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REVELATION THROUGH HISTORY
AND EXPERIENCE

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First Edition October, 1934

Printed in Great Britain by Stephen Austin & Sons, Ltd., Hertford

Dedicated in appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Board of Studies in Theology, and the Faculty of Theology of the University of London for many kindnesses experienced in a thirty-years' friendly association and helpful co-operation.

PREFACE

The occasion for my writing the four lectures which form the greater part of this volume was my appointment by the Senate of the University of London, on the recommendation of the Board of Studies in Theology, and the Faculty of Theology, to deliver a course of lectures of a more advanced kind ; these were given by the kindness of the Dean at King's College on 24th and 31st October and 7th and 14th November, 1933. While I have revised and in some places expanded these lectures, I have left them substantially as they were prepared. Although when I had published the three volumes, *The Christian Belief in God*, *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead*, and *The Christian Ideal of Human Society*, in which I attempted to offer a Constructive Christian Theology in the three recognized branches of apologetics, dogmatics, and ethics, and had no intention, still less expectation, of inflicting another book on theology, yet, when it came, I did welcome the opportunity of putting into

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a smaller volume, through which I might hope to reach a wider public, the fruits of nearly half a century of study, reflection, and teaching on the subject which to me is the only essential content of Christian dogmatic theology—the Christian doctrine of God as based on the Christian history ; for with our modern view of the Scriptures, much cargo in the theological ship of the past can be thrown overboard, or transferred to the other ship of Biblical Theology ; and what remains has a lawful place only as implication, inference, or application of this doctrine ; the world and man, sin and salvation, duty and destiny, all fall within the range of God’s purpose, activity, and relations. To justify this conviction, I have here added to the four lectures, an *Introduction*, to show how I have been led in my thinking to this concentration of interest and effort, and a *Conclusion*, in which I indicate the transformation of other doctrines which for me has resulted from my conception of God. Another reason why I welcomed this opportunity of dealing with the doctrine of God was that a ‘ progressive ’ group of ministers in Congregationalism have been advancing a doctrine of God as alone justified

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by modern knowledge and thought, which in my judgment challenges the fundamental assumption of the Congregational polity, i.e. the presence of the living Christ wherever believers are gathered together in His name, and the guidance of His Spirit in their decisions. With no desire for controversy I must bear my witness to the truth in love.

I have in this volume endeavoured to meet criticisms which have been offered by reviewers of previous volumes. The complaint was made that in the last volume published, *The Christian Belief in God*, I had quoted too much and had not given my own conclusions. In my preface I gave the reason for the numerous quotations ; and my exposition of the views of others was accompanied by a running commentary of my own views. In this volume I have quoted as little as was possible, and have given, as frankly as I could, my own convictions.

My style was blamed as too involved in some sentences. I have tried here to write as simply as I could ; but I must confess that while I use the method of analysis as far as is necessary, my mind is of the synthetic order, and seeks always to follow analysis by synthesis, a " thinking

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things together". This doubtless has affected my style. The organic unity of a truth may be more adequately expressed in a *verbal organism*, a body of many members, a sentence consisting not of a succession of co-ordinate clauses, but a structure of principal and subordinate clauses. This demand for short, simple sentences, whatever be the truth to be expressed, leads in my judgment to "tit-bits" thinking. Although I have not seen the error of my ways in this respect, I have tried to amend them.

Exception has also been taken to my numbering and lettering paragraphs, as not congenial to some readers. After careful consideration of pros and cons I have decided to adhere to my usual practice, as I believe most readers are helped to follow the course of an argument, when such indications of its stages are given. I at least am grateful to a writer who thus guides my steps.

Surprise was expressed that I had not taken account of Barth. Having given so much toil of mind and travail of soul to escape from Calvinism, I have no mind to return to its bondage. I hope this volume shows conclusively that Barth has not been needed to teach me the

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truth regarding the necessity and the sufficiency of the Word of God. I am one with him in insisting on the sovereignty of God, and the dependence of man, but deplore reactionary elements in his theology, and the harsh dogmatic tone : that German " liberal " tendencies needed his chastisement one may admit, but his stripes were more and heavier than need be. Some of his disciples in this country seem to me to be too fond of a " parrot-like " repetition of his phrases, instead of working out in their own modes of speech what truth he stands for. With all appreciation and gratitude for any service he may be rendering to bring thought back to the revelation of God and redemption of man in Christ, I must excuse myself from worshipping at his shrine ; and as I am no iconoclast, I shall leave any Ephraim whom he has succoured to remain joined to his idol.

I trust that this personal note may be forgiven ; a man looking back on a long day's work, and aware that it must be near its close, may be allowed to present the object of the faith, by which he lives and in which he will dare to die, not in an impersonal discussion, but as a personal testimony : " I know him whom I have believed,

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and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day " (2 Timothy i, 12).

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

HENDON,

LONDON, N.W. 4.

1934.

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INTRODUCTION

The theological reaction of to-day—The theological situation sixty years ago—The theological emancipation experienced—The theological results of the higher criticism—The theological “Christocentric” principle—The theological interest expanded by philosophical study and practical experience—The theological completion in the doctrine of the Trinity—The theological influence of human affection.

(1) There seems to be a tidal movement in human thought and life, not a constant onward current, but an ebb and flow. At the present hour there is an ebb—reaction has displaced progress, dictatorships are deposing democracy, protection free trade, nationalism internationalism. Theology is not escaping. Barthianism is a reaction and glories in being a reaction as a Neo-Calvinism. Even Neo-Calvinism, “naked and unashamed,” is displaying and disporting itself. In such a situation it may not be without interest and value for some of my younger brethren who are making haste to go backwards, if I venture to record an advance, without haste, without rest, from the Calvinism in which I was brought up as a boy to the conception of God as the universal Father, the eternal Love, the infinite Grace, which, at the age of seventy-two, I am

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defending and commending in this volume, and to indicate the varied influences which have brought about this personal development, since experience and character have been affected no less than intellect, for I have learned the truth : *Pectus fecit theologum.*

(2) I was brought up abroad in a home which, despite the environment, was distinctly Scottish. The Sabbath was kept as strictly as was at all practicable. The metrical Psalms and the shorter Catechism with proofs and references had to be learned by heart. When at the age of thirteen I came to school in Edinburgh, the after-effects of Mr. Moody's first visit was being shown in a great deal of evangelistic effort, in which the denominations were co-operating, and so the sectarian barriers were being lowered, and the Calvinistic orthodoxy was being modified, often in a very crude evangelicism. Even as a schoolboy I had a keen interest in theology, and had thoughts of the Christian ministry as my calling. I sat in the gallery of the Synod Hall, and heard the discussions of the Declaratory Act which the United Presbyterian Church proposed as an explanation of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and also the debates when the late Dr. Fergus Ferguson was arraigned for heresy, and censured for the use of the word "salvation" in another than the Confessional sense. The impression

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on a boy of keen intelligence and sensitive conscience was such that I made up my mind to put away the thought of the ministry, as I could not contemplate the intellectual bondage which the ministry in Scottish Presbyterians seemed to me to involve.

(3) Theology still remained a potent interest. I was much distressed by the doctrines of election, verbal inspiration, penal substitution and eternal punishment. Although I cannot remember having been formally taught the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, yet the inerrancy in questions of science and history and the infallibility in morals and religion were assumed by all with whom I came in contact. I therefore eagerly studied attempts to reconcile geology and Genesis. Cook's *Monday Lectures* seemed to me for a time to have confuted the theory of evolution. But while religious faith remained unshaken, due largely to the gracious influence of my "Auntie Katie" who had been a mother to me from my fourth year, doubts assailed the mind continuously. Farrar's *Life of Christ* rendered me a great service, in making the historical personality of Jesus a reality to me, and it was to that reality my faith still clung. The poems of Walter C. Smith came as an emancipation from this Calvinistic dogmatism, as later the novels of George Macdonald; Newman Smyth in his book *The Old Faith in the New*

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Light brought me this assurance : that it was no abandonment of Christian faith to renounce these dogmas. What completed the deliverance was the course of lectures which I heard given by W. Robertson Smith on *The Bible in the Jewish Church*, a popular defence of his critical views, for which he had been suspended from the Professorship in Aberdeen by the Assembly of the Free Church. Many who accepted these critical conclusions did not allow them to transform, as they were fitted to do, their theological method : I may add with all affection and gratitude, that this was largely the case with Dr. Fairbairn.

(4) Only very gradually have I learned to abandon the dogmatic for the historical method of interpretation. My rejection of some of the more extreme conclusions of criticism are not due to any dogmatic prejudice, but to a careful scrutiny and appraisal of the relevant evidence. Were I re-writing the book into which I put what was best in my living and thinking for nearly twenty years, *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, I should probably take fuller account of Synoptic criticism. I recognized the critical position in regard to the Fourth Gospel, in so far as I did not use that as an independent source of equal authority with the Synoptics, but only with reserve in confirmation of them, and fifteen years later (1922) I ventured to offer

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a judgment in my book *The Beloved Disciple*. I am glad to avow my single-minded and whole-hearted adherence to the methods of modern Biblical scholarship. This new apprehension, this fresh appreciation, of the Bible has freed me from the theological difficulties and perplexities of Calvinistic orthodoxy, and has made possible for me the restatement of some of the doctrines in the *Conclusion*. It has relieved my mind of any need to reconcile modern science with the teaching of the Scriptures, and allows me to welcome any of the results which may be reached by the proper methods, while refusing and resisting philosophical conclusions, contrary to the world-view of the Christian faith, which have no such warrant. It has made Jesus Christ our Lord central to my theology, as He alone reveals God as Father and redeems men unto God as His Children; and in this Christocentric principle has given me a positive standard of judgment of all other doctrines, advanced on the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and even justified me in going beyond the text of the Scriptures, as in eschatology, to bring out explicitly what is implicit in the conception of God given in Christ.

(5) For me, as I have stated more fully later in this volume, this conception of God is the only and all the theology which Christian faith needs as its adequate and satisfying object: and this

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concentration on the things of God, and consequent simplification makes more authoritative and effective the appeal of the Gospel, the Word of God, to use the phrase so beloved of many to-day, to the reason and the conscience of man. A friend of mine once told me that he thought a man fixed his theology at the age of twenty-five. I wondered that he had taken so long to reach his infantile, puerile views ; I can say sincerely and gratefully that I am still moving on, as my successive theological endeavours would show, not away from Christ, but, I believe, more deeply into Christ.

(6) My work as a teacher of theology has widened my horizon in two directions, the history and the philosophy of religion ; and the conviction to which I have been led is expressed in the first sentence of my book *The Christian Belief in God*, which I allow myself to quote—"There are two dangers which the Christian theologian must avoid : (1) the isolation of Christianity from all other religions, and (2) the isolation of religion from the other interests and activities of human personality" (p. 25). For me, Christ is the fulfilment, not of law and prophecy only, but of the religious aspirations and the philosophical speculations of man. During the years when I was engaged in business, and before the irresistible call to enter the Christian ministry came with the discovery that it might be

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exercised in freedom of reason and conscience, without the creedal bonds, in Congregationalism, my Christian service in the slums of Glasgow widened my horizon also as regards the practical, social application of the Gospel, and the fruits of this interest and activity have been garnered in my book *The Christian Ideal for Human Society*, and the more recent, much smaller work *Can Christ Save Society?* The awful reality of sin and the urgent necessity of salvation which was brought home to me in those days, preserved, amid all theological changes, the passionate conviction that man needs the Divine Saviour.

