liquidated before there can be any salvation for them. But reflection has made it increasingly difficult to maintain such a view whether of God's primary relation to mankind or of the work of Christ on the race's behalf. It is not possible to deduce such a conception of God from the teaching of Christ concerning Him. It is equally impossible to infer from Christ's references to His own work in the world any trace of the idea that He came specifically and primarily to satisfy a punitive law, or to offer Himself before a judge as a substitute for a guilty race. Nor does it appear to be dealing with moral reality at all to suppose that even He could have satisfied by an equivalence of suffering all that the Law was supposed to demand of every member of the innumerable multitudes of mankind. To attribute in the Anselmic manner an infinite value due to His divinity, to His sufferings is a fantastic device that fails to convince, in spite of its manifest homage to the power and worth of Christ's person. This however, is not the only nor the strongest objection. There is the more serious one that the grace of God is being distorted by all such attempts at equivalence; that they

mean/

mean and insist that God must punish someone before He can or will pardon anyone; and that forgiveness on such terms is a misnomer for a discharge to which one is legally entitled. Such an interpretation may be acceptable to some of those who are experiencing the terrors of an awakened conscience, and whose first interest is relief one way or another. But even if it so serves, the view cannot be allowed to pass for the truth, if it offends against the revelation of God, given in His Son, and is inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel. If anything is clearer than another in the doctrine of Christ, it is that God's fundamental relation to mankind is that of Father; and that only as this relationship is maintained and honoured by His children do they have life. "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the Father, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent". It cannot be admitted that claims of any kind are to be satisfied before God can be considered in the paternal relation to mankind. It would be a virtual denial of this relationship to suppose that it is baulked and frustrated by something else in God. Such procedure is to put darkness for light, and the postulates of certain theologians in the place of the historic revelation of Jesus Christ. The claims of justice and holiness are indeed real and insistent, and must be met in the reconciliation which the Atonement secures; but they are made/

made by One who is Father before and while He is Judge. If there be any priority in any of the relationships which God bears to the race, it is surely in that which is creative. Hence, the paternal relationship as it precedes, must also embrace and qualify every other. But to require that the justice of God should assert itself in the infliction of punishment, whether on the guilty or on the innocent, before His grace could possibly operate, is effectively to destroy the conception of God which Christ came to make known and operative everywhere. To set up as Dale does, a law of righteousness that is so alive in God as to require its vindication through the infliction of a satisfactory penalty, before the love of God can be available for guilty man, is equivalent to the repudiation of the ruling conception of Christ regarding God, and most depressingly qualifies all that Christ ever said regarding the forgiveness of sins. There is never a hint in that teaching that the Divine forgiveness proceeds on a different principle from that on which men are urged to proceed; and there is never a hint that their sense of justice must be satisfied through the exaction of a penalty, or through an act of intense suffering on the part of a substitute, in place of the actual offender, before they forgive their debtors, or any who may have wronged them, however wantonly and repeatedly. The Parable of the Prodigal Son (as it is called/

called) uniquely relevant as it is to all discussions on this subject, fails even to allude to such a penalising condition of the Fatherly forgiveness. Though admittedly no parable can give the whole truth concerning any subject, there must be reasonable consistency between the part of the subject illustrated by a parable and the rest of that subject. In this instance, the very matter with which the parable is concerned - the father's unqualified, forgiveness of his son - would be incredible and could not have been put in such a form at all, if justice had first to be met before forgiveness could reach the penitent. The essence of the meaning of the Parable is the unconditional grace of the Father's welcome to His erring son on his return - so unlike the attitude of the Elder Brother, who if he relented at all, would be the kind of person to demand some satisfaction of his sense of outraged justice and wounded pride, and probably to insist on guarantees of good behaviour on the part of the returned scape-grace. It is not only gratuitous but misleading as well, to turn the royalty of welcome which it was the intention of Christ to emphasise, into something else, something that makes grace the result of the reconciliation of conflicting attributes of God's nature, rather than the out-going of that Love which qualifies and harmonises into one gracious Will all the attributes of the Divine Being.

The plight of an awakened conscience, painfully aware of guilt and demerit, is undoubtedly difficult to relieve. Even where the primacy of the paternal relationship of God is accepted, the seriousness of transgression is not thereby diminished. In some cases of very sensitive souls, it may well be considered increased, as sin against love seems less easily forgiven than if it were only against a general moral principle, though that too is ultimately to be referred to the same divine love. If, then, the conception of punishment as an expiation of this guilt, is no longer acceptable, what remains to take its place, and enable the conscience to find peace? How will the sense of demerit due to the relationship of the soul with God having been dishonoured, and the holy law of God having been repeatedly and wantonly disregarded, cease to disable and inhibit the soul? This insistent interest of the conscience must in some real way be met, before forgiveness can honourably be accepted; for everyone instinctively realises that salvation cannot be secured by simply ignoring the sin of the past, and the moral condition it has created in the sinner himself as well as probably in others. In most cases it is not pride that prevents the acceptance of a bare declaration of amnesty; rather, it is the conviction that the Universe, whatever/

whatever else it is, is ultimately an honest place, where causes of a certain kind must have consequences of a certain kind; that in a religious crisis, realities must be faced if ever they are to be faced; that grievous and heinous sin cannot be treated as though it had never been: and that moral responsibilities must be admitted and discharged as far as that is possible.

When religious experience takes this line, when the conscience has been trained in the fear of God, and the prevailing conception entertained of Him is that of Judge who will inexorably make requisition for sin, the soul may well be brought into such straits that some form of the doctrine of Merit may be necessary for its peace. This is a condition into which great numbers have been brought throughout the generations; nor would it be safe to suppose that great numbers may not reach it in the future. At present, it may be the case that not many are concerned with this form of religious experience; but that is not a sufficient assurance that it is definitely behind the race. The truth is that where conscience is concerned, it is impossible to say that its threats and forebodings may not at any time bring about the kind of crisis in question. Further, it would seem that the natural man finds it hard to believe the best regarding God, thinking/

thinking like the one-talented man of the parable, that He is hard and exacting, and that He will by no means clear the guilty, except on terms. Hence, it is likely enough that many will always feel that their first need is the pardon of their guilt on the clear basis of Christ having in some way satisfied God on their account. Until they have this assurance, they may be unable to believe in any spiritual fortune for themselves. It is probably the first meaning that the Gospel can have for them; and if there is nothing in the work of Christ to meet their case, it might be impossible to interest them in it. But for all who are so exercised, the moral achievement of the Redeemer throughout His life, and in His obedience unto death offers ample security and relief from the disabling consciousness of an evil past. It can so be presented without reading into it any purpose that was alien to it, or forcing it to yield a meaning that it cannot properly have. If the soul demands merit which it can plead before God, and on which it can take its stand, or in virtue of which it conceives that its sin and demerit in the sight of God may be forgiven, such merit may be seen in Christ's perfect love and loyalty towards God throughout His life, a love and loyalty that were signally revealed and finally sealed by the supreme test to which He submitted. The Temptation narrative/

narrative indicates the splendid prizes which Christ refused for God's sake, that He might manifest God's true Name to the world. It was a great renunciation; and the perfection of it is shown in the fact that Christ went not grudgingly but joyfully into the path of lowly, exhausting service, and neither complained nor faltered though He foresaw rejection and suffering before it was accomplished. He had to endure the contradiction of sinners, to experience misrepresentation and ingratitude in return for His labours of love; yet it was ever His meat and drink to do the Father's will, and finish the work appointed to Him. Steadfastly pursuing His vocation, in spite of all that threatened, and all that would distract Him, He remained in the love of God with soul unclouded and unstained, and with perfect fidelity. Subjected to the severest strain which perverted zeal and malice could devise against Him, experiencing the full onset of all the militant power of evil in society, victim also of a peculiarly distressing and prostrating treachery on the part of a chosen companion, Christ continued glorious in holiness, unshaken in fidelity, unchanged in His purpose of grace, without a shadow of resentment at His fate, bearing and revealing the will of God in a love that remained pure, strong and undiminished through the whole ordeal, culminating/

culminating at last in the amazing grace of intercession for the transgressors.

His maintenance of this sublime attitude is a revelation of godliness, that has inexhaustible and absolute worth. It is written that on several occasions a voice from heaven attested that He was the beloved Son in whom God was well pleased. Surely, on no occasion could this Divine satisfaction with the bearing of the Son have been so high or so deep as when He perfected His obedience and self-sacrifice in the spirit in which He endured the Cross. There the sin of man is shown for what it is by the very fact that Christ had to realise its nature, and suffer from it in such a manner; its guilt is seen in men's hatred of the Holy One, in the hideous contrast of their spirit with His; in the terrible issue of their self-will over against the meek yet mighty goodness that could bear all things at their hands, and yet seek their salvation, thus glorifying God beyond all that could be imagined. This bearing of Christ, following upon a life of service, in which He fulfilled the Father's will, and abode in His love, constitutes an objective reality of righteousness and holy worth, objective in the sense that it is a historic and complete achievement, of permanent import, and independent/

independent of men, but to which they may turn in their despair, in which they can find refuge in their distress, and the value of which they may plead when they would make a new and clean start with themselves. In that sense, it is an "opus operatum", to which nothing can be added by any one. More over, by the very nature of the case, it is done on behalf of God - to declare His Name; and for the sake of men - to deliver them from their sin that they might have abundant and eternal life. Priestliness since He makes intercession and vicariousness, since He gives His life a ransom for many - are essential aspects of Christ's action and passion, both to His own mind, and to that of all who consider His history. Hence, it is through His moral achievement that the bad conscience must find any peace that can be possible to it. Experience proves that even for the most unlikely, for such as sinned in wantonness, cruelty, and blasphemy, the peace of God which passes all understanding can come to keep their hearts in the knowledge and love of God. How, then, does this peace take the place of the turmoil and fear which a moral awakening involves for such as have so sinned? There must be some moral ground, other than what they are themselves, on which they take their stand. There are various ways of describing what happens at this crisis and it has often been/

been misrepresented. What really gives peace is the acceptance of the moral majesty of the Crucified, of His sublime spirit of holiness, obedience, and love which eternally satisfies the mind of God and is yet in principle communicable to men by a Redeemer with whom they are united. By faith to identify oneself with all this is equivalent at once to the complete condemnation of a past course of life in which self-will prevailed and wrought lawlessness; the repudiation of all perceived sin; and the adoption of the ethic of righteousness, as interpreted by that which the moral meaning seen especially in the Cross requires. This identification of one's moral being and purpose with Christ in His supreme self-revelation, or manifestation of God, is vividly represented by St. Paul when he habitually speaks of believers as being "in Christ" a mode of description which appears scores of times in his letters, and was characteristic of his thought. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things have become new." Again, in another important passage, he declares "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." In the Johannine writings, the same conception appears again and again in various guises, as in the figure of the vine and the branches, the Living Bread on which men must feed, and in the doctrine of/

of the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in the believer. As for the individual, so for the whole Church, Christ is a live environment, both of spiritual ideal and of moral power. Nevertheless God's chief interest is not that past offences should somehow be made good or obliterated, which is not possible; but rather that personalities should be redeemed from evil, and committed to a course of righteousness because righteousness is life and well-being. There is, therefore, no "justification" apart from deliberate and vital association with Christ. That which assures forgiveness, and really satisfies the conscience, is the adoption of the mind of Christ as it stands revealed in the Gospel, both towards God and man, towards sin and righteousness. This is effective repentance, and genuine salvation. But it cannot be said that such a moral change obliterates the facts of past wrong-doing or equates them in some scheme of moral book-keeping or prevents them from continuing to exercise some influence both on the agent, and on his associates or victims as the case may be, although the character of that influence may come to be modified. There is no way of undoing the past transgressions of Divine Law, which is involved in all sinful activity. Although the Prodigal returns, and receives the Father's forgiving welcome, although a great change/

change has taken place in his mind, and his moral future is going to be different in principle from his past, the fact must ever remain that he went away and acted disgracefully in the far country, where doubtless, his ways affected others as well as himself, and might continue their baneful influence long after his return. But in so far as he himself and his destiny are concerned, it is clear that the essential thing has happened - the Son is restored to the father, in the mind proper to a son with such a history, and with the resolve to obey his will, even as one of the hired servants. There is irreparable loss and damage connected with all sin; and all effort to think of it as though it had not been, or as if it could be squared by some equivalent, is like trying to make indemnities cover the guilt of men who should have resolved, for ends of their own, to precipitate a devastating war. But no one imagines that if there be forgiveness for such men, the war has lost on that account any of its tragic reality as historic fact, or that its grim consequences will not continue long after its more responsible perpetrators have passed away. Hence, the awakened conscience cannot expect or find even in Christ a " justification" with respect to the sinful past; or a moral value that can obliterate its demerit, or compensate for its damage. The endeavour to find such significance, however intelligible it may

be/

be in certain crises, is itself delusive and reprehensible, inasmuch as it is an effort to conceal facts, or get the better of them by magical rather than by moral processes. But what one finds in Christ with reference to all evil, is its utter condemnation and repudiation, agony for its guilt, injury, and shame, and the realisation of its deadly meaning for man, and its bitterness even for God. And as regards the mind that pleases and glorifies God, it is exhibited by Christ in a splendour that must forever fascinate all who seriously regard Him, revealing themselves to them by its holy light, yet holding them by its inherent power of goodness. This is the only security the conscience can get - that of an adequate judgment having been passed on one's sin on behalf of God by one who gave Himself for men and to them once for all - a judgment which the conscience adopts and operates. This judgment is the real judicial element in the Atonement, the importance of which can hardly be over-stated; for it is impossible to be one with Christ in His passion, to be crucified with Him, as St. Paul puts it, except by adopting this judgment on one's own sin first, and then on all sin. It implies that in principle, one has come to be of the same mind and purpose as Christ's..On this ground, the main interest of God is secured: forgiveness is possible; right/

right relations are restored. This restoration of filial fellowship with God is the essence of forgiveness. The justification of a sinner cannot be with reference to his past, but with regard to his present and future, in which the evil of the past is repudiated. It depends wholly on faith in Christ, and identification with Him in the doing and bearing of the will of God. Thus, the greatest of the Apostles can dare to say "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith on the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave himself for me." It is not possible to see how the evil that has been done can be made good, whether it be regarded as a deficit, or as positive injury. If God were to mark iniquity with inexorable and legalist scrupulousness, no one could ever be saved, as the Psalmist saw long ago. But inasmuch as He is Father of all primarily, and consequently seeks the salvation of His children from the power and love of sin to the love and service of righteousness, and fellowship with Himself, there is forgiveness with Him for all who by faith identify themselves with Him in Whom godliness is authoritatively manifested, and iniquity is reprobated in a way that adequately shows God's permanent attitude towards it. If God forgives on these terms man must gratefully accept/

accept seeking no other justification beyond acceptance in the Beloved One, in whose fellowship men become new creatures in the sense that they are committed to the highest moral action of which they are capable, repudiating all the evil of their former ways, and making all possible reparation for injury done to others. Such persons belong to that moral order of which God Himself is the only author, and of which He must ever approve. He is therefore, both merciful and just when he "justifies" the ungodly, as soon as he enters upon a life of faith in Christ, that pledges him eternally to righteousness.

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Chapter viii.

-:- THE FINAL MEANING OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST. -:-

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In the foregoing discussion, emphasis has been laid on the reality of Christ's call to the nation, and generally on the ethical conditions that governed His conduct, even to the last issue. Further it has been held that the revelation of supreme godliness under the crucial and final tests of suffering and death, would appear to have been necessary for the full revelation by contrast, of the malignity and deadliness of sin; and therefore, a necessary condition of repentance and forgiveness. Moreover, it was shown that personal identification with the godliness so made manifest, is the ground of justification, as also it is presented in varying descriptions in the Pauline and Johannine writings. But this does not exhaust the significance of the death of Christ. When one considers all that the Resurrection has meant for the faith and the higher life of the race, as it is confronted with the dreary, paralysing prospect of death; or when one thinks of the steadying and fortifying influence of a Christ Who was faithful unto death in its hardest form upon men contending for the right in dire circumstances, one sees the truth

illustrated, that "it behoved the Messiah to suffer, and so to enter into His glory." But there is more than this yet to be said. There is repeated throughout the Scriptures an assertion that connects sin with death. Perhaps the final form of that assertion is that "the wages of sin is death". In any case, the connection is held to be there from the beginning when man appears upon the earth as a responsible moral being. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die", and as everyone knows, the New Testament, especially the Pauline contribution to it, assumes it as the tragic situation which Christ came to annul; "that as sin has reigned unto death, so grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord". If such a connection really exists between man's sin and man's death, it is inherently likely that there is a deeper reach of interpretation of the death of man's Redeemer than has as yet been indicated in this discussion. It may well be implied in one of the commonest assertions of the New Testament regarding that death, namely, that it was for our sins. But it seems to be clearly called for when we read that He who knew no sin was made sin for us; that He died unto sin; that He bore our sins in His own body to the tree; that He tasted death for every man, that He is the propitiation for our sins. The importance, one could almost say the

exclusive importance, which the Pauline presentation of the Gospel attributes to the Cross of Christ in the work of redemption, is hardly intelligible except on the ground that in this last experience, Christ was conceived to be dealing with the ultimate meaning of death for man. If this is so, then Christ's death is understood to be more than the painful occasion of exhibiting the nature and guilt of sin over against Divine holiness and love. To say that Christ was made sin for us is undoubtedly to use an intensive metaphor; but at least, that indicates the writer's view of some intense connection between man's sin and Christ's death, something surely more than the commonplace that He suffered death at the hands of sinners, because they were wicked enough to kill Him. There is indeed, no question that St. Paul meant more than this. His view is extensively set forth in the 5th chapter of Romans, and remains a prolific source of difficulty and controversy. But on any interpretation, St. Paul means more than that Christ's death was an ordinary martyrdom, or even an act of sacrifice through which the principles of His life were more clearly manifested so that they should become more fruitful, although the latter view might legitimately found on the word of Christ himself about the corn of wheat. There seems to be no doubt that St. Paul rightly or wrongly connected the universal sway of death over the race with the universal

fact of sin; and that to his mind it is this connection which finally explains the death of Christ, and gives it a profound and universal religious significance. There are many who simply reject the Pauline interpretation on the ground that it is based on Rabbinical ideas, including a certain theory of the Fall, which they consider to be no longer tenable. Such procedure may, however, be too summary. Even Rabbinical ideas may not be wholly fanciful. Besides, it should not be forgotten that St. Paul's mind was one of the most daring and original of which history furnishes any record. He broke through the most authoritative religious tradition of mankind, freed Christianity from Judaism, and set forth fresh formulations of doctrine that earned for him the wrath and persecution of his fellow-countrymen. All this he did when he realised the significance of Christ, and especially of Christ crucified. It is therefore, not easily credible that such a man would have remained the slave of Rabbinism in any of its ideas which did not appear to him to accord with facts. If he holds that death passed on all men because all had sinned, it is surely not because that view is Rabbinnic, but because he considered it to be true. Hence, apart from all question of inspiration, and merely considering the indubitable freedom and enterprise of Paul's mind, we are justified in assuming that he would not have erected a structure of

doctrine on unexamined, traditional foundations. It is more reasonable to suppose that he had considered the theory, and for reasons that seemed good to him, adopted it. In that case, we have all the more reason for giving it reverent attention.