(7) While my theology remains *Christocentric*, I have been led by life as well as by thought to a much clearer apprehension and fuller appreciation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit ; and the final synthesis of the Christian conception of God in the doctrine of the Trinity, of which my book *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead* is a fuller, and the present volume a briefer exposition. The love of God through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit—this is my theology (2 Cor. xiii, 14). Truly an apostolic benediction.

(8) Although I hesitate, I am constrained by the human love through which I reach the love of God, to add that not only my Christian life, but even my theological thoughts have been influenced far more than I can estimate or express

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by the love of two saintly Christian women, my aunt, who took my mother's place, and my wife, who for twenty-one years was my companion, counsellor, and helper, and whom I believe to be still as near as she is dear. From their love I realized the love of God more fully than by thinking alone I could have done, and their relation to me was sacramental of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The reader must forgive my going beyond customary reserve; but is it not a sacred obligation that we should pay our debt to the beloved, who are unseen, but still with us in God?

Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of His light
For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise "

(BROWNING : *The Ring and the Book* : Pompilia.)

LECTURE I

GOD AS FATHER

The Relation between Eternity and Time : (a) *An issue for philosophy as well as theology* (Ritschl.) ; (b) *The eighteenth-century attitude* (Leibnitz, Lessing) ; (c) *The significance of history for religion—The Necessity of Revelation in History* : (a) *The Necessity in God's Nature to create and reveal* ; (b) *Man as in history* ; (c) *Herrmann's stress on history—The Place of Jesus in History* : (a) *Herrmann's argument* ; (b) *The three phases of revelation : God as Father, Jesus as Christ and Lord, the Holy Spirit as Life-Giver—The Limitations of the Treatment* : (a) *No Literary or Historical Criticism* ; (b) *No detailed Biblical Theology.*

The Denial by McGiffert (The God of the Early Christians) : (a) *Statement, supported by Dalman and Moore* ; (b) *Two Qualifications* (i) *Literature and Life*, (ii) *Jesus' Criticism* ; (c) *Admission of Uniqueness of Person* ; (d) *The logion in Matt. xi, 27 = Luke x, 22* (i) *its place in Q.*, (ii) *the mood of exaltation*, (iii) *the Synoptic claims*, (iv) *the Baptism and Transfiguration*, (v) *the Johannine emphasis* ; (e) *The Personality of Jesus and its Interpretation—The Evidence of Montefiore and Klausner* (Speer) : (a) *Montefiore, contrast and contribution* ; (b) *Klausner, antithesis—The Impression and the Influence of Novelty* : (a) *The transforming influence* ; (b) *The basis of the Apostolic Interpretations.*

Originality and Authority : (a) *Jesus' mastery of inheritance and environment* ; (b) *The religion of Jesus and the Christian religion—The Subordination of the Son to the*

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Father—The Revelation of Fatherhood through Sonship—
(a) *The perfect correspondence ; (b) The perfect mediation ;*
(c) *The kinship of man and God—The difference of Jesus as holy and men as sinners—The human conditions and limitations : (a) The revelation of God in His relation to men as Father ; (b) The attachments to the Hebrew religion and religion generally.*

Introductory — God as Personal and Supra-Personal — The supreme interest of Man's Relation to God : (a) The essential elements of God's Fatherhood ; (b) The Fatherhood as affected by sin ; (c) Atonement and Incarnation—The controlling function of God's Relation to Man as Father—The need of making the conception of Fatherhood dominant in Christian theology.

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About half a century ago, when I had just begun my training for the Christian ministry, I read an essay in a Bible Class for Young Men with the title : *A Historical Personality an Eternal Truth* ; and after nearly fifty years' experience, study, and meditation, at almost the end of my fully active service I return to the same theme which has not waned, but waxed in its fascination for my mind. Can the fact of Jesus claim such profound significance and such sublime value, as to justify the transformation of the Hebrew conception of Yahveh into the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ?

(1) This question is an instance, the supreme instance, of the issue for philosophical no less

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than theological thought : What is the relation between eternity and time, between divine reality and human history? Can the content of the one be expressed in the bounds of the other?

(a) It is an issue for philosophy as well as for theology ; for even Ritschl¹ admits at times, if not always, that there is a borderland common to theology and philosophy.

“ Apart from the doctrine of God,” he says, “ Christian dogmatics offer no opportunity to set up a metaphysical idea directly as a theological.”

That there is this common ground must be maintained, for a philosophy which takes into account all the data, the moral conscience and the religious consciousness as well as the speculative intellect, must make its reckoning with the belief in God, either confirming or challenging. A philosophy which ignores or denies the reality of God, and either enthrones nature as ultimate law, or enshrines humanity as supreme object for contemplation and devotion may leave this issue untouched ; but any less superficial philosophy which recognizes that man's reach exceeds his grasp, that in religion he must *reach* beyond and above the world and the self which he can *grasp* to a reality greater and more enduring, must try to show how the eternal, the divine, is present, active, and manifest within the temporal, the

¹ *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 40.

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human. The dualism in this respect of the seventeenth and the eighteenth century is now impossible to our thought.

(b) In that period *mathematics* and *physics* were the dominant sciences ; a *static* system of nature was distinguished and even detached from God as distant Creator, Preserver, and Governor : the natural religion of an abstract reason was substituted for the revealed religion of a concrete history. Accordingly, Leibnitz distinguishes two kinds of truths.

“ Truths of reason are necessary, and their opposite is impossible ; truths of fact are contingent, and their opposite is possible.”¹

Similarly Lessing argues—

“ Accidental truths of history can never be evidence for necessary truths of the reason ; that Christ raised a dead man does not prove that God has a Son co-essential with Himself.”²

(c) Without contending that one historical fact *per se* justifies a doctrinal inference, having no causal or logical continuity with it, we must here challenge the general principle that human history cannot be the medium of divine revelation, that the eternal cannot be disclosed in the temporal. For our view of nature to-day is *dynamic*, since biology discloses a vital evolution

¹ *Monadology*, p. 33.

² *Theologische Streitschriften*, ed. 1867, pp. 6, 7.

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and psychology a personal development ; and this crucial idea of progressive change is no less applied to the inorganic realm ; reason is not for us a treasure-house of permanent and universal ideas, but a capacity to deal with the content of experience in history. While impelled towards a transcendent object of belief and worship by its very nature, religion can apprehend and comprehend the transcendent only in and through the immanent God. History is for our thinking invested with an importance great enough to be the vehicle of divine interest, purpose, and activity ; and eternity is not merely the negation of time, but the complementary and interpretative synthesis of the antitheses of past, present, and future, even as in human consciousness, if only imperfectly, memory, experience, and anticipation can be fused into personal identity amid all change.¹ This initial objection to the argument to be here developed is no insuperable obstacle.

(2) We can now pass to the positive affirmation that God has not, and so we may infer, cannot reveal Himself to man otherwise than in time.

(a) Speculatively we may argue that the relation of eternal and temporal, as of infinite and finite, is not negative but positive ; within God Himself there seems to be a necessity of

¹ See my book, *The Christian Belief in God*, pp. 444-6.

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nature to create, to express Himself in reality other than, and yet related to and dependent on, Himself; from the Christian standpoint this necessity can be interpreted as the constraint of love to give and to find itself in giving.

(b) Empirically we may argue that, if there is to be any relation of God to man, or man to God, so that God may fulfil His purpose in man as knowing, trusting, obeying, and loving Him, His approach and appeal must be under the conditions which determine the life of man. Even if in promise and potency God has placed eternity in the heart of man, he lives and labours, strives and suffers, sins and amends his ways in time; and thus God must deal with him, if at all, in time. Man is made or marred in history; and in history God must reveal Himself to redeem from sin and reconcile unto Himself.

(c) The Ritschlian school, while excluding *metaphysics* from theology, and *mysticism* from religion, lays all the stress on the *historical character* of revelation.¹ Herrmann especially has developed the argument in his two pamphlets, *Der Begriff der Offenbarung* (The Conception of Revelation) and *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtlicher Thatsachen?* (Why Does our Faith

¹ See my book on *The Ritschlian Theology*, chapter vii, pp. 194-229. This *objectivity* should disprove the charge of *subjectivity*, which is often levelled against the school because of its theory of *value-judgments*. See pp. 161-193.

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Need Historical Facts?). To this question his answer is briefly this :—

“ While the moral law, on the one hand ‘ the eternal law of our will takes possession of us ’ ; yet, on the other hand, we are living in time ; we belong to history, and it is in time and through history that this eternal law must be realized in our temporal existence. ‘ God is for us the power which joins the temporal with the eternal, which makes it possible for man who lives in time to cleave to the eternal law, which turns to him as the law of his own inner life.’ As the moral law is to be realized in history, so God, who makes that realization possible, must be manifest in history.”¹

Without accepting the exclusion by the Ritschlian school of metaphysics or mysticism, or the sole emphasis of Herrmann on the eternal law, and maintaining a much broader view of the relation of God to man including the rational and the spiritual as well as the moral, and the media of their intercourse, I entirely agree with the main position, and the reason given for it.

(3) Granted that history is the medium of God’s dealings with man, does the place of Jesus in history justify such a transformation of the conception of God as Christian theology has effected ?

(a) For Herrmann the saving revelation of God is in Christ.

¹ Op. cit., p. 218.

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“In the history of mankind there is one event” which carries this burden, “that is the appearance of Jesus Christ as it is handed down to us in the books of the New Testament.”¹

Christ came as the consummation of the progressive revelation of God, recorded in the Old Testament, the fulfilment of law and prophecy : no other revelation of God has proved as satisfying, and no redemption of man as efficacious, as His truth and grace. As these words of Herrmann indicate, our treatment of the subject must be historical, and not dogmatic. Whatever value the creeds may claim as historical monuments of the faith of the Church in any age, we are not concerned here to vindicate their metaphysics, although in the last lecture some reference will be necessary.

(b) Does the history as recorded in the New Testament afford a solid, sufficient basis for a *trinitarian*, I should prefer to say *tri-unitarian*, interpretation of God's revelation of Himself? There are, it is evident, three phases of that revelation, the conception given by Jesus of God as Father, the confession by the Church of Jesus as Christ and Lord, and the experience in the Church of the Holy Spirit as Life-Giver ; each of these phases will be the subject of a lecture, while in the last the resulting data for the doctrine of the Trinity must be discussed.

¹ Quoted in *ibidem*.

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(4) Before dealing in the rest of this lecture with the first subject, God as Father, two limitations of the treatment, which the condition of time imposes, may be mentioned.