It must be admitted at once that it is difficult, if not impossible, to accept the view that seems to be assumed by St. Paul, that death, which is primarily the dissolution of the organism, is the consequence of sin. Certain considerations conspire heavily against it. In the animal world, which modern people are not allowed to forget, death reigned as well before as since man's appearance on the earth; and in physical constitution, man is clearly of the same material as the beast that perishes; both man and beast are subject to the same process of decay, and often to the same diseases, the chief difference in this respect being that the diseases of mankind are much more numerous than those that assail the lower animals. Further, it is almost inconceivable that with a material body, man though sinless, could have been immune from death; for fire would surely burn, and water drown, and weight crush him whatever his moral condition might be. Terrible as are the effects of sin, it is hardly possible to imagine them altering the essential constitution of the physical universe according to which death, sooner or later, is inevitable. The cycle

which restores man's body to its kindred dust is inherent in the natural order. Such considerations, with their implications, seem conclusive for regarding death as naturally determined for man as for any other creature.

But on the other hand it is more than likely that St. Paul also recognised all this; and was thinking, rather, of the momentousness and awfulness of death for man. In most states of the human mind, the thought of it is present if only as a momentary suggestion, and it is always disturbing and repellent. If death be the debt of nature, it is seldom paid willingly, unless it appears as an escape from intolerable conditions of life. The recoil from it is the mightiest reaction of which we are capable. It is true that all creatures show an instinctive fear of death, and make violent exertions to preserve themselves in the face of menace. This is but the instinctive law of all organisms. In man, however, we are on another plane of being. Man is not merely a part of nature, but in some important respects, the lord of it. In him, life has attained not only consciousness and self-consciousness, but world-consciousness and God-consciousness. He is the intense centre in which a universe mirrors itself, in which time, space, eternity are concepts; in which history unfolds its meaning, and a thousand years are but as one day; in which knowledge unfolds the story of Creation, and unveils the most mysterious of Nature's processes.

Endowed in a unique degree with creative and governing powers he forms schemes, prosecutes enterprises, draws upon the past, prospects into the future, constructs a civilisation of myriad complexity, sets up mighty organisations, explores the earth, exploits its resources, surmounts its most formidable difficulties, exults in its splendours! Though this be the race's achievement, and not that of any individual, yet the latter enters upon the inheritance of it and consciously lives in it. Moreover, he finds himself the bearer and subject of an imperious law that prescribes and judges his conduct, so that a moral quality attaches to all that he does, even to his inaction; and he is aware of a continuous judgment being passed upon him. In this dimension, he may reach great heights, and fall to terrible depths. A few there are, whose moral glory is bright, whose lives are consecrated to noble ends, whose action and endurance alike, shine with the light of a great fidelity; in whom, indeed, the life of man rises to the level of the sublime; others there are unfortunately, who attain a corresponding pitch of loathsome corruption and diabolical wickedness. Between these extremes, the great multitude pass obscure lives, but never without a moral struggle in which they are sometimes the victors and sometimes the vanquished. As Amiel puts it, "Man is the great abyss." No limit can be put to the

intellectual enterprise, the power of imagination, and the moral susceptibilities of his mind. These are the characteristics that make the death of man always the solemn, and sometimes the appalling experience that it is, and places it in a category by itself. It is impossible to reduce it to physiological terms; for where the analogy with the death of any other creature may be physiologically complete, the disparity in their experiences may be incalculable. The fact that in man, mind has become what it is, means that all that vitally concerns him, although based in the physical order, must find its final meaning in that sphere of being to which mind belongs. Hence, it is not the process of physical deterioration to which the physician attends, that tells what is really happening to a dying man, but the interpretation of it in the latter's consciousness. However much this interpretation may vary, the broad fact remains that death, when it is not sudden or does not otherwise come unawares, is a supreme moral crisis. To a human being, with a bad conscience, it is the dread hour in which the moral meaning of the Universe which hitherto may only have warned and troubled, becomes a sentence of condemnation. When the physical foundation is breaking up, and the spirit is shut in on all sides, in utter helplessness, the feeling of such a sentence on one's whole conduct and character is tragic and overwhelming. The last woe which man can experience on the earth is to have no security in God when every other security

is going to pieces. In spite of the sub-normal cases in which the moral nature seems to have fallen below that sensitiveness without which neither moral dread nor hope is possible, experience amply proves that for those who are conscious of the situation, this is the ultimate meaning and terror of death. It is not importing into death anything that does not belong to it, but simply stating what it proves to a guilty conscience; so that the fear of it has kept the race more or less subject to bondage. This also is what makes the levity of some references to death, and the heroics of others jar on serious people, and incline them to suspect that both kinds of reference are due to the same ancient and enduring fear. It is not possible successfully to argue with death. What it says to all, both those faced with its immediate finality, and the spectators who foresee themselves in the like situation, is that the only question at last is how one has conducted oneself with reference to the will of God and the sanctities of life. Through all considerations of rank and distinctions, of achievements and services, the question forces its way, and arraigns every soul of man. The world is willing, when a considerable period has passed, to forget the moral character of men of genius, regarding them from the point of view of their achievements as soldiers, scientists, or poets. But this does not touch the issue, inasmuch as men of genius, like other mortals know themselves to be subject to the moral

demand of life. We may regard Robert Burns as a sublime poet, and refuse to pass judgment on him from the moral point of view; but we cannot forget the indescribable despair which filled his own soul at the prospect of death. The truth of this final aspect of life is that from no quarter, and by no contrivance which leaves to the mind its normal perceptiveness, does a human being obtain victory over the fear, the isolation, or the despair with which it is commonly fraught except by faith in God. As the Apostle sums it up - "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law; but thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord, Jesus Christ".

It is surely with this tragic experience that those Scriptures are concerned that connect sin with death. Apart from the consciousness of guilt in the presence of a broken law, and a dishonoured moral order of the world, death, though its pathos and humiliation would yet remain, would be no tragedy. It might come to all as gently as sleep comes, which happens not infrequently to those who are at peace with God. If we consider such statements as the following:- "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die", "Return ye, return ye, for why will ye die, O House of Israel"; "Hear, and your soul shall live"; "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"; "The wages of sin is death"; these and so many similar statements do not imply that the doing of God's will would annul the termination of man's life upon the earth, or

that it is sin that puts a term to it, but rather that it is sin that separates man from God, that this separation is a process of dying, which in the final crisis only reveals more clearly its ultimate meaning. This view is fully supported by the words of Christ - "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall not die eternally". The description "eternal life" as the gift of God to all who believe in the Son and are consequently in fellowship with God assumes the same view. To be "in Christ" is to be delivered from the sphere of death. "He who hath the Son hath life". It is no longer death to die, as whether we live or die, it is to the Lord. All that made death tragic - the moral separation from God which is the fatal element in death - has changed into reconciliation and faith, so that the last scene of mortal life may be not only calm, but even beautiful. No doubt, to the spirit of man with its kinship with the infinite, there will always remain in certain cases, an offensive and distressing aspect of the last scene of human life on the earth - the prostration and collapse of the body; the pitiful, hopeless struggle with a disordered organism; the progressive defeat of life, once so powerful and bright, by the on-coming process of corruption. That which alone prevents this final humiliation of man being an unrelieved disaster, is the enduring consciousness of being committed to God's keeping through out its dark menace, and

beyond it. There is an acknowledgment of this continuing degradation of death in the Apostle's words:- "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"--a consummation that will take place only "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality", and the dishonoured and discarded body has been re-constituted and glorified. If this be what the Scriptures mean, and death is not only physical dissolution but also a supreme moral crisis, involving spiritual despair for the unreconciled, we have to consider whether the death of Christ has not its profoundest significance in this respect, that it mitigates and in a sense annuls the doom which the race has always feared in death. We see that Christ meets in holiness that divine order which every man has to meet as a sinner; and that He does this deliberately for the salvation of man. When He himself foresaw that He must so serve, giving His life a ransom for many, or laying down His life for the sheep, there were undoubtedly more reasons than one in His mind; but the language in which His death is frequently though not exclusively described in the New Testament, both by Himself and by others, is unreasonably strained and overburdened unless in His death, Christ was vicariously sustaining the onset of all that makes death terrible to the children of men. Such expressions as "dying for our sins", "being made a curse for us," "bearing our sins in His own body to the tree", are either over-charged with hyperbole,