(a) This lecture is not an essay in literary or historical criticism, nor in Biblical theology, although the results of both must be assumed. but an attempt at constructive dogmatics. Accordingly I shall not deal with the details of either preparatory discipline however necessary. I fully and frankly accept the legitimacy, even the necessity, of the application of the principles of literary and historical *criticism* to the record of the Gospels, although I recognize that here "the personal equation" does obtrude itself, as it does not in the natural sciences, and the results cannot claim to be purely objective; and I am suspicious in the extension of such criticism in what is known as *the religious historical method* of the intrusion of the principles of *correlation* and *comparison*.¹ Some critics are, in my judgment, too confidently positive in affirming or denying what Jesus could, or could not, have said, and in limiting the range of His teaching by its *correlation* or its *comparison* with the Jewish teaching of His age. This judgment I should also apply to the extension of the criticism to the tradition behind the records in the new

¹ I have fully discussed this *religious historical method* in my book, *The Christian Certainty amid the Modern Perplexity*, pp. 144-152.

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method the *history of forms*, as in Martin Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*. The common testimony of the New Testament and the enduring consequence in human history of Christ's appearance justify us in regarding Him as not "cribb'd, cabin'd, and confined" to the measure of average manhood, and as not exclusively conditioned by the thought and the life of His people and His age. This consideration will affect the content of the next lecture more than of this, but needs to be advanced at the beginning of this discussion.

(b) So many valuable books have been written on the teaching of Jesus generally, and especially about God, entering into minute detail, that it is not necessary to go over the same ground. It is here assumed that Jesus in word and deed revealed God, the Creator, Preserver, Judge, and Ruler of mankind as Father, showing His goodness in nature and providence, protecting from evil, providing good (Matthew vi, 25-34), waiting to be gracious to, and ready to forgive the penitent and believing, grieved by man's loss through sin, rejoicing in man's recovery, anticipating man's faith by His grace, seeking that He might save the lost (Luke xv). It is also assumed that through Him this revelation became effective in human experience, so that the sinful woman knew herself forgiven, and was so assured of her salvation that she could

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go in peace, (Luke vii, 36-50), and that salvation did come to the outcast of Jewish society, the tax-gatherer Zacchæus (xix, 1-10)—two typical instances, out of a great multitude. As we read the Gospels our general impression is that Jesus did not only attempt, but achieved, a religious revolution, leading mankind to a conception of God, and a consequent relation to God, such as no other religious teacher before or elsewhere had brought about. Is this impression true?

I

THE ORIGINALITY OF JESUS

(1) The *originality of Jesus* has been challenged by a Christian scholar, Dr. A. C. McGiffert in his book *The God of the Early Christians*.

(a) "Jesus was a devout and loyal Jew," he says, "and the God whom he worshipped was the God of his people Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was not a theologian or a philosopher, and he indulged in no speculations touching the nature and the character of God. So far as we can judge from the Synoptic Gospels and from his attitude reflected there, he did not regard it as his mission to promulgate a new God or to teach new ideas about God, but rather to summon his fellows to live as God—his God and theirs—would have them live."¹

¹ Op. cit., p. 3.

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Even as regards God's Fatherhood Dr. McGiffert writes :—

“ The personal piety of the age indeed expressed itself largely in the thought of God as Father, and Jesus simply followed the common custom of his day in employing the term.”¹

For this statement he claims the support of such scholars as Dalman and Moore.

(b) On a matter of scholarship he would be not a brave, but a rash man who challenged the authority of such a scholar in his own sphere. Only two qualifications may be here suggested. (i) *First of all*, religious literature may be and usually is in advance of religious life ; otherwise it is difficult to understand why the teaching of Jesus found such a welcome among the multitude, if He was simply repeating what were generally accepted commonplaces. (ii) *Secondly*, the criticism in the teaching of Jesus of the current religious belief and practice points, not to correspondence, but rather conflict with at least the dominant piety. In so far as His teaching had been anticipated, we may welcome the evidence that the *præparatio evangelica* was not confined to the “ ethical monotheism of the prophets ”, as we are only too ready to assume, but included the truest thought and best life of contemporary Judaism and that in the largest

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

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sense He came in "the fulness of the time" (Galatians iv, 3).

(c) It is no interest of Christian faith to isolate Jesus from His historical context. Dr. McGiffert, however, qualifies his own statements.

"His uniqueness," he says, "so far as his teaching goes, lay not in the novelty of it, but in the insight and unerring instinct with which he made his own the best in the thought of his countrymen."¹

The reason for this uniqueness he admits may be where Christian faith has usually found it.

"That he was conscious of standing himself in a relation of peculiar intimacy with God, as Christians have always believed, and that out of it came his assurance and his extraordinary religious insight may well be, but the proof of it is to be found rather in his general attitude than in his use of the word 'Father', or even of the phrase 'My Father'."²

(d) Regarding the confession of that intimacy by Jesus in the *logion*, Matt. xi, 27 (= Luke x, 22) he writes:—

"I am unable to think that this utterance came from Jesus himself. It is found, to be sure, in both Matthew and Luke, and is assigned by Harnack to Q., but it is too much out of line with the Synoptic tradition and too closely resembles the Johannine emphasis to commend itself as genuine."³

¹ Ibid., p. 21.

² Ibid., p. 15.

³ Ibid., p. 29.

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This dictum strikes me as arbitrary criticism. It can be set aside for five reasons. (i) Just because the logion is so unlike the Synoptic teaching generally, how, if not genuine, did it get into the older source of the two Gospels, as Harnack, I think, has proved? (ii) Is it incredible that in the mood of "rejoicing in the spirit", which Luke surely rightly ascribes to Jesus, He broke through His habitual reserve as regards His inner life with these His still immature disciples and let His heart freely speak? (iii) Do not the claims which, according to the Synoptic teaching, He made on His disciples, to come to Him, to learn of Him, to bear His yoke, to find rest in Him, to confess Him before men, to take up the Cross and follow Him, indicate a consciousness congruous with this confession? (iv) This utterance is not so entirely alien to the Synoptic tradition, if we accept the record of the Baptism and of the Transfiguration as trustworthy. Can "the Johannine emphasis" be simply dismissed as having no roots in history, and as proving a saying unauthentic? ¹

(e) If we press the question: Whence then came the Christian doctrine of God? we get an answer with a qualification which in my judgment largely negates it.

¹ See my book, *The Beloved Disciple*, for a discussion of the historical reminiscences in the Fourth Gospel.

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“ So far as the God of the Christians is different from the God of the Jews, it is not due to Jesus’ teaching about God, but to the teaching of Paul and those that came after, or still more to the personality of Jesus and the interpretation his followers put upon it.”¹

What that personality was, and how far the interpretation put upon it was valid will be discussed in the next lecture. Here only we take note of this concession that, even if not original the teaching of Jesus made an impression and led to a consequence which belong to no other teacher. The truth embodied in this tale, the creed of creeds wrought in loveliness of perfect deeds has given the world a new religion through a fresh revelation of God, which has proved a fulfilment of Hebrew and Jewish religion, not as merely a continuance, but as a correction and a completion.

(2) It is interesting and important to place in contrast to this depreciation by a Christian scholar of the originality of the teaching of Jesus, the tribute paid to it by a Jewish scholar of no less eminence, Dr. Claude Montefiore.

(a) “ The truth seems to lie between the ordinary Jewish view, which would deny to Jesus and Paul any development or improvement of the old Jewish conceptions of God, and the critical Christian view, which

¹ Op. cit., p. 21. The mistake many scholars make is to lay all the stress on the words, and to treat as merely *subjective* the impression made by the personality on receptive and responsive followers.

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delights to misuse the words of later Jewish literature as a foil to the teaching of the Gospels and the Epistles. For the real means by which later Judaism triumphed over the religious dangers of a one-sided exaggeration of the divine transcendence, while they were thoroughly effective, were yet national and particular. Jesus and Paul triumphed over them by a more general method, by bringing into more habitual and emphatic prominence the other and complementary aspects of Deity, the immanence of the divine spirit in the souls of men and the universal fatherhood of God.”¹

Montefiore even suggests that for—

“ a dominant and consistent doctrine, adequate and comprehensive, soul-satisfying and rational which can set forth and illumine in its entire compass the relation of the individual to society and to God,” Judaism might borrow from the Gospels “ important elements towards the formation of such a congruous body of doctrine . . . elements which would harmonize, develop and bring together the highest religious teaching in the Old Testament and the early Rabbinical literature, and which a prophetic, though not a legal, Judaism, with full consistency and much advantage, might adopt and cherish as its own.”²

(b) Dr. R. E. Speer writes of Dr. Montefiore, that he—

“ recognizes in the idea of redemption by love ‘ something new in the history of Israel due to the teacher of Nazareth ’ and he says of Jesus’ conception of God, ‘ We certainly do not get in the Hebrew Bible any

¹ *The Hibbert Lectures*, 1892, pp. 428-9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 550.

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teacher speaking of God as "Father", "my Father," "your Father," and "our Father" like the Jesus of Matthew.' "

Dr. Speer goes on to refer to another Jewish scholar :—

" Dr. Joseph Klausner, in his notable book on *Jesus of Nazareth*, maintains that both in His ethics and in His theology, Jesus represented positions so novel and radically impossible for the Jews that there could be no concord. ' Jesus,' says he, ' was the antithesis of Judaism. He ranged above the teaching of ceremonial laws in His ethical teaching, and from this high ethical standpoint the material and political ideals of the Jews lose their importance ; mankind as a whole and not the nation is the central point in religious thought and in " the world to come ". Jesus' teaching thus becomes the contrary not alone of Pharisaic Judaism but also of Scriptural Judaism ; it is therefore the negation of Judaism.' " ¹

The conclusion from these contrasted estimates seems to be that if we confine ourselves to the Synoptic records of the teaching of Jesus we cannot offer so confident a judgment as does Dr. McGiffert.

(3) Even if the teaching of Jesus lacked originality in its details to the extent on which Dr. McGiffert insists, it made an impression of novelty : a new teaching (Mark i, 27), which

¹ *The Finality of Jesus Christ*, pp. 66-7. Even if Klausner is affected by Jewish prejudice, there must be some ground for his impression of the contrast he asserts.

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attracted attention and compelled interest. (a) It exercised an influence, securing acceptance or provoking hostility, as that of John the Baptist had not. It was addressed largely to those who in the judgment of the authoritative teachers were least promising subjects of instruction; and it transformed lives, finding the lost, saving the sinners, lifting up the fallen (Luke vii, 36-50; xix, 1-10; Mark ii, 13-17). Isolated truths were co-ordinated into a harmonious truth; and that truth was so effective because it was the channel of grace. The personality was even more than any of His words and deeds; and in Him the Kingdom of God, His sovereign saving activity, the reign of the Father in human hearts and lives, came to men (Luke xvii, 21). Whether the words were spoken by Him or not, He proved the true and the living way to the Father (John xiv, 6). Even if every word that He uttered could be paralleled, and there are those which cannot, in Him men came into a contact, a gracious and redemptive contact, with the divine reality—the Fatherhood of God, which made His ministry, and what followed after and from it, a creative moment in human religion through divine revelation.