or they describe a supreme achievement exhausting the doom of death on behalf of a sinful race. For, as has already been shown, it is in death that sin fully manifests its destructiveness, leaving the mind at last without resource, forsaken, and lying under a sense of irretrievable disaster. The ultimate meaning of this universal experience can only be that the nature of things is profoundly moral. It is of course true that this is commonly recognised, apart from death. But man is resourceful to evade its judgment as long as the body remains vital, and there are lively interests in which one may find temporary refuge. Only when these are no longer possible, when all things are drifting away from him, and he lies, a naked soul before the inevitable, does man fully realise that the moral order, or the divine law of life which he disregarded or defied has the last word, and that it is a word of condemnation. Thus, death becomes the occasion of man's self-knowledge commonly issuing in despair. Is it possible, then, that the Redeemer's death has no reference to such a calamitous situation? We are obliged to say that a Redeemer who had no experience of the crisis in which the guilty is without hope, and even the best of the race are sorely tried in the endeavour to obtain victory over its assault, would seem to be inadequately qualified for his office. The Scriptures recognise, of course, that it became the Captain of salvation to be made perfect through suffering, since the race is a suffering race. The writer of the Epistle to the

Hebrews does not hesitate to affirm that the sufferings of Christ peculiarly prepare Him to fulfil the office of humanity's eternal High Priest, in virtue of the sympathetic understanding which these sufferings gave Him for our weakness and temptation. Unquestionably, the work of salvation required a leader who should have achieved in his own bearing under the final test, the victory of faith, and to whom no trial of man, and least of all the severest, would be unfamiliar in its demands. One might find in that requirement alone a sufficient reason for the death of Christ. Yet this view of it, while it forms an essential part of the Scriptural interpretation, does not exhaust it. When it is said that "He died for our sins" or "bare our sins in His own body to the tree" or that "He is the propitiation for our sins" the thought however true it may be, is not even present, that He was undergoing a discipline that would qualify Him for the moral leadership of the race. The meaning of such statements may be hard to define with precision; but at least, there is no gain in looking for it in the wrong direction. The implicit reference in these statements appear to be to that profound connection that exists between sin and death, in that the order of life to which man belongs is such that when he is about to die, unreconciled to God, he experiences a sense of forsakenness and darkness, of dismay and foreboding. If this be the case universally, it must be because such is the nature of things by divine appointment that it thus registers its

condemnation of the ways of the transgressor. If there is no such meaning in it, we must conclude that the most formidable of human experiences is at once universal and irrational. It is no answer to suggest that the terror or despair that is commonly associated with death, is due to the superstitious inventions of false religions, since these superstitions themselves derive their strength for the most part from the evil conscience, and would be unintelligible without it. Besides, intellectual emancipation, if it delivers man from some of the baser terrors, is not sufficient to give peace to the ungodly whether in life or in death In the last analysis, the nexus between man and the universe is moral; and it is not possible to treat that fact as other than constitutive and regulative of man's existence and experience. We may not be able clearly to see the operation of this cosmic morality. In man's general dealing with the moral order, far more that is relevant is commonly concealed in the region of motive and ambition than is ever apparent in conduct. All that we are entitled to say from the evidence is that only those who are identified with the highest morality known to them are delivered from the nemesis of the moral order of the world, and die in peace.

Since this is the way that life works out, it must be under the governance of a divine ordinance that cannot be broken. Any salvation therefore, that sought finally to deal with reality, must acknowledge the fundamental nature of it,

as this is shown in the reactions of the moral order in the mind that has desecrated it. If Christ was to save mankind, by identifying Himself with a sinful race given over to this kind of death on the one hand, and with God on the other, how could He escape facing the crisis, in which their mutual relations reach a supreme issue? If He is effectively to declare that the moral conditions of life, which bear so hardly at last on the transgressor are of divine appointment and inviolable, would the declaration not require to be attested by His own submission to death if it was to carry the last degree of authoritativeness? If He was to show that it is God's will that man should be saved from this death which is the wages of sin, must He not have set forth this grace of God in the closest connection with that solemn experience? It is not that any Law required of Him to die as He died; nor can we imagine that He considered that as a substitute for the race, He owed it, so as to clear the race's debt. There is little reality in such an interpretation, since death remains in all its formidable tyranny for those who do not believe. Besides, there can never be substitution in a legal sense where moral personalities and their spiritual experiences are concerned. No one can take another's place in any other than a representative capacity. But since He came to deliver man, and effectively to open up his destiny in the Kingdom of God, He felt constrained to deal with man's darkest and most dismal experience, in which his sowing to the flesh presents its free harvest. We have seen how He was led, by the character and

attitude of the rulers and the purposes of His own life into the conflict; yet we cannot doubt that, for Him, death had a significance beyond being the seal of fidelity and the last proof of love. We are permitted to see but glimpses of all that was happening in the mind of Christ, as He foresaw His death. But even with these, we can see that He was profoundly preoccupied with it, solemnly pondered it on the Mount of Transfiguration, impressed on His disciples that it was necessary, became rapt in anticipation of it, treated it sacramentally at the Last Supper, recoiled from it in an agony of soul, and then went forward calmly to undergo it. The intensity of His passion has always been a source of wonder and awe. When it is remembered that He was personally free from those forebodings of the guilty conscience that make death awful to men; that He had the supreme satisfaction of knowing that He had finished the work that God had given Him to do; and that in death, He would be more triumphant than in life, the distress which He suffered is all the more remarkable. It is not possible to imagine that it was on His own account. Neither do the exigencies of a voluntary martyrdom or of a love that was faithful to the last explain it. The view that death is a kind of sacrament of all that is desolating and terrible to the mind of man because of sin, and that Christ was called upon to realise that meaning of it, is the most adequate to the facts. He was man's Redeemer; and it is not possible to suppose that He did not fully measure and exhaust

man's worst bondage and woe. When, therefore, it is said that He "tasted death for every man", or that He "was made a curse for us", or that "He is the propitiation for our sins" or "bore our sins in His own body to the tree", it is surely implied that there is nothing in death for the worst that He did not face and sustain, while His bearing of it all creates a new situation. He goes deeper than despair, and its cause; and by His invincible love and holiness and faith He secures out of the doom of death itself a new liberty, a new outlook, and a new hope for all. That was the intention of His whole ministry; but it is hard to see how it could have been secured, had the last formidable foe been left in all its grim menace. Deriving its power to isolate and terrify man from man's own evil conscience, death would ever frustrate every scheme of salvation that failed to take it into account, to recognise its moral significance, and yet to show a way through it, a power that is its master, a love that can bear even sinners beyond its apparent finality, a mercy that can dissolve the connection between sin and its wages. The New Testament writers see this issue of the death of Christ, along with its more obvious meanings; and for most of them, it goes beyond while comprehending, all others. Their statements have unfortunately been construed by some to mean that Christ suffered a judicial death at God's own hands; that the Law which insists that the soul that sinneth shall die, demanded that the sinner's Saviour should die before mercy could reach him. It is not necessary to repeat

that such a construction belongs to a world of thought that has disappeared; and that where it lingers, it is beset with difficulties that prove fatal whenever they are recognised. But it does not follow that these statements must be given a shallow or facile interpretation. They are dealing with Christ's supreme achievement on man's behalf, through His experience of death. There is nothing to indicate that the gravity of death diminishes as time goes on. It is true that the last trials may be mitigated by drugs or other skilful methods; nevertheless, the moral gravity of death remains; and there is no liberation from its bondage except that which has been secured through a Redeemer Who, by passing through and exhausting all its heavy incidence, communicates His peace to those who believe in Him. Such a view of Christ's death is not more substitutionary than any view of His life that allows for its effective influence on the thoughts of men, giving them an attitude to life and death that they could not have had apart from Him. Though it has been presented in legal terminology, and even conceived in a legal category of thought, its substance is real, and can be described in the most ethical of terms. It should not be forgotten altogether that legal terms, when used in such a connection, inevitably implied ethical values. No one could hope to be delivered from the fear of death, through faith in Christ, except by a process of faith which is essentially ethical.

But here, we are met with the objection that after all, He could not enter into this significance of death, inasmuch as personally, He was sinless. If, as has been contended, the deadliness of death is the sense of guilt and of separation from God, how could the One guiltless soul of the race realise the nature of the sinner's death? Admittedly, the question is difficult to answer satisfactorily. On the other hand, there are considerations which at least may indicate the direction in which such an answer may be found. The personality of Christ is such as not only to caution us against confidently denying to Him the power of identifying Himself with man in his last tragic experience - a power which seems to depend mainly, on moral qualities of the highest order; but it is also such as to dispose us to expect of Him what may be impossible to the best members of a sin - corrupted world. Through His holy love, Christ was intensely sensitive, sympathetic, and sacrificial. He not only saw but also bore the afflictions and sorrows of others. "Himself bare our sicknesses, and carried our sorrows". It is not suggested once in the records that Christ had personal experience of illness; yet it is plain that the diseases of others deeply grieved Him, so that He spent much of His time in healing. The multitudes which probably did not pity themselves and which other great men would have scorned, moved Him with a great compassion, because He realised their pathetic lot, as sheep

without a shepherd. He even wept over Jerusalem, when no one else would have seen cause for sorrow. Yet, He himself, ever dwelling in God, was as far as it is possible for a man to be from the condition of the unshepherded people. The fate of Jerusalem, too, was in the dim future, while His own was at hand; yet, He could say - "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, ye daughters of Jerusalem". If such was the quality of His nature that He could be so moved by the lot, whether physical or spiritual, of others, a lot of which they themselves were mostly unconscious, can we find it difficult to believe that when the last and the most terrible enemy of man assailed Him in the fulness of His powers, and proceeded to destroy Him, He was able to realise what death must mean for the godless! The analogy of His compassion for those who had none for themselves would rather indicate that just because He was the sinless One, ever abiding in the Father's love, He was able in a unique manner, and to an unparallelled degree, to enter into the woe of man's death, and thus bear in His holy soul that bitter curse for which He had no responsibility. To say that because Christ was personally sinless, He could not realise what the effects of sin and the presence of a guilty conscience contribute to the experience of death, is to judge Him according to callous moral maxims that are inapplicable to Him, to forget the reach and power of His sympathies, and to ignore His own intense consciousness of the sacrificial nature of the death He was to die, and of its fundamental importance to the race. The

truth seems to be in the opposite direction. Notwithstanding their restraint, the records emphasise the awfulness of the last hours of Christ, hours in which He appeared to be sounding the very depths of tragedy. Malefactors were dying beside Him from the same physical causes. Their sufferings are not even mentioned; whereas in His case, there was that which profoundly impressed those who report the scene. The cry of dereliction, and the shout of painful victory - "It is finished" indicate the storm and stress of His soul, while the darkness which is said to have covered the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour indicates the solemnity and awe which the bearing of Christ throughout the crisis, had already developed among the spectators. Such a final experience can only have been His in virtue of the spiritual difference that distinguished Him from the others. It is because of all that He was morally and spiritually, and of His unique relation to the race in virtue of these spiritual powers, that the approach of death can have had such a meaning for Him and such an effect upon Him. But what is this but another way of saying that His purity and innocence, instead of excluding Him from realising the woe of death, led Him into the heart of its meaning as no sinful son of man had ever been able to enter.

The conclusion to which this leads is that inasmuch as the last experience of man in his sin is one of dismay through the reaction upon him of that holy order of life

which he has desecrated, it was not only fitting but appears to have been even necessary that man's Redeemer, should in His own person, experience it. An evasion of it would have been equivocal. It might imply - it would to many suggest - that there is nothing inevitable or moral in the connection between sin and death. If salvation could be procured without His facing the supreme crisis in which sentence passes on man, it would be by getting round instead of meeting the issue that above all others, shows the need of salvation. But there is too grim and too desolating a reality in death, that its victims could ever be lifted into moral victory over it by one who had not faced and realised its essential distress for sinners. Hence, the final sufferings of the Redeemer inevitably assume the profound, though to some the objectionable, aspects of an expiation, which means that Christ, though personally sinless, enters into the deepest woe of the race, thereby not merely showing the absoluteness of His love, but also recognising at the cost of all that He suffered that the order of the world that at last bears so severely on the transgressor, is God's holy appointment. It is precisely this representative acknowledgment of the moral significance of death, through undergoing it, in which Christ completes His obedience to God's law and yet stands beside man in the last experience of forsakenness. That is, He maintains the sanctity of the order which bears so terribly at last on the children of men. Through His unique spiritual perception, and the intensity of His identification of Himself with their interests, Christ was

able to plumb the depths and measure the meaning of death as that culmination of experience in which the soul fells finally disowned. That Christ had precisely this feeling is made plain by the cry of dereliction, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The various attempts made to rationalise this confession succeed only in reducing it to the shallowest commonplace of remonstrance that God should have allowed such an undignified and painful fate to overtake Him. This is not in keeping with the tone or tenour of the record, nor is it consistent with Christ's own attitude to the situation; for He knew long beforehand that rejection and death were awaiting Him, and that His vocation required that He should meet them. What accounts for the cry better than any other explanation is the view that the experience proved even more appalling than the anticipation of it; and that it was given to Christ in that hour to taste the very bitterness of death for every man. It may be that such terms as expiation and propitiation, - with their pagan pedigree - carry too heavy a suggestion of legalism and externalism; but so far, no other terms have been found that adequately describe the significance that is so often attributed in the New Testament to the death of the Redeemer. It cannot be denied either, that in the history of the Church, countless souls in their most thoughtful and intense moments, have found peace in the assurance that Christ died for them, so that death can demand nothing from them which has not already

been met. They confess that because He died for them, death is not what it would have been had He not died on their behalf. They feel that placing Himself with all His triumphant love and power between them and death in its awful meaning of isolation and despair, He achieved and secured something inexpressibly valuable for them, a feeling and an insight that are suggested in the words of a favourite Hymn - "Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes". Was there ever a Christian believer who would have thought this a superfluous or a meaningless prayer? To ignore this aspect of redemption because it is not easy to give a transparently clear account of it, is to turn away from precisely that ultimate reach and reality of it in which every soul that knows ought of it and will be called upon to face the prospect of approaching death, is likely to find its last refuge and its peace.

Note to Chapter viii.

Throughout the works of the late Principal Denney, and more par: ticularly in his last book--"The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation"- the connection between sin and death is stated with great clearness and force; and the necessity of Christ's death, if He were to be the Saviour of mortal men, is powerfully argued. He even says--"If He had not died for us, He would have done nothing at all" (274) The necessity which Dr. Denney sees constraining Christ towards the Cross from the beginning of His ministry, is by no means clear to all. Probably, he is right in saying that Christ foresaw that He must lay down His life for men. The Ransom passage is almost a proof. The utterances in connection with the Supper indicate the same feeling. Yet, with all the deep Christian sentiment, and the penetrating vision with which Denney discusses the subject, there is something in his treatment that almost justifies the criticism which Rashdall makes of his presentation of it in the "Death of Christ" page 126, that "he makes our Lord actually commit suicide." If Christ were deliberately marching to His death, because He was certain that to die for men was His one supreme service, one can: not help feeling that there is some unreality pervading all the apparent earnestness and seriousness with which He preaches and appeals to men. This has been already discussed. Here, it is enough to say that the death of Christ, when he came to it, was bound to have the expiatory value argued for in the foregoing chapter, simply because of His character and vocation; and there: fore, does not in the least distort or cause any suspicion of unreality to attach to the ethical meaning of His life and minis: try. He came to it through holy fidelity to His calling; and found what it meant, by tragic experience.

Chapter ix.

-:- SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION -:-

Chapter ix.

-:- SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION. -:-

It has been shown that the nature and efficacy of Christ's work on behalf of God and man arose naturally out of His character and personality. It was His unique consciousness of God, loyalty to God, and spiritual vision that prescribed His vocation for Him. That which He was, and that which He knew, led Him to devote His life to communicate His knowledge to the world, and put the blessedness which He enjoyed in the fellowship of God within the reach of all. This resolve involved Him in a ministry of public and private instruction, and of mental and physical healing, through which He appealed to the nation to repent and believe in the character of God as Father which He was thus manifesting. Roused to anger and jealousy by His influence in the country, and moved by religious conservatism and possessive interests, the authorities resolved to destroy Him, whenever the opportunity offered, while the multitudes who had expected Him to lead a nationalist movement were disappointed, and forsook Him. The issue raised between Himself and the leaders of Judaism being/

being vital for the salvation of the world, Christ realised that it must be decided, and resolved not only to hold fast by His gospel, but to proclaim it along with all the personal claims which it involved, in the seat of the opposition - the centre of the national life. When apprehended, He went forth, prepared to suffer according to the will of God, believing that His suffering and death were, in the circumstances, required to complete the revelation which He had been divinely commissioned to give to the world, and would be the means of great spiritual fruitfulness in the future.

The intensely ethical character of the circumstances under which Christ wrought out His great purpose is thus perfectly clear. No reader of the Gospel narrative can miss it. It is true that in the sweep of His purpose, the whole world of man was embraced; yet, it was against evil and ignorance as He encountered them among men of a definite and peculiar history and outlook that He set forth the riches of Divine grace. The form which His doctrine assumed and of the opposition which He encountered was largely determined by the training of His fellow-countrymen; yet that doctrine is of universal application, and the nature of the conflict in which He was engaged is independent of its special form. In principle,/

principle, evil is always the same, though its myriad forms depend on changing conditions. At last it resolves into antagonism to that which is good, disobedience to the heavenly vision. In the shameful story of Christ's rejection by His own people, men everywhere recognise the passionate selfishness of their own hearts, their moral callousness, their hatred of any spiritual change, their care for their own status and authority, their worship of Mammon, their contempt and cruelty towards a person with whose ideals they are not in sympathy. There is not one factor in the opposition which at last crucified Christ, which men everywhere cannot recognise as their own, when they are candid with themselves. However Jewish the features of the great drama, there is nothing that is merely Jewish, or merely historical in its significance.