(b) Although we must discriminate more carefully than theologians have always done between the religious basis and the theological superstructure, I cannot regard either the Pauline

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or the Johannine interpretation of His personality as merely theological speculations without any basis in actual history, even if the terminology belongs to another intellectual environment than that in which He in His earthly ministry moved. Would the appearances after the Resurrection have brought about the confident conviction in the witnesses, and through them in the primitive community generally, that He was risen and lived, had the impression of His earthly life been only that of one of many teachers, repeating already familiar truths, and not investing them with a transforming power such as no scribe had ever secured? Even if we deny, as in my judgment we are not entitled to deny, that "the beloved disciple" of the Fourth Gospel was an eyewitness, and has preserved some of his cherished reminiscences in his interpretation of the Master,¹ how was the impression made upon him which inspired his Gospel, unless he shared the life of a community in which the memory was of One who so impressed in His earthly life, that after His death He became a living, mighty, saving Presence? How was Saul, the persecutor, turned into Paul the Apostle, unless behind his solitary vision (Acts ix, 1-9), which would surely have faded into the light of common day, there was the confirming and sustaining witness (1 Corinthians xv, 1-11) of that same

¹ See my book, *The Beloved Disciple*.

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community, that ecclesia, that new Israel, which He who was confessed Messiah, Christ, had brought into existence and kept in holy enthusiasm and holy energy "filled with the Holy Spirit"? (Acts ii, 1 11). The kind of research of which Dr. McGiffert's work is an example of highest merit, cannot solve the problem of the fact of Christ as the New Testament presents Him, and as Christian faith in all ages experiences Him, the creative source of the Christian Church. In Him we must recognize a Divine initiative in human history.

2

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

How did Jesus make the Fatherhood of God a reality, redeeming and reconciling for men, even the worst in the judgment of others and also their own? It is because behind His originality, the novelty of His teaching, there lay *authority*. He taught as "one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew vii, 29).¹

(1) It is no mere play with words to point out that a man is *original*, if what he says or does is not borrowed from another but has its *origin* in himself, and so also a man has *authority* in

¹ See the discussion of "Authority in Religion" in my book, *The Christian Certainty amid the Modern Perplexity*, pp. 108-119.

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the measure in which he is the *author* of words and deeds that are effective and creative, and does not depend for them on another.

(a) While we must fully recognize that Jesus inherited "the ethical monotheism" of the succession of the prophets, that He was influenced by His environment not only in the mode but even the content of His teaching ; yet He was original in that which He adopted, in that by which he was affected. He remained master of inheritance and environment alike, because His was a creative personality ; and inasmuch as His originality and His authority were in the realm of religion, the relation of God and man, we may affirm that the source of His life and thought was in God Himself : His authority in the things of God was due to His immediate contact with the Author of all reality, God Himself.

(b) There is a distinction which may be recalled in this connection, although theologians making a claim to orthodoxy have usually been suspicious of it and even hostile. The eighteenth century in some of its representatives sought to replace the Christian religion in which Christ is the object of faith by the religion of Jesus, of which He is the subject. For such a substitution I do not offer any plea ; but the distinction deserves to be recognized—a religion of Jesus is a necessary condition of the Christian religion.

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Jesus was the "author and finisher of faith" (Hebrews xii, 2), the pioneer believer, that He might become the object of the faith into which as organ He led mankind. He must needs reveal God as Father in the relation in which men can and do realize the Fatherhood. He Himself lived, trusted, obeyed, loved God as Son in order that men through Him might know God as Father, and might be brought into relation with God as sons (Matthew xi, 25-30). He is Lord and Mediator because He is also example and leader. A revelation of God's Fatherhood in supernatural words and deeds could not be given to men ; but must be realized in sonship as man. Hence the perfect humanity of Jesus was a necessary condition of His perfect Sonship in which the perfect Fatherhood of God was revealed. There was a perfect human receptivity and responsiveness as a condition of the perfect divine communication of the truth and grace of God through Him. It is in a realized human Sonship that divine Fatherhood is revealed.

(2) It is well worth pursuing this subject further, as on the one hand under the influence of dogmatic presuppositions we may ignore what must needs be the mode of the divine revelations in history ; and on the other hand in our formulation of the doctrine of the Godhead we may fail to give its due significance to the distinc-

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tion between Father and Son. We must then insist that according to the historical testimony of the Gospels, and the doctrinal interpretation by Paul (1 Corinthians viii, 6), the Son as incarnate was conscious in Himself and confessed His subordination to His God and Father. The confession to which allusion has been made already acknowledges entire dependence :—

“All things have been delivered unto me of my Father,” and complete submission : “Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight” (Matthew xi, 26–7). Even regarding His second Advent, He leaves the time to the Father’s appointment. “Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark xiii, 32). In Gethsemane He prays : “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee : remove this cup from me ; howbeit, not what I will, but what thou wilt” (xiv, 36). On Calvary His death was an act of self-committal : “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke xxiii, 46).

Even if the last two utterances should be challenged on critical grounds, they indicate the impression His constant attitude to God made. In what I believe to be the historical reminiscences in the Fourth Gospel it is the same picture which meets us, a Son in intimate communion with God as Father, but in constant reliance, in continuous obedience. Surely this was an inevitable condition of the reality of the Incarnation : the Incarnate must ideally realize

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the relation to God to which through His mediation mankind was to be gradually brought. Whether within the Godhead there is any corresponding relation of Father and Son is a question which must be deferred to the last lecture. The revelation of God in His relation to man can come only through the religion of man as receptive and responsive thereto.

(3) This conclusion raises the further question : How can and does the perfect human sonship reveal the perfect divine Fatherhood ? A threefold answer can be given to the question.

(a) Where there is perfect correspondence in a relation, the unknown person can be apprehended and appreciated through the known, even as the unruffled face of the lake reflects the blue sky with its white clouds above. From what a human son or daughter is, where there has been the proper intimacy, we may infer of what kind was the father or the mother. Jesus did speak about God as " my ", " your ", " our " Father ; and even if His use of the term " Father " be not as original as it was once held to be, and even if some of His sayings are similar to what had been said before, His teaching as a whole was a unique, convincing affirmation of the Fatherhood of God, and His own attitude as Son was ever confirming and making effective that teaching.

(b) But this is not all, may we not even

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say the words were the less impressive mode of the revelation? His own attitude to men, to sinful men, His attraction for them, His influence over them, His transformation of them, His whole redemptive and reconciling passion and action were a final and complete demonstration of the reality of God as Father. The Shepherd seeking the lost sheep, the woman searching for her lost coin were analogies of the Father waiting to welcome home the lost son (Luke xv). Because of His loving intimacy with God and His loving insight into man He knew how God willed to save and bless, and also knew when in man the condition of penitence and faith were present without which God's will could not be fully realized. A priestly absolution can never be above doubt, because no priest knows God and man as He did; His pardon was assured as very God's (Luke vii, 47-50; Mark ii, 5, 9-11). Putting the matter even in lower terms, His brotherliness as Son of Man helped men to believe in the fatherliness of God, which, as Son of God knowing the Father, He revealed.

(c) Further, if man is made in the image and for likeness to God, if affinity of nature makes possible community of life, then the sonship in man which the Fatherhood of God as thus revealed evokes, is itself a disclosure of what God is, in Himself eternally both Father and Son. So far to round off this argument it is

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necessary to anticipate what must later be demonstrated, if that be possible.

(4) When insisting, as we have done on the realization in Jesus of the perfect human sonship, we may appear to ignore one element which does and must distinguish Him from all men. God's Fatherhood for us sinners means sin forgiven (Mark ii, 5), the debt paid (Luke vii, 41-3), the lost found (xix, 10), the prodigal turned home (xv, 18-21). Not so for Him. It might seem as if this difference—real as it is—must mean distance, even separation. But love, love such as God's in Christ, can bridge even such a gulf. Because He loved and God loved mankind in Him, He who was no partner in man's sin, guilt, or punishment, was a sharer in the sorrow, suffering, and shame of sin—all the consequences of sin save only the consciousness of having sinned (cf. Isaiah liii, 10; Matthew xx, 28; 2 Corinthians v, 21). And the self-identification of love was so complete, that that difference, great as it is, falls as a barrier. The holy can love and pity and suffer with and for sinners as the sinful cannot, and do not. It was love for God as Father and man as brother which gave Jesus His authority as revealer of God to men, and so redeemer and reconciler of men to God: and that love found its supreme expression in the Cross and from the Cross draws its mightiest influence over

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men. Human personality transcends its finite individuality in sympathy with, service of, and sacrifice for others ; so finite human persons do not limit God's personal infinitude, because in His holy love He interpenetrates the life of man with condemnation for the sin and compassion for the sinner.

(5) It must never be forgotten that the revelation was under human conditions and in the relation of God and man. On the ground of an abstract dogmatic formula to ascribe to Jesus for instance omniscience and so to assign divine authority to what He said about the authorship of Old Testament writings, or the causes of disease is to disregard the historical data which the records of the Gospels provide. As the matter affects the person of Christ it will be dealt with in the next lecture ; but what must here be insisted on is that the revelation in Christ is not a complete and exclusive revelation of the total divine reality.

(a) It is as Father in His relation to mankind, especially as regards man's sin and forgiveness, duty and destiny, holiness and blessedness, fellowship with and likeness to God that He alone knew and made God known. His revelation is not opposed to, nor supersedes man's pursuit of truth, appreciation of beauty, endeavour after holiness. That this revelation is central, crucial, directive, corrective, and

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completing in regard to man's varied and constant search after God must be maintained ; but the believer who claims Jesus as an authority in every realm of human interest and activity is as mistaken as the unbeliever who turns from His truth and grace, because He did not concern Himself with science, philosophy, and literature, all that comes under the broad term culture, or with the more material aims and objects of men, which may be included in civilization.

(*b*) The simplicity of His life does not necessarily condemn the complexity of ours : the range of His interest and activity does not fix the bounds of what it is lawful and desirable for His followers to inquire into, or endeavour after, although, as has already been indicated, the revelation of God as Father does and must affect the motive and the manner of the inquiry and the purpose of man. If we recognize this we shall not detach His revelation of God, as did Marcion and the Gnostics from the preparatory progressive revelation to the Hebrew nation and the Jewish people. In His own religious thought and life He appropriated and assimilated His inheritance as a Jew of the ethical monotheism of the prophets ; correcting and completing, not destroying, but fulfilling. Some of what seem to me fanatically narrow and rigid interpretations of the teaching of Jesus are due to an isolation of His distinctive message

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from what men had already received and possessed in the Old Testament Scriptures. To detach Him from His historical background is to misunderstand and misinterpret Him. We may go further, we must not ignore altogether men's search after God in other religions, for where religion is genuine, there is the divine presence and communion, however limited and impeded by the defects of the human medium. He fulfilled not only law and prophecy, but all the religious aspirations and endeavours of mankind in all lands and all ages. We must not detach His revelation from what God has disclosed of Himself in other religions, nor banish God's presence from the manifold interests and activities of men.