The first meaning therefore, which the death of Christ carries to every mind is that of absolute fidelity in His vocation, sealing the testimony of His life with His blood. If such a seal does not of itself prove the truth of the contention to which it is affixed, it at least proves the conviction of the person providing it. In the case of not a few, there is reason to think that they may have suffered for a faith in which much error was involved; yet, even then, there is something solemnising in their devotion.

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When men of knowledge and moral standing elect to die for what they consider the truth, there is a strong presumption that the cause they thus advocate has in it a core of importance for all men, even if their view of it is not perfect. It is hard to imagine any responsible man standing alone or in a small minority, preferring to surrender his life for an idea that is of no consequence, or a cause that is founded on falsehood. When we think of Christ, we are bound to remember that of all teachers, He is the clearest and most authoritative in judgment, the most assured in His knowledge of life and the principles that govern it, the readiest to deal with its problems, the only One who has its secret, and can call others to learn it of Him that they may have peace of heart, and obtain victory over all that can threaten them. When he dies for the truth which made Himself a regnant spirit so that no combination of circumstances, and no enmity of men could disconcert Him, there is a witness in His blood to something more than a personal conviction. So great is His spiritual reputation that His final fidelity is tantamount to the demonstration of the truth for which He lived and suffered. In so far, therefore, as the faithfulness of Christ even unto the death of the Cross, delivers men from uncertainty as to the worth of contending for truth and goodness in face of opposition, leads them to commit themselves fearlessly/

fearlessly to the right, gives them comfort and peace in their conflict, and unites them to the highest purpose of God in human life, it is to them an atonement - an achievement which removes from their path the chief obstacle to courageous moral enterprise, and leads them into fellowship with God in the highest ends of existence. That obstacle is the suspicion that easily besets men that in the end, perhaps truth and right do not matter too much; that they do not need to be taken too seriously, and that it may be a mistake to stake or suffer much for them. The testimony that is in the blood of Christ speaks mightily to men in such temptation, and comforts them with an assurance that can reach them from no other quarter.

Again, the death of Christ makes poignantly memorable and unfolds finally that which was His essential mind throughout His whole ministry. He was always striving to reveal the love of God for His lost children. With Him lay the unique power of reconciling sinners with God, of bestowing upon them the peace of God, and of setting them to walk in the way of righteousness. It was the mystery of godliness in Him which words could not compass, an authority which astonished all who knew Him, that gave Him this power. But to make it available for all, to render it independent of His visible person, to carry it past all

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that is savage and godless in the human heart, to lift it victorious over every contradiction and enmity, required more than the word of even such a transcendent personality as He was. Hence, a compelling reason for His resolution to face and bear all that might come upon Him. Without triumphing over the worst passions that His presence and work had aroused, there would be no finality about His service on behalf of mankind. Unless He could say - "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me" or again, "It is finished" it could not be said with assurance that God's battle for man had been won; that God's love, which He was ever manifesting had been proved beyond all denying; neither could it be said, in the absence of such a victory, that the sin of man, and the mystery of iniquity in his heart, would have been exposed in all its God-destroying intention and its awful guilt, so that conviction of its nature and repentance for it should be expected everywhere from the preaching of the Gospel. Inevitable, therefore, the conflict which Christ waged at last when alone He bears the resentment and assault of all that is godless in the human heart, absorbs and expresses the main significance of His life. The central meaning, therefore, of the atonement - that which above all else entitles His passion to be called an atonement - is the sublime love which bears, exposes, and defeats the deadliest sin of the race, and yet offers itself and God's forgiveness to/

to the worst sinner, through that intense and holy agony. It is the overcoming of enmity by suffering love, the epic achievement through which God tells the whole world of sinful creatures that nothing is too hard for Him to bear for their redemption; that no sin is too guilty, no shame too deep, no alienation too hard for Him to forgive and forget, if they turn to Him in penitent faith. In it, God shows Himself bearing in His Son the price of their reconciliation, submitting Himself to all the humiliation and injury that proved to be incident to the adventure of the redemption of the lost. This above all else, is what Christ is saying from the Cross on behalf of God. When, therefore, those in despair are asked to turn their thoughts to God, and they fear because of their sins, the first thing that may be said to them, that the sacrifice of Christ should say to them, is that divine Love has already proved itself able to get beyond the worst guilt of man, to forgive enmity even after it has exhausted itself in vain against God, and to receive into the fellowship of eternal life those who have brought themselves into the condition of doomed and lost souls. This is the sublime quality and power of the love of God which is set before all mankind by the Cross of Jesus Christ. Its very glory is its difficulty for some. They can hardly believe that even for God, it is possible so to deal/

deal with sinful men. Their minds seek for some covering, some value, with which to approach God, other than His own unmerited grace. There can of course, be none. Yet, it is possible, and even permissible, to present the merit of Christ's holiness, obedience, and sacrifice, with which the soul associates itself by faith, as a ground of appeal and approach to God. This appears to help many, when they awaken to a disturbing sense of guilt and unworthiness. Recognising that Christ offers himself to them and for them in all the moral glory of His Being, and in all the value to God of His holy, redeeming ministry in the world and beyond it, they feel mightily encouraged to believe that they are accepted by God in spite of all their past. Yet, it must be pointed out that, after all, this is no more than believing in the Divine mercy, since it is clearly the Divine mercy that provides Christ thus offering Himself to the faith of sinners. The form which that mercy takes meets the interest of the stricken conscience by the moral glory of Him who is the object of faith, and gives confidence to those who are subject to the terrors of the Law, and who might despair; but it must not be supposed that Christ's sacrifice, though it has this effect, is an appeal for mercy, but its supreme operation. The risk of misrepresentation here is serious. The/

The help which the righteousness of Christ gives to those in moral distress may easily be construed, as in fact it has been, in an unethical way, as though it cleared away all moral indebtedness. There is real difficulty in working clear of legal concepts. It ought never to be alleged that by His sufferings for men, He established an arrangement on the basis of which God can afford to overlook the past, and receive rebels into His favour, but rather this should be in the foreground of all interpretation - that by manifesting God's love in all His ways, bearing it triumphantly through every ordeal which hostility devised against Him, and sealing it once for all with His blood in the most public place in the world, He swept away all that might seem to be in the way of reconciliation on God's side, and He presents God, Who was His inspiration in all that He did and suffered, as taking Himself the initiative and bearing all the cost of redemption. Herein was love, achieving almost the incredible, in order to clear its own path into the hardened, alienated, guilty hearts of men. This is the core of the Atonement. The Pauline gospel of a crucified Messiah does not err, nor does it lay a false emphasis, even if it uses arguments that are less cogent to us than they were to those to whom they were originally addressed; for clearly it is through all

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that the Cross meant to Christ that the supreme glory, the invincibility, and the absoluteness of the Divine love are attested before the world, and unconditional forgiveness is indisputably assured to all who repent. Whenever therefore, Christ is truly preached, it is as One who amply demonstrated and eternally possesses this power of atonement, effectively conveying the Divine love and forgiveness past all offences so as to cause repentence, create faith, and commit men to the service of righteousness, so restoring them to God, and leading them into eternal life. The securing of this result is the chief end that we can believe God has in view with respect to those who are lost to Him, as it certainly was the main interest of Christ's life and death.

It is consequently a singularly infelicitous and gratuitous mistake to set forth such signal grace primarily in terms of law, as though its first reference were to the Divine justice. The glory of the Atonement is precisely this - that it deals with sinners on a basis to which law does not and cannot apply, in a region high above its operations, where measureless generosity meets, pities, and blesses helpless indebtedness, where morality itself is transcended and transfigured, as it would be for example in the case of a man/

man who, from pure goodness of heart, should take great pains to rescue his enemy from destruction, and should place him in the way of high fortune. The moral quality of such benefaction and the obligations which it would create for the beneficiary both pass beyond the limits of ordinary ethics. Clearly, neither the saviour nor the saved person in such a case, would be in the least concerned with legal considerations, nor even with those of equity; the former would be simply concerned with blessing, the latter, with the meaning of the extraordinary and unexpected treatment which he had received. No doubt, such treatment would, or at least should, evoke enduring gratitude, create obligations of honour, and work out the finest moral consequences. But none the less are benefactor and beneficiary in relations so far above those of law that it does not apply to them at all. It has not been denied by any theory of the Atonement that such is, in fact, the status of believers in Christ, that they have been delivered from the condemnation and curse of the law, that Christ made an end of it for them, that they live by faith in Christ, and not by any impersonal principle. It could not have been otherwise if any regard were paid to the spirit of the Gospel, and the Pauline preaching and protestation, in Galatians for example, but also throughout most of the Epistles, that Christians are no longer under law, but under grace; that they are in Christ, and derive the inspiration/

inspiration of their conduct wholly from their fellowship with Him in the Spirit. In opening such a sphere of moral experience for them, it is certainly the case that Christ fulfilled the spirit and intention of the law, taking it, so to speak, incidentally in His majestic moral stride, since He was holy of heart, and love to God and man completely governed His conduct. But to isolate this holy element of the redemptive action of Christ, and treat it as a satisfaction of law, through which the whole guilt of those to be redeemed was liquidated, was an unfortunate blunder, inasmuch as the effect of it was to bring the idea of law once more to dominate that of grace. It is like insisting that the glory of a summer's day that blesses the world with beauty and bounty is due to intense heat, that, were it not for the atmosphere, would scorch all living creatures out of existence. Such a truth as that not only does not help our appreciation of the great scene, but also seriously misrepresents its beneficence. Similarly, the Satisfactionist the Judicial, and the Governmental conceptions of Christ's redeeming work cannot stand in His presence, whether we visualise Him bringing salvation to a Zacchaeus or a Magdalene, or when we consider that amazing humiliation to which He who was so rich and so mighty in Himself, condescended for the sake of His unworthy brethren, or when we hear His intercession on the Cross on behalf of His murderers. It is not only irrelevant,/

irrelevant, but an offence to introduce such formal, heartless conceptions to govern or to qualify a saving procedure which manifestly operates through the constraint of a love that cannot be measured and has no parallel. If Christ brings men into a sphere of grace, He also secured their status by a transcendent grace that concerned itself first and always with their deliverance from evil, and not with any abstraction of law; and it is precisely because He has interpreted God once for all as so concerned, and at least as gracious as Himself, that the hopes of men can rise, and their faith fasten upon Him, in spite of all the evil they may have done. Their atonement is due to His transcendent grace, overcoming their fears, creating faith in their hearts, and enabling them to accept the forgiveness of their sins, and enter upon the life everlasting.

At the same time, the work of Christ from beginning to end has a steady reference to, and an urgent bearing upon, the tragic reality of sin and lawlessness, with which most theories of the Atonement have been so preoccupied. It is needless to repeat that Christ Himself walked in holiness and love, fulfilling all law, and honouring God; that for once in the dismal moral history of the race, One appeared in whom God was well pleased. To put it thus, however, may only convey an/

an impression of His blamelessness, and fail to give an adequate idea of the energy of holiness that characterised His life, an energy that penetrated the hearts of friends and enemies alike, passing judgment upon their thoughts and intents, and requiring of them purity, truth and love. Christ was, indeed, the friend of publicans and sinners; but in every case recorded, these were under the power of the same holy inquisition that probed the hearts of Pharisee and Sadducee. They knew that they were loved and forgiven; but they also recognised that the evil of their ways was condemned, and must be renounced. Christ's sense of the gravity of evil, and His hatred of it, may be seen in different aspects of His doctrine and life:- in the urgency with which He teaches men to watch and pray, lest they fall into temptation; to strive to enter into life, though the gate be narrow and the way straight; or it may be necessary to deal drastically with themselves, and hate everything, however precious, should it stand in their way; in the withering fire of His invective against hypocrisy, extortion, and self-advertisement; in the passionate force with which He cleansed the Temple courts; in the condemnation which He pronounced upon cruelty and offence towards the defenceless and the weak; in the vivid exposure He makes of the fatal consequences of Mammon worship; in the extraordinary force of His parables against callousness and/

and inhumanity; in His reprobation of hardness and unforgivingness; in the sense of guilt and horror pervading His prophecies of the destruction of the nation because of impenitence, and the rulers' perversion of God's heritage to their own interests; in His description of the folly of worldliness, and the doom of frivolity, and spiritual resourcelessness; and - significantly enough in this connection - in His warning against irreverent, angry, and contemptuous language. Or again, if we think of the Beatitudes, the very form of them as well as their content, tells of One whose heart was as passionate as it was pure, declaring that men should rejoice when persecuted for the sake of righteousness. Moreover, the stand which Christ made against the temptations that assailed Himself - they appear to have been suggestions to compromise to some extent with evil, and use His power to win immediate success in the world - discloses the same energy of holiness. Above all, the resolution with which He set His face to go to Jerusalem, where His enemies would be on their own ground, and would be bold to perpetrate their worst intentions towards Him, if they should refuse His last appeal, and to die, if need be, at their hands, reveals the intensity of His opposition to evil, and His determination to bring it to its judgment in public once for all; while the manner in which He bore all that men had the heart to do to Him, in a holy/

holy triumph of patience, meekness, and forgiveness is the final seal to a purity of heart, and righteousness of Life that makes all who in any measure understand, exclaim- "Truly this man was the Son of God." The death which He died was a voluntary surrender, as much as the fate which His enemies decreed for Him. As such, it is the final measure of His antagonism to the evil in society, for it was the unswerving fidelity of His remonstrance, and the unanswerable criticism which he brought to bear upon the official piety and ethics of the day that provoked the implacable hostility, which He determined to bear unto death. Had He cared to avoid a final collision, He could have done so at almost any stage save the very last. Every sort of constraint, except that of holy love, would deflect Him from facing the last extremity. No man was taking His life from Him; but the quality of His own soul, and the purpose of His mission would not permit Him to evade the final decision of the issue between Himself and His enemies. So, He died for our sins, bearing, exposing, and eternally condemning them. His Cross is, thus, the index of His hatred of evil, no less than of the Eternal love for the fallen and the lost. But like the rest of His work for our salvation, it is not to be understood nor explained by any formal relation on His part to the Divine law, but by the unexampled force of goodness in Him, the passionate attachment/

attachment of His heart to holiness, and the urgency of His redeeming love.

It is as such a personality, charged with such holy energies against sin, not less than with forgiving grace, that Christ is known to men. He ever liveth with this virtue not only resident in Him, but proceeding from Him. Wherever He is preached in the context of His work for mankind, one inevitable result is the exposure of the evil that lurks in the heart; the sacrilege, disobedience, corruption, greed, and selfishness that have their home within. From His word and His works, His humility and purity, His obedience and fidelity, His passion and Cross, a white light strikes in upon the secret places, the secular purposes, the unsightly quality of the lives of men. They are able in this light really to see their sins, and repent of them. Without such a vision, there can be no genuine repentance. Conscience no doubt, makes cowards of us all; and fear or social considerations may deter men from following their impulses, or lead them to break off from dangerous courses. This is expediency, and may be far from repentance. Pharisaism, with all its decencies, is at all times far from the kingdom of heaven. Repentance, and the remission of sins begin when the meaning of Christ, but especially of Christ crucified, begins to show men their moral condition in the sight of God, and holy love begins

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to win them to itself. In His exalted and eternal mode of existence, Christ exercises this complex, saving power, being able at once to convict men of sin, and present to them that sovereign grace that ever receives and forgives all who turn to God. He lives forever, and can only be known by us in the meaning and power of the personality revealed, the conflict waged, the death borne on our behalf as described in the records. That which He did for us saves, only when through it we repent of what we are, and believe in the divine forgiveness offered us there, and commit ourselves to His fellowship. He loved us, indeed, and gave Himself for us; but even that truth would be impotent, unless it has an eternal import; unless it is an exhibition in time of God's enduring disposition towards us. Likewise, the holiness manifested in Christ's action and passion, which searches all who read the New Testament, might only plunge sinners into a deeper despair than any law could produce, were it not that it is but a quality of that love which in Him ever says to the worst - "Him that cometh unto me; I will in no wise cast out." Proceeding from One in whom the will-to-save sinners is the outstanding characteristic, Who bears eternally the marks of His conflict on their behalf, thus giving the assurance that He who loves them so, can also sanctify them, the Spirit of holiness enters along with the/

the forgiveness of sins. That this Spirit will eventually succeed in cleansing away all the corruption and stain of sin, and develop the moral sentiments against all evil and in favour of all good, is a matter of faith, an inference that God would not have begun, at such cost, a work that cannot be maintained and completed. Here, again, it is not any legal bond or opus operatum in which those who wonder whether they will ever get beyond some sympathy with evil, put their trust: but in the Divine confidence implied in the Divine enterprise for our salvation. It is the only assurance there is that the work of God's spirit can prevail in His children; but it obtains confirmation in the ceaseless operations of that same Spirit; for believers are never without its encouragement and promise, its comfort and warning, its constraint and rebuke, its light and peace. They know no temptation so swift in its appeal but as swift a reference to the Lord of holiness and love takes place in their minds; and they know that He is seeing to it that His purpose in their lives is not defeated. This possession of the Spirit of Christ is the distinction and the unity of all who believe on Him. We are not here concerned with the question of how that Spirit comes to operate in human hearts. It is enough for our purpose to recognise that its presence and operations are the supreme reality of the Church's life from age to age, and the great hope of the future of humanity. Whenever any soul of man yields/

yields to the promptings and suggestions of this Spirit in connection with the reading of the sacred page, the preaching of the Word of reconciliation, the fellowship of Christian people, or some recollection of the Saviour, the quality of holiness, destructive of sinful thought, desire, word, and deed is present, while the inexhaustible bounty of Christ's love - which is the love of God - is the wonder, the confidence, and the hope of the heart. This is how sin is really borne away and destroyed. It cannot be put away vicariously. Being a quality of souls, its removal must be a moral process. This process is conducted by the Spirit that proceeds from the living Lord of grace. By the possession of this Spirit, believers are united with Christ, and live in a sphere of moral inspiration and power. They are committed to the doing and bearing of the will of God. They are led to adopt the same attitude towards evil that led Christ to the Cross, and may be said to be crucified with Him. They have learned also through His Spirit the attitude of reverent, obedient, loving children towards God. In this situation, their reconciliation is accomplished. They have received the Atonement.