3

THE SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS

Recognizing the distinctive character of the revelation of God in Christ, and consequently not claiming that it throws clear light on the total reality of God, we may, in closing this lecture, indicate its *sufficiency* for man. God has so made and endowed man that he can by his own knowledge and skill, while always dependent on God's providence and guidance, fulfil his own ends in culture and civilization. Nature and history

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disclose to his searching gaze aspects of the Universe ; and thus raise problems concerning God which the Christian revelation does not solve, nor even recognize as needing solution, such as this : while we must conceive God as personal in so far as in religion He enters into personal relations with man, is the category of personality, even as ideal, so far as our thought is capable of forming such a conception, adequate to describe God's total reality, so far as we can reach it by our thinking, or must we concede that God is also supra-personal, that there must be in him to explain this Universe as man conceives it aspects of reality reaching beyond that conception ? There is thus a wide range of theoretical interest and practical activity which lies beyond the immediate reach of the revelation in Jesus, but three considerations may be advanced to show the supreme, even absolute, value of Him as Revealer.

(1) *First of all*, if God be what He must needs be conceived to be, if conceived as God at all, the essential reality, the ultimate cause, the final purpose, the universal presence, the directing wisdom, and the controlling power of the Universe, nature and man, His nature, character and purpose in relation to man must hold the foremost place in man's interest, inquiry, desire. No more urgent question can any man ask than this : What is God towards me and for me ?

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What does He offer me ? What does He ask of me ?

(a) No more satisfying answer can be given than that as Father He offers personal communion, and in that communion personal conformity to His own perfection ; for these seem to me to be the two necessary elements in the conception of God's Fatherhood. His is the perfection which man shares in his communion with God that he may gain it for himself. Loving God as Father, men can become like God as His children (Matthew v, 48 ; Ephesians v, 1). This seems to me to be the essential relation of God to man, and man to God, even were there no sin.

(b) But, inasmuch as the relation of man to God, as God means it to be, has been disturbed by sin, the revelation of God must needs be redemptive and reconciling (Romans iii, 21-26 ; 2 Cor. v, 18-19) man's estrangement from God must be overcome, and his unlikeness to God must be removed. Disbelief, distrust, and disobedience must be replaced by belief, trust, obedience. The revelation in Christ not only discloses what man is and ought to be, but is effective in changing man from sinner to son and saint. We must never think lightly of man's sin and guilt, or of God's forgiveness and renewal ; but the relation of God and man is wider than sin and grace. Just as some great thinkers of

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the Church have held that there would have been an Incarnation even in a sinless world as the consummation of the whole creative process as a progressive revelation of God, so we may hold that God's Fatherhood and man's sonship are deeper in their reach and wider in their range than reconciliation and redemption, although man as sinful, being what he is, the possibilities of the mutual relation of God and man could be actualized only by the removal of that hindrance.

(c) Central as for sinful mankind must be the atonement of the Cross and with Paul we should glory in nothing save the Cross (Gal. vi, 14) ; yet the Incarnation reaches out to a wider circumference in the relation of God and man. Unworthy as sin has made mankind, the worth of man as created by God for sonship has not been utterly wasted. Man's capacity to receive and respond to God's approach and appeal has not been destroyed altogether by his sin, although grace alone can evoke its exercise ; and we should, it seems to me, always recognize the essential affinity and potential community of God and man as the necessary condition of even the possibility of man's recovery of what he has lost through his sinfulness. That there are many men whose moral conscience does not convict of sin, whose religious consciousness does not constrain to seek after God, is no disproof

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of the world-wide evidence that God has made us for Himself, and that our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Him. Despite widespread ignorance, or indifference to man's supreme need of God, of forgiveness and holiness from God, we may claim that Jesus does deal with what ought to be, if it is not always, mankind's supreme concern—the relation to God, and that He so deals with it that the need is fully met, the aspiration abundantly satisfied.

(2) *Secondly*, it follows that the relation to God must be directive of, and controlling over all other relations. If all things are of God as Creator, Preserver, and Ruler, then there is no interest or activity of man unrelated to his relation to God. That relation need not always be present to consciousness. The man of science in his laboratory is not guided in his observation or experiment by the Sermon on the Mount; he is guided by the principles and methods of science; but as a man in the pursuit of his vocation in science, he must recognize his responsibilities in his discoveries and disclosures not to hinder, but to further the common human good as presented in, and required by God. In like manner the artist in shaping his marble, or blending his colours, need not be thinking of the Golden Rule, or of conveying a moral or religious truth by his statue or picture, but as man he cannot escape judgment if his art is

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degrading and not elevating the character of the community. The revelation of God's Fatherhood in Christ must not be regarded as primarily negative restraint; it is surely also positive constraint. Jesus saw the Heavenly Father's care and bounty in the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, the impartial goodness of God in sunshine and shower (Matthew vi, 25-34), in the works and the ways of men He found parables of truth concerning God. If the revelation of God in Christ becomes dominant in any mind or life it cannot but affect, cleansing and hallowing, the whole world around, "All things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans viii, 28). "If we are Christ's and Christ is God's, then all things are ours" in their divine significance and value as tokens of the Father's love to His children (1 Cor. iii, 23).

(3) *Thirdly*, this revelation of God in Christ has not become dominant as it should be, even in Christian theology. As we study the dogmas and systems of the past, we discover, if we do not allow prejudice and partiality to vitiate our sincerity and candour, sub-Christian, non-Christian, anti-Christian elements. A despotic monarch, and not a Holy Father has often been the conception of God regulative of thought. The indiscriminating use of the Old Testament, the assimilation of Christian thinking to pagan

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under the influence of Greek philosophy or Roman law, the still unregenerated elements in the nature of the theologian himself have combined to give us a Theism that is not yet alone and all Christian. As I believe that our modern scholarship has enabled us to gain a more accurate knowledge and a more adequate understanding of the whole past history which has shaped our theology, we have the opportunity, and so lie under the obligation to revise and transform our theological inheritance to make it thoroughly Christian. For many years I have been revising my own theology under the guiding principle that I will believe nothing, even if supported by texts, inconsistent with the revelation of the Father in the Son, and I will believe anything that that revelation leads me to believe as by sound inference resulting from the conception of God's Fatherhood, even if no text can be cited in support.

To give one instance, the universality of God's Fatherhood, intensive as well as extensive, the whole manhood of all mankind, has been denied on the ground of the doctrine of election, for it is not recognized that even in the New Testament lower conceptions of God than that Jesus has given us survive, e.g. Paul in Romans ix is arguing against Jewish arrogance as still a Jewish Rabbi, but in Romans xi, 25-32, he has the vision of the Christian apostle. Again while men in

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their temporal development become the children of God (Matthew v, 47) in character, or experience the change of their relation to God as *adoption* (Galatians iv, 5; Ephesians i, 5), God in His eternal reality is the universal Father: and we must interpret all His dealings with men as fatherly. Our Christology even needs to be revised to be congruous with our theology; our thought of Christ must be determined by His thought of God. To this task the second lecture will be devoted.

LECTURE II

JESUS AS CHRIST AND LORD

The Limitation of knowledge : (a) The historical evidence ; (b) The distinction of Knowledge and Judgment ; (c) Ignorance no personal defect ; (d) Knowledge as progressive process for man and God ; (e) Special Points of Difficulty : Scripture References, Demonic Possession, and Jewish Eschatology—The Liability to Temptation : (a) The range of the temptations of Jesus ; (b) The possibility and the probability of the wrong choice ; (c) The sympathy and the succour of the tempted as affected by defeat or triumph in temptation—The subjection to Emotion, Vicarious Love.

The Religious Consciousness : (a) The religion of Jesus as the Consciousness of Sonship ; (b) The intimacy and immediacy of His relation to God ; (c) The consciousness of pre-existence. We are not Christs ; (d) Answer to criticisms of Jesus' conception of God (i) The standard applied, (ii) The ethical monotheism of Jesus, (iii) Jesus' use of Jewish Eschatology—The Moral Character, Criticism : (a) Criticisms of Jesus (i) His teaching on rewards and punishments, (ii) His severity to the Pharisees, (iii) His Jewish exclusiveness ; the Syro-phoenician woman, (iv) His answer to Jewish ruler ; (b) Another approach : His enthusiasm for His vocation ; (c) His character indescribable—The Mediatorial Efficacy : (a) The confession of the Christ ; (b) The confession of the Lord ; (c) The reasons for the title Lord (i) Authoritative Teacher, (ii) Redeemer in His death, (iii) Victor over Death and Head of the Church ; (d) The interpretation as Son and Word.

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INTRODUCTION—THEOLOGY AND CHRISTOLOGY

The greatest difficulty in securing a satisfactory Christology is due to the fact that the conception of God and man and their relation has seldom been adequately Christian. The assumption has been unconsciously made that somehow the Jewish God was changed into the Christian by the Incarnation, and that the Person of Jesus must be construed from the conception of the Jewish God. I should be far from denying that that event and experience in time had no significance and no value for the eternal reality of God: but the Incarnation disclosed not what God was going to become, but what God eternally is. If God be eternally Father, and if man in God's purpose in Creation, Providence, and Redemption is potentially child of God, then not only must the Incarnation take place under so real human conditions as to exhibit the perfect Fatherhood of God to all mankind, but also the promise and the pattern of human sonship must be realized under as real human conditions. The humanity of Christ has been asserted by the creeds, and it is heresy to deny it: but orthodox theologians have tended to concede the human limitations grudgingly and only in so far as the historical evidence compelled them, and that even they have tended to minimize. If, as has been in the previous lecture

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contended, the perfect divine Fatherhood has been revealed in the perfect human sonship of Jesus as "the Firstborn among many brethren" (Romans viii, 29), the pioneer of mankind in its way towards God (Hebrews ii, 10), no hesitation need be felt, no reserves made, as regards the reality of the humanity as though humanity were the negation of divinity or *vice versa*. Only one qualification of this statement need be made: it is not a *sinful* humanity, it is not an *average* humanity that has to be affirmed, it is humanity at its best, as God means mankind to become. We must not begin thus with any metaphysical conception of deity, and then infer from divine attributes so affirmed what the historical reality of Jesus can or must have been. We must begin with the actual record of the Gospels, learn what manner of man Jesus was, and then relate manhood so disclosed to the godhead thus revealed.

I

THE HUMAN TRAITS

The first *human trait* that is for dogmatic reasons denied, but must on historical grounds be affirmed, is *the limitation of knowledge*.

(a) I need not repeat the familiar evidence from the Gospels, the most conspicuous instance

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of ignorance confessed has already been mentioned : even the Son of Man does not know the time of His second Advent (Mark xiii, 32), but it is on no isolated texts that the conclusion rests ; the whole life in its moral and religious reality would be turned into a mere semblance were omniscience assumed as an inference from the divinity, but an inference ignoring the fact that divinity was incarnate, that the Word became flesh (John i, 14). Omniscience cannot be tempted, nor exercise faith, and is not subject to the emotions of surprise, disappointment, fear. The attempt to demonstrate a dual consciousness, ignorance as man and knowledge as God, is as futile as it is unnecessary. I can remember the antagonism which was provoked by the late Bishop Gore's admission, guarded as it was, of the limitation of knowledge, and the defence he offered by what seemed to me an unnecessary appeal to the Fathers. The Gospel evidence is quite sufficient ; and to deny this limitation is to deny the essential reality of the Incarnation.