But the death of Christ has also the significance of what may almost be called an expiation, in that in the experience of it, Christ appears to have realised through His/

His sympathetic imagination the nature of the tragedy of death for sinners. It is not conceivable that He Who tasted death for every man, and Whose agony is set before us as almost overwhelming, had not in His mind the condition of hopeless, godless creatures in their last crisis. The religious value of this aspect of the Redeemer's death is seldom recognised by modern theologians. (Dr. Denney is a notable exception) But it is amply recognised in the experience of the dying. Even for the best, there is that in the prospect of death that isolates, solemnises, and deprives of resource and assurance; and who has a conscience void of offence towards God and man? That Christ went before us in this experience, that He bore the onset of all that it can mean, that He passed through it unscathed, and says to us that trusting Him we have nothing to fear, is an achievement on our behalf which cannot be over-estimated. It is true that the sting of death is sin; and if any were sinless, the worst of the last experience of man would be a-wanting. But as all have sinned, even the forgiven have reason to seek the comfort and assurance that can only come to them from the Lord of life and death - from One who went through the dark defile, and says to them with authority - "Fear not; Lo, I was dead, and am alive forevermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades." In submitting Himself to death, Christ drew the monster's teeth for His disciples, and moreover,/

moreover, reconciles them to this hardest of Divine ordinances, which removes them from all that they have known and loved in the temporal sphere. To be able to say - "Thy will be done" in this connection, to turn death into a triumph of faith, to be at peace through believing on Christ as the dark waters are rising all around, is no small part of the Atonement which is through His death. It is the completion of our reconciliation, as we accept the worst with confidence in Him whose ordinance bears so hard upon us. As for those who face death with a guilty conscience, and unreconciled to God, the one Gospel likely to be effective for them is that of a Redeemer who experienced the worst, Who knows their condition, their fear, their despair; and yet can say to them that He is able and willing to have mercy upon them, and save them from the doom they have brought upon themselves. That He died for them is the one word of power that can be spoken to them. If He is the Lord, there is hope for men, even at the eleventh hour.

It has been maintained in the course of this discussion, that the idea of the Atonement as a sublime transaction between Christ and God in which the guilt of the world was expiated and cancelled, belongs to the realm of myth. It may have served like other myths, to make the truth picturesque, and carry it where otherwise/

otherwise it might not reach. Fortunately, it is almost impossible to preach Christ without bringing His holy, saving power to bear upon the moral condition of those who believe in Him, however crudely presented. Yet, it is possible through an exaggerated interest and confidence in a "finished work" to escape much of its spiritual meaning and its proper influence. It can be treated as possessing magical virtue; nor is it uncommon to hear it referred to, as though it not only had squared all outstanding accounts, but also relieved men of some of the obligations of morals, and chivalry. In circles where this tendency prevails, it is not uncommon to find fervent piety combining with considerable complacency and spiritual pride. Believing themselves to be set free from all condemnation, and invested with all the values of the "finished work", to which they can add nothing, they have less concern with their tempers and dispositions; they are apt to be censorious and uncharitable; and their certainty of being right in their views and ways is not readily shaken by the criticism or disagreement of others. It does not readily occur to them that moral stagnation, exclusiveness, and lovelessness are not less reprehensible in God's sight under a Christian disguise than in any other. Such results are largely due to false presuppositions, and misleading theological formulas. They are less likely to happen when legal/

legal conceptions of Christ's work are no longer used; when the Cross of Christ is set forth in its ethical context, arising out of His conflict with evil in society, and so bringing the human heart under its searching and humbling investigation. Though differences of opinion can never be eliminated, yet pride and self-satisfaction can never stand before the Redeemer's Cross, when set forth in its original connection and moral significance, yet withal, in its absolute grace. Travesties of its meaning will be possible as long as its glory is shadowed by ideas of satisfaction and substitution, and it is treated as a mysterious, transcendent transaction between Divine principals, of which it was agreed that mankind should have the benefit. This is not the way in which the Spirit of Christ can convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, nor yet take of the things of Christ, and show them to His disciples. Salvation by myth is more picturesque and less troublesome than a salvation that sets before all a high ideal of thought and temper, of deed and endeavour. The meaning of salvation is not only deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, but likeness to Christ - sharing in that Spirit that embraced all in its love, rebuked sin in all its manifestations, spent itself freely in sacrifice, bore all things in perfect charity, and therefore gave a new revelation of God for all the race to rejoice in. Without doubt, the Christian salvation puts believers/

believers into a position of high privilege, making them heirs of all things immediately, and without reservation; but they must take possession of their heritage, if it is to be theirs; and they can do so only through a moral process and experience in which the Spirit of Christ must govern and direct them. All formulas that let men off easily, and allow them to cherish a good conceit of themselves, are delusive and pervert the Gospel. The Christ of the New Testament with all the searching virtue of His holiness, with all the meaning of His passionate contention for truth and righteousness, and of His self-devotion for sinners, associated inseparably with His name, is the same forever; and it is the living energy of His Spirit that accomplishes the work by which alone men can be saved. Little has been said in this discussion on what is called the God-ward aspect of the atonement, for several reasons. The assumption in every idea of a God-ward aspect is that the sacrifice of Christ somehow affects God, and determines or qualifies His attitude to the race. Even MacLeod Campbell describes it from this point of view as an act of vicarious penitence on behalf of humanity, an act which has the character of an oblation and a propitiation. It is difficult to be sure how much or how little of truth such a presentation holds. All recognise that the holy, dedicated life of Christ was well-pleasing to God/

God, that the work which He achieved on God's behalf for human salvation was precious in the Father's eyes; and that the death through which He supremely manifested God's love and glorified His name, must have signal and permanent worth in His view. But when more than this is implied, and the conception of Christ's solidarity with the race is introduced, so that what He did on the Cross is conceived as done by the race in Him, or imputed to the race, or to a section of it, we seem to be once more in a region of speculation and myth. The solidarity of Christ with the race is a precious reality; but its redemptive value only begins to take effect when faith proceeds to apprehend Him, and His Spirit proceeds to work His purpose in men. It is only in the Church, which is His body, that Christ's solidarity with humanity brings forth its fruit, and is on the way of attaining its end. It may be held that to the mind of God, contemplating the sacrifice of His Son, all the future effects of it are present, and the values of these effects are attributed to it in advance. But this is only saying that God either foresees all things, or sees them in an eternal present; which does not carry us further than we were. It is not easy to imagine how that which is either foreseen from all eternity, or seen in an eternal present, can change God's attitude to mankind.

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The interest of others in a God-ward aspect of the Atonement is on behalf of the Divine government. They regard it in this direction as an act of sublime holiness, in which full homage is made to God for all the desecration of the holy order of life perpetrated by the sinful children of men, and as an earnest of the latter's obedience. It is possible to see all this in the great sacrifice. But it is equally true of the whole ministry and life of Christ, which was characterised by a spirit of loving loyalty towards the Father. The attempt to find a special reference in His death to the Divine order does not appear to be capable of proof. Moreover, it tends to obscure the central, unitary meaning of all - the love that travails, bearing all things that it may conquer the hearts it seeks to bless. Besides, it is unnecessary to impute a special meaning to His sacrifice in the interests either of the Divine honour, or the moral government of the world, when the spirit of His whole life, the purpose of all His service, and the only spirit He bestows on men, is holy. The law and the honour of God are involved in all that He ever did, taught, or inspires; and it is probably a mistake to suppose that they are in view, in any exceptional and additional sense, in His surrender to death.

From these considerations, it is doubtful whether

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any useful purpose can be served by speaking of a God-ward aspect of the Atonement. The phrase assumes that we know more than we do. It is, further, a disguised relic of the unfortunate dominion of legal conceptions over the minds of theologians. It is God who provides the Atonement as the supreme manifestation of His grace, and the final proof of His love. There is much to be said for avoiding terms that suggest a change in the Divine attitude, due to His own action in Christ: or that reparation is made to Him in advance, in Christ's sacrifice, for all the wrongs done to Him by His rebellious children; or that He obtains therein a pledge of their future good behaviour. It is best to explore the manward significance of the great sacrifice, instead of speculating where the keenest vision fails.

The central problem of the world is the same to-day as it has ever been - that of the deliverance of men from evil. The growth and complexity of civilisation have neither mitigated the problem, nor discovered any new method of solving it. In some respects, it seems to be more intractable than ever through the increasing inter-dependence and mutual influence of nations of differing standards and religions, and the ever-increasing material resources and pre-occupations of men. The one well-founded hope that can be cherished is that the revelation of God in Christ reconciling/

reconciling the world unto Himself, and destroying evil in every life that receives the Atonement, shall prevail more and more. This will depend on the fidelity with which the Gospel of redemption will be brought home to the hearts of all nations by the Church's witness. Nothing else is known that can deal with the tenacious wickedness of the human heart, but the still more tenacious love and holiness that confront the world's heart and conscience in the Person and Cross of man's Redeemer and Lord.

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