(*b*) I shall not waste any more time on either the proof or the denial, but shall endeavour to show that such a limitation does not in any way affect Jesus' authority as Son revealing the Father, nor is such limitation a defect marring the perfection of His character. A distinction which is often overlooked, and yet for our present inquiry is crucial, is that between mental *capacity*

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and mental *content*, between *judgment* and *knowledge*, although the now recognized distinction of facts and values approaches it. The one is an individual endowment, the other is a corporate possession in which individuals more or less share. To put the difference more concretely, the learned man is not always the wise man ; a man may have acquired a vast mass of information, and yet be singularly lacking in discernment, intellectual, æsthetic, moral, and religious. He may have accumulated many facts, but have little (if any) appreciation of values—truth, beauty, holiness, love. A saint who has a rare insight into the ways of God and goodness may be no scholar, and a scholar, who has gathered much curious lore may be no saint. Acquisition of knowledge may even become a hindrance to immediacy of apprehension. To know God as Father—the grace that He gives, and the goodness that He wants of men—requires not knowledge of facts, but judgment regarding values. The personal discernment of Jesus, as the condition of His disclosures about God, duty, and destiny, depended on His personal relation to God, of communion with God, dependence on and submission to God, and not at all on how much or how little He shared of the knowledge of His own time. The condition of acquiring such knowledge is not religious experience, or moral character, but observation,

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research, learning, study. Thus not only is there difference of *nature* between knowledge and discernment, but also of *method* in the attainment. Jesus' knowledge of God was such discernment, and is not to be confused with the ordinary knowledge of facts, laws, and causes.

(c) We do not regard a man's ignorance of a subject which it is not his duty to know, or of which he has not the opportunity of acquiring knowledge as a moral defect, a religious limitation. Paul remains a master in the interpretation of the life in Christ, although he knew no psychoanalysis. We do not depreciate Newton because he did not anticipate Einstein. Even the greatest scholar is limited by the knowledge of his age in his own department, and to such additions to it as that knowledge makes it possible for him individually to make. Even the greatest thinker in science or philosophy cannot detach himself from the intellectual development of his own environment, although he may individually further that development. It is only neglect of such obvious considerations which can lead us in our Christology to the assumption that in some way the personal perfection of Jesus was marred because in the content of His knowledge of facts, causes, laws, He knew only what was known to His contemporaries, and only what He had learned by the ordinary methods of acquiring such knowledge.

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To His function as teacher it would have added only difficulty and confusion had He anticipated the physical science, or the literary and historical criticism of later ages in His statements to the people, or had He been under the compulsion of always distinguishing what He could or could not say.

(d) This general argument can be in my judgment strengthened by two further considerations. (i) In *the first place* let us recognize that the acquisition of truth is a *progressive process*, and that a knowledge which is approaching, even if it has not yet reached the absolute and final truth, has truth relative to the stage of acquisition which has been reached. The Newtonian physics was true relative to what was then known of the physical universe, and the starting-point of an advance by Einstein towards more adequate truth. Accordingly it is to excite prejudice by the use of a word, when the question about Jesus' knowledge in relation to His own age is put thus: Was Jesus mistaken? as that suggests some defect.

No man is to be blamed for not knowing what none of his contemporaries yet know. If the Incarnation was a reality, such limitation of knowledge was inevitable.

(ii) *Secondly*, if time has any relative reality for God, if it is as real for Him as the world in time, we are precluded from bold affirmations

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that God's omniscience regarding the content of the world is not conditioned in some way by time, and prohibited any such rash inferences therefrom as would necessitate a denial of the limitation of the knowledge of Jesus in time. The relation of time to eternity is so obscure a problem, that to represent God's omniscience as embracing all events, past, present, and future, in one synopsis, if I may use the word, is to cause only confusion. It is only modesty in us to keep the conception of divine omniscience out of any discussion of the content of the knowledge of Jesus, and to approach the subject from what we assuredly know as to the human method of acquiring knowledge.

(e) There are some subjects in relation to which this recognition of limitation of knowledge presents special difficulties to some thoughtful believers, and it seems necessary to meet such misgivings. (i) *Firstly* the Bible as the record of divine revelations holds a position of such authority in Christian thought, that some men find it difficult to exclude from the sphere of Jesus' authoritative knowledge any of His references to the sacred writings. The Davidic (Mark xii, 36) authorship of a Psalm, the historical authenticity of the story regarding Jonah (Matthew xii, 39-41) are placed by some as beyond all question by the authority of Jesus. But this is surely to confuse the distinction

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between the heavenly treasure of divine revelation and the earthen vessel of the human record, and traditions regarding it: facts to be ascertained by the ordinary methods of knowing are not to be confused with values, discerned by moral and spiritual insight. As regards the second we may maintain the infallibility of Jesus without committing ourselves to His inerrancy in regard to the first.

(ii) *Secondly*, demonic possession was, in accordance with the older animism surviving in the religion of the progressive revelation, the explanation offered of certain forms of disease, all the symptoms of which, as recorded in the Gospels, medical science to-day would explain as insanity of one form or another. Is the belief in evil spirits and their malevolent activities in human life so closely related to the revelation of the Divine Fatherhood in Christ that one must regard Jesus as setting the seal of His authority as Son knowing and making known the Father on the current belief? I have no hesitation in answering, No, not only on the ground of our medical knowledge, but for the reason that such a belief in demonic possession seems inconsistent with that revelation of Fatherhood, when our theological reflexion has worked out all its implications.

(iii) *Lastly*, what has here caused most heart-searching and mind-bewilderment is the adoption

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by Jesus, as it seems, of the Jewish eschatology, especially His expectation of a speedy return at the end of the age (the *æon*). Surely here no limitation of knowledge can be admitted, so it is argued. But some considerations may be offered to arrest so hasty a judgment. Jesus Himself confessed His ignorance of that for Him decisive hour (Mark xiii, 32); need we then claim His authority for the details as regards the circumstances of that consummation? We must recognize that the confident belief of the primitive community must have had a basis in His teaching, but no less that that belief may in turn have coloured the record, giving greater definiteness to some of the utterances of vaguer kind. Prophecy as prediction by its very nature must be conditional, as God is not carrying out a fixed timed programme in human history in which man is but a puppet moved by omnipotence; but in the drama there are human actors as well as the Chief Actor, and God's activity is conditioned, helped or hindered, hastened or delayed by man's actions. Prophecy would be a vain disclosure, if warnings or promises remained ineffective. Jesus' sense of the immediacy of the divine actions would necessarily be affected by His estimate of man's resistance or response to the divine purpose; and the surprise and disappointment which He expressed show that

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here His judgment was, and could not but be conditional. As prophecy deals with the events of the future, it must express them in terms of the present, that is symbolically not with prosaic literalness but poetic freedom. Even if Jesus' language was taken from the current Jewish eschatology, the meaning He put into it must have been determined by His filial consciousness, and cannot be interpreted through the intention of those who did not share any such consciousness. I cannot perceive in the limitation of Jesus' knowledge in these matters any hindrance to His adequate, satisfying revelation of God as Father. To His infallible discernment we shall return after discussing other human conditions of that revelation.

(2) Although on first consideration it might appear that *the liability to temptation* would present even greater difficulty to Christian faith than the *limitation of knowledge*, yet on the contrary, because of the value of the fact for the moral experience (Hebrews iv, 15) it has been less questioned, but often the admission is so qualified as to allow only the semblance, and not the substance, of temptation.

(a) The Epistle to the Hebrews, which shows an exceptional appreciation of the significance not only of the temptation, but also of the whole *human* experience of Jesus has stated a conviction, unspeakably precious to tempted men :—

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“ We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but one that has been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin ” (iv, 15).

This does not mean that Jesus experienced every kind of temptation ; for the range of temptation varies for different men. What is a tragic temptation to one brings no strain of resistance to another. So far as the Gospel records go, all His temptations were in relation to His calling, the easier and pleasanter or the harder and more painful way of its fulfilment. (Matthew iv, 1-11 ; xvi, 22, 23 ; xxvi, 38-42). What the statement does mean surely is that the trial was as great, the resistance as hard, and the victory as difficult in His experience as in that of His fellow-men. A man may either be too good, or not good enough to be tempted in certain ways ; Jesus was so good that temptations could come to Him only in corresponding ways ; but they were as real at His level as they are to those who ever live at a lower. The sources of temptation are in natural impulses, which, in due subordination to conscience, are and remain innocent, social influences, in which an inheritance of evil reaches the individual, personal circumstances which bring danger or need, and which may prove occasions for a wrong response—in all these cases the temptation itself is no evidence of moral defect. There are,

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however, temptations due to previous moral failures, desires gratified, habits formed, associations accepted, and here such evidence is offered. Of Jesus' temptations we can say that they show no such moral defect in Him.

(b) There are many who in reverence for His person dare not contemplate the *possibility of His choosing wrong*. This difficulty disappears if we recognize the distinction between *abstract possibility* and *concrete probability*. A temptation is experienced as real, if the possibility of the wrong choice is present, and is more or less intensely felt as present by the tempted. The disposition, character, and purpose, however, may be such that for the observer the possibility is never even a probability. When we hear an evil report of a good man whom we know, we often say: "I don't believe it; he could not have done this wrong"; we are not denying his freedom but affirming that liberty and law have in him been harmonized. Indeed, we must distinguish between natural and personal liberty. A personality is developed only as the possibility of the wrong choice grows less and less and the probability, approaching certainty, of his doing right more and more. The prayer: "Grant unto us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing, and no weakness from doing Thy will, that in Thy light we may see light

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clearly, and in Thy service find our perfect freedom " is not a vain quest ; but the aspiration in which personality finds its fulfilment. To be subjected to impulses which tempt is the lower freedom, to rise above them altogether the higher. Because Jesus saw in God's light clearly, His was the perfect freedom in His Father's service. He saw temptation where others saw a fulfilment of His vocation as Messiah ; He saw duty where others saw only avoidable danger : and as was His light, so was His liberty. How intensely felt the temptation was, despite these resources which assured His triumph, the severity of His rebuke of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi (Matthew xvi, 23) and His " sorrow unto death " in Gethsemane show (xxvi, 38). His triumph is regarded by some as indicating that the experience was not real. But it is surely the man who carries the " fight to a finish ", and not he who yields, who has the fullest experience of its severity : it is the fiercest assault that calls forth the stoutest defence.

(c) Again it has been urged, that the assurance of His sympathy and succour would be greater if His temptation had not been without sin, that is, if he had shared the common human experience of sinning as well as being tempted. This is a profound mistake. For sympathy, common suffering and not common sin is needed. It is not the sinner, but the saint

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(Hebrews ii, 18), who is most pitiful and helpful to sinners. The Jewish priesthood scorned the despairing Judas (Matthew xxvii, 3-5) ; Jesus looked with pity on the denying Peter (Luke xxii, 61-2). He is worthy to be our example because He never sinned : He is, however, more than an example ; He is Saviour and Lord, and we could not experience or confess a fellow-sinner as such. It is from the Holy God that the forgiveness which satisfies the conscience comes. The fact of sinlessness has been denied, and we must return to meet this challenge when dealing with those aspects of His personality, which raise Jesus above without severing Him from mankind. Here our task has been to show that liability to temptation did not disqualify Him to be Redeemer of men, even as His limitation of knowledge did not make it impossible for Him to reveal God.

(3) There is one other element of human nature in Jesus which is often ignored, but needs emphasis, in view of what I hold to be false teaching about the impassibility of God. He was subject to emotion, even violent emotion. He was no ascetic and no Stoic, suspecting and suppressing any sinless element in man ; He fully shared pain or pleasure, sorrow or joy, fear or hope. He was moved with compassion for the multitude (Matthew ix, 36), and anger and grief (Mark iii, 5) against religious leaders

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who misled ; He wept at the grave of Lazarus (John xi, 35), and over impenitent Jerusalem (Luke xix, 41) ; in the agony of Gethsemane and the desolation of the Cross He fathomed the depths of human woe. He could not have sought and saved men by His love otherwise ; for in love there is and must be emotion. A judgment of value regarding another or a purpose of good for another is not love without a sentiment of such interest as makes the lover joy or sorrow with the beloved, and share the lot of another in a common life with that other. Love, by its very nature, wherever there is occasion, is vicarious ; it takes another's place, shares another's suffering, bears another's burden, Jesus thus "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews ii, 9) ; Himself sinless He felt the consequences of man's sin as His own sacrifice offered for man unto God (2 Corinthians v, 21). Whether this is an adequate view of the atonement or not is not the question here ; but only that no vicarious love is possible without emotion, and surely the intenser the emotions the more effective the love. To be overcome by emotion so as to be unfitted for duty is human weakness ; to direct and control emotion to worthy ends is human strength. Jesus showed not weakness but strength in His experience of emotion. If God is revealed in Christ as Our Father, we must recognize pain as an element, if subordinate,

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in His blessed perfect life, God's love must be sacrificial to be effectually saving, reconciling and redeeming.

2

THE DIVINE DISTINCTIONS

From these traits in the person of Christ which unite Him to mankind we pass to those which distinguish. The purpose of the previous section, however, was to show not only His possession of those traits common to mankind, but to prove that none of these was a hindrance to all that raises Him above men. We have now to deal with the respects in which He is unique, so far above and beyond men that He can be confessed Christ and Lord. I shall not here include the virgin-birth, the fulfilment of prophecy, the performance of miracles, as I am not here concerned to affirm, still less deny, these grounds on which the claims for Christ's divinity have often been mistakenly based, but they are irrelevant to my present purpose, which is an argument addressed to the moral conscience, and the religious consciousness, of our time, to which alone the appeal can be made. Reference to these subordinate considerations will be made at the appropriate places in the

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argument. The references to the pre-existence and the fact of the Resurrection will necessarily hold a more prominent position in the argument. The three aspects of the uniqueness I shall advance are the *religious consciousness*, the *moral character*, and the *mediatorial function*: we may treat them separately, although they all blend in the harmonious unity of His perfect personality.

(1) Much that could be said under the heading of the religious consciousness has already been necessarily said in dealing with the revelation of God's Fatherhood in Jesus as Son, since that consciousness was the organ of revelation.

(a) I repeat here that I must recognize *the religion of Jesus* as the necessary antecedent of *the Christian religion*, for Jesus realized in His Sonship towards God the relation of God as Father towards mankind which He revealed. It was in His perfect Sonship that God's perfect Fatherhood was disclosed, not in words only, but in life. I have insisted on the authenticity of the confession of Sonship (Matthew xi, 25-7 = Luke x, 21-22 probably derived from the common source Q), and indicated the confirmation of this unique relation to God which the Synoptic witness to the relation to men which Jesus claims seems to me fully to supply. While some of the controversial metaphysical assertions about the relation of Father and Son in the Fourth Gospel seem to me to belong to later theological

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interpretation,¹ there are many sayings about the relation of intimacy, dependence, confidence, submission, that unfold what is so summarily stated in the Synoptic passage, which I cannot regard as due to the spiritual genius of the beloved disciple, but must hold to be historical reminiscences of Jesus' self-disclosures to a disciple more capable to apprehend and appreciate than were any of those from whom the Synoptic tradition derives.² After the study of and meditation on the Fourth Gospel for many years I have sought to state and prove that conclusion in my book, *The Beloved Disciple*. Here I must take these critical results for granted.

(b) Even if the teaching of Jesus regarding the Fatherhood of God was less original than has usually been assumed, as Dr. McGiffert has sought to show, yet, as he concedes, that teaching has an effect because of the personality of the teacher, such as no parallel teaching has had. His consciousness as Son, of God as Father, was unique in its intimacy, constancy, dominance in His experience, the expression He gave, and the impression He made. We need not here repeat what was said in the last lecture ; but, before we pass to repel some criticism of the adequacy and finality of His conception of God as Father, one consideration which the

¹ See *The Beloved Disciple*, pp. 14-30.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 61-74.

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third phase of the argument will develop must be here mentioned. It is this: While He mediates this revelation of God to us, and mediates the redemption from sin in which that revelation becomes effective in us, He had no mediator, who did for Him in relation to God what He and He alone has done for all mankind. A brilliant, but erratic journalist of a previous generation gave to the world as a heaven-sent discovery this rule for life: *Be a Christ*. That proposal seems to me an irreverence towards Christ. Christians cannot claim to become what He was who has made them what they are, and as we shall afterwards see, still is. Imitation of His example, however close, does not put them so near to Him that they can usurp the same function in relation to their fellow-men. So also it is irreverence in my judgment to claim that all men are divine, if in less degree than He. It is true that by Him as Saviour men are saved into sonship towards God, and that the Fatherhood He reflected in His Sonship He revealed as a relation which may become real in all men. But the difference between Him who mediates this relation of God to men, and those for whom He thus functions, is so great, that He and they cannot be put on a level of a common divinity, differing only in degree. The love of God as Father, of which He

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alone had this immediate consciousness, is mediated to men by His grace.

(c) If at least some of the references in the Fourth Gospel to pre-existence are authentic sayings of Jesus, such as that in viii, 58 : " Before Abraham was I am," it is in this connection alone that we can give them an intelligible meaning. To affirm, as some theologians have done, that Jesus had a continuous consciousness of His pre-incarnate relation to God throughout His personal development as man, is to say something that is to me entirely incredible, because impossible, if such a development was to be real. But that, especially when His consciousness of Sonship, and the relation of Saviourhood towards men for which that Sonship qualified Him was challenged by His opponents, a certain intuition came to Him that His immediate relation to God was not begun in time, but was rooted in the eternal reality of God—this seems to me intelligible and consistent with His filial consciousness as man. It is not incredible that man as potential son of God should also have some pre-existence in God, as philosophers and poets have thought, and should lack the consciousness through failure to become actually what he is potentially.¹

¹ There is no evidence that the fact of the virgin-birth, if fact it was, had any place in His consciousness as sustaining His sense of Sonship ; nor should we connect it with His sinlessness, since the

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(d) One or two solitary thinkers, whom I shall not raise to undesirable prominence by naming have in recent years advanced criticisms of Jesus' conception of God, and have believed themselves capable of carrying His revelation of the Fatherhood of God further than He did. (i) What is the distinctive feature of the teaching as they understand it—the Fatherhood of God—is used as a standard of judgment to expose what seem to them the defects of other features. I have already insisted that Christ's revelation of God must be the criterion of all Christian doctrine; but in that revelation I include all His teaching, as I find in it a consistent unity. Offence is, however, being taken at His teaching about divine judgment generally

mother no less than the father is the channel of heredity, and it is not the sexual intercourse that is the cause of any taint, if there is any, at birth. If, despite the inconclusive evidence, we accept the fact, and attempt to explain its significance, what is at least a probable conjecture is that the mother's faith, receptive of, and responsive to, the divine grace (Luke i, 28-38) was a condition from the beginning of His life of a corresponding greater receptivity and responsiveness. Whether this be so or not, and I offer the conjecture very diffidently, I am compelled by the certainty of the filial consciousness to assume a *creative act* of God in the human personality, which found its completeness in personal communion and union with God. The modern theory of "emergent evolution", the scientific counterpart of the religious belief in God's creative activity, would allow for the emergence of a human personality thus uniquely qualified for the unique relation of Jesus as Son to God as Father. I have put this statement into a note complementary to the argument I have developed in the lecture itself, because it is advanced with less confidence.

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in rewards and punishments, and specially in the final judgment. God in this view is grace and grace only, never severity : there are natural or historical consequences of human action, in which no divine judgment of reward or punishment should be recognized : the Kingdom of God will come on earth, when all mankind will be saved. This development of thought takes the distinctive feature of the revelation, and makes it the exclusive, and thus conceives the Fatherhood in what seems to me an inadequate way. It is a modern Gnosticism without the dualism which would be its necessary consequence if all the data were taken into account.

(ii) Jesus inherited the ethical monotheism of the prophets, assumed it as the background of His teaching, and did not contradict it, but confirmed it. He discovered God's goodness in nature and in the works and ways of men. He teaches no doctrine of original sin or total depravity : but He thinks and feels and wills of man as lost and needing to be found (Luke xv, xix, 1-10), as a debtor, who cannot pay his debt but must ask that it be cancelled (Matthew xviii, 27), as diseased, and so calling for a physician (Mark ii, 17). He recognizes divine judgment in the consequences of sin as the human conscience has recognized them to be (Luke xiii, 1-3). To describe them as

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natural, and so deny God's connection with them is the dualism already referred to. If God be Creator, Preserver, and Ruler, nature cannot be personified as inflicting penalties or distributing rewards independent of God's will. The moral conscience has not been mistaken in regarding the consequences of conduct as expressive of the judgment of God. (Cf. Galatians vi, 7-8.) Whether the reference to rewards and punishments in moral teaching is a defect or not will be considered in dealing with the moral character of Jesus, as His words no less than His deeds must be taken into account in any estimate. It seems to me an optimism which all the facts do not justify to assume that the perfect Kingdom of God will come upon earth under present conditions. That, if there be a divine purpose in human history, there will be a divine consummation who can doubt, and who can confidently deny that it may include judgment as well as mercy? All we dare affirm is that faith in God's Fatherhood sustains the larger hope "that somehow good shall be the final goal of ill" and that "no life shall be destroyed or cast as rubbish to the void when God shall make the pile complete". On the horizon of the future, as we now see it, there are the shadows of judgment as well as the sunshine of grace.

(iii) That Jesus necessarily expressed Himself

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in the poetic symbolism of Jewish eschatology does not forbid our translating His teaching into the terms of our own thought. For instance, the idea of individual personal judgment by God may be replaced by the conception of a permanent and universal moral order, to which the natural is subordinate, of which the natural may be the instrument, and in which the inevitable consequences of actions express God's approval or condemnation of them. For rewards and punishments we may substitute, as Paul does the conception of sowing and reaping (Galatians vi, 7-8), but in so translating such conception, we must beware of unduly de-personalizing the process and so excluding God's personal relation to each man.

Jesus Himself indicates that there is nothing arbitrary in this process, when He intimates to the sons of Zebedee that the seats of honour are not at His disposal, but are given by God's appointment (Matthew xx, 23). What must, however, be insisted on against an enfeebling sentimentalism is that God's Fatherhood is not good-nature, moral indifference, but a holy love, which may smite in saving, and may pursue in judgment till grace is victorious.

(2) In passing to deal with the *moral character* of Jesus, (a) some recent criticisms may first of all be dealt with.

(i) We may at once take up the question

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just deferred regarding the teaching of rewards and punishments as motives of human conduct. As has been said above, if behind the use of current language there lies the idea of necessary consequences, there is nothing false or wrong in warning or encouraging men by insisting that actions have their corresponding results, bad or good. This was what the prophets were always doing. As regards the wicked this may be the only appeal which will compel them to consider their ways, and cease to be fools; and so arrested, they may the more readily heed the offer of grace when a higher motive at once comes into play. As regards the righteous, if we interpret the figurative language of parables by the explicit statements of the beatitudes, there is no appeal to selfish prudence but only to selfless wisdom. The benedictions offer no attraction to men moved by the lower interests of life; but are assurances of worthy achievement for fit endeavours. And all this teaching must always be subordinated to the supreme command of absolute love to God and equal love to self and neighbour.

(ii) Although even those who have not fully accepted the Christian faith generally acknowledge the moral excellence of Jesus, some criticisms of His character even have been recently offered, and such a challenge to the common Christian belief cannot be ignored.

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Without entering into minute details, one of the main objections advanced may be stated, Jesus is charged with unloving severity to the Pharisees in His denunciation of them. On critical grounds we are justified in ignoring the controversies reported in the Fourth Gospel. That there were controversies, when Jesus' claims were challenged by the Jewish teachers and leaders, and defended by Himself may be admitted as probable, but the frequency, violence and bitterness of these controversies reflect rather the zeal of a disciple for His Master than the Master's own spirit.¹ The denunciations in the Synoptics must be admitted. But do they prove moral defect? Jesus dined in the house of a Pharisee and kindly rebuked his fault-finding (Luke vii, 36-50). Personal hostility we are not justified in ascribing to Him. But if the Pharisees were by their doctrine and practice conveying false conceptions of God and so were proving a hindrance to the approach of the multitudes to God, if their lovelessness was concealing from sinners the love of God, if they could be brought to repentance and conversion only by severe rebuke and warning, were the indignation and reproach of Jesus not justified? There is a justified reaction of holy love against pride and arrogance. There is a wrath which is not sin.

¹ See *The Beloved Disciple*, p. 104.

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(iii) As unfounded seems to be the charge of Jewish exclusiveness, of which Jesus' treatment of the Syrophenician woman is regarded as the conspicuous but not sole instance. In considering the record we must remember how incomplete it is, and how much lies behind it, which, if known, might give quite another complexion to the story (Mark vii, 24-30; Matthew xv, 22-8). The record follows in Mark on the teaching about clean and unclean (1-23). Is it likely that He who rose so completely above the ceremonial limitations of Judaism into the sphere of universal morality could still be entangled in its prejudices as regards the Gentiles? The confession at Cæsarea Philippi (viii, 27-30) followed soon after. If the disciples were beginning to believe that Jesus was the Messiah of their nation, is it not likely that some remonstrance was offered by Peter, now as afterwards, against a course of action, which offended his anticipations of the Messiah? Why had Jesus brought them into an "unclean land" among "unclean people"? Was not Jesus' reply as regards the limitation of His function to the Jews spoken to His disciples (Matthew xv, 24) as a rebuke of their exclusiveness, when they were prepared to break through it, not out of compassion, but to get rid of an inconvenient intrusion (*v.* 23)? He let them see the consequences of their exclusiveness—

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the need to refuse help to a sorrowing mother. When He turned to the woman there must have been something in His tone or manner, which belied His words, still meant for His disciples, but which evoked the courageous faith of the mother, and supplied her with her clever plea? What a difference in a saying is made by kind or harsh tone, smile or frown! Even if we cannot fully explain the incident, in view of all the evidence, which cannot now be cited, of His compassionate, appreciative attitude to Samaritans (Luke x, 33; xvii, 17-19) and Gentiles (Matthew viii, 10-13), to base any general conclusion on such a story is illegitimate hyper-criticism. I have confined myself to this incident, as other instances given of such exclusiveness show a curious ingenuity in escaping the obvious explanation. Jesus' teaching about God's Fatherhood makes it impossible to believe that He could have been so inconsistent as to have cherished any such exclusiveness.

(iv) Much use has been made of Jesus' answer to the rich young ruler! "Why called thou me good? None is good save one, even God" (Mark x, 18) as a confession of sinfulness. Is it not sufficiently explained by His consciousness that He was still *viator*, and not *comprehensor*, that He was still being tempted, that He still was under strain in fulfilling the purpose of God, that He had not yet drunk

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the cup, and received the baptism (Mark x, 38, 39 ; xiv, 36), from which He was shrinking, and yet toward which in obedience to God He was pressing. How was He straitened till all was accomplished (Luke xii, 50) ? Even if such an explanation does not suffice, we must set over against it what it seems to me to be impossible to dismiss as untrustworthy evidence. There is no indication of repentance, confession of sin, or prayer for pardon ; and His attitude to sinners as mediating God's grace confirms the conclusion that He was not conscious of sin to be repented of, confessed, or forgiven. His moral discernment in teaching about sin, and dealing with sinners, forbids the explanation that this feature unexampled among saints was in His case due to less sensitive conscience. Into further details it is not necessary to enter, as I am convinced that an adequate vindication can in every case be offered.

(b) There is, however, another mode of approach to the whole question, which is suggested by Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. It does not lay stress on the negative aspect of *sinlessness*, a treatment which suggests the description : " faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null," but on the positive of fulfilment of vocation, fidelity and devotion to the will of God for the good of man as it is progressively discerned. Instead of minute

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observance of a code as the condition of holiness, we should think of constant direction towards an end, and adaptation of conduct as the changing conditions demanded from moment to moment. Unless we could transport ourselves into the whole historical situation by the possession of all the necessary data of information, and by the exercise of so discerning an imagination as to make the past present to our minds, we should not be able to pass an infallible judgment ; for our present circumstances and our present code might be so unlike as to mislead. If character is judged as it should be, not by meticulous attention to minor details of conduct, but to the constraining motive, the dominating purpose in every action, we are much more likely to estimate the value of any life accurately and adequately. We are told that Jesus was "full of the Holy Ghost" (Luke iv, 1) ; and the impression made upon His disciples by the cleansing of the Temple, according to the Fourth Gospel, was expressed in the quotation recalled : "The zeal of thine house shall eat me up" (John ii, 17). He was possessed by an enthusiasm and energy, which drove Him onwards to His goal (Mark i, 12), and He was straitened to accomplish His course (Luke xii, 50). We need not rely on such texts alone, as they are confirmed by the impression His ministry makes. It was, indeed, His meat to do His Father's will

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(John iv, 34) and His bodily needs were forgotten in this absorption of His soul (Matthew iv, 2; cf. John iv, 32). Anything that might hinder or divert Him from the path of the call of God, He reacted against as a temptation. God alone could guide His course, and even His mother, dear as she might be, must be set aside (John ii, 4). The disciple whom He had pronounced blessed for his confession must be rebuked as Satan when he sought to dissuade (Matthew xvi, 23). The severity of His demands on His disciples is only the obverse of the severity with which He treated Himself in His submission to God (24-7); in the same way we must regard His treatment, to less strenuous spirits appearing harsh, of candidates for discipleship (Luke ix, 57-62) and of the rich young ruler (Mark x, 21). He was giving His all; His followers must be prepared for the same measure of surrender. This approach further suggests alternative explanations of two passages already referred to: Did Jesus see in the request of the Syrophenician woman as in that of the Greeks (John xii, 20-4) the peril of a diversion into a ministry among the Gentiles from His ministry among His countrymen, which He knew He must pursue to its tragic close? Was His reply to the rich young ruler an indication of an inward struggle which had not yet ended in assured victory? I myself cannot find

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in word or deed of Jesus, even from the standpoint usually assumed, anything offending to my conscience. This alternative approach seems to me to offer even more conclusive evidence. The scholar in his study disinterestedly applying his abstract principles is least qualified to appreciate fully a life filled with the Holy Spirit, full of a compelling enthusiasm and a conquering energy.

(c) No attempt need here be made to describe the character of Jesus as blending manly strength, womanly gentleness, and childlike trustfulness and lowliness. His humility towards God as Father ("meek and lowly in heart") goes with His compassion for men who labour and are heavily laden, and to whom as His yoke-fellows He offers rest (Matthew xi, 28-30). His grace towards sinners does not blunt the edge of His judgment on sin, especially lovelessness. His moral standard raised far above the current morality, even of the wisest and the best, is no fleeting visitant, no casual aspiration, but is realized in His constancy in the fulfilment of God's will, despite all hindrances. His perfection is no cold correctitude of conduct, but a glowing passion of sympathy, service, and sacrifice. Even if there were instances of an impatience or an indignation towards human sin and folly, which a cold-blooded moralist might feel justified in regarding as not quite

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consistent with the social proprieties, although I do not believe that they are, who would heed them in view of this "fullness of the Holy Spirit"? On His Cross supremely is His love for God in submission to the Father's will, and His love for mankind in vicarious sacrifice made manifest. Hence, however greatly men appreciate all the manifold and yet harmonious excellences of Jesus it is in Him as crucified that the world has most clearly seen, and been most deeply moved by His grace as realizing in passion and action, and so revealing the holy love of God, judging sin even as it forgives sinners, through death bringing in the fullness of life in the Spirit.

(3) A force is measured by the effects it produces; a personality estimated by the impression it makes, and the influence it exercises. Hence the religious consciousness and the moral character manifest their significance and value in Christ's *mediatorial* efficacy.

(a) What Jesus did in and for His disciples was expressed in Peter's confession of His Messiahship, a confession the significance of which cannot be exaggerated (Matthew xvi, 16). Jesus in His ministry, carrying out His conviction of His vocation as confirmed in the approving voice at His baptism and descent of the Spirit, His consciousness of divine endowment for His task (Matthew iii, 13-17) and His victory over temptation (Matthew iv, 1-11) had been

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not conforming to, but challenging the popular expectations of the Messiah, and even the prophetic predictions as currently understood, and yet His companionship had so changed at least some of His disciples (Matthew xvi, 16-17), that they found in Him the Yea and the Amen of the promises of God.¹ His consciousness of His vocation was not primarily based on the predictions of the Son of David as Messiah (Matthew xxii, 41-5), but on the conception of the Son of Man with reference to Psalm viii, 4, and Daniel vii, 13-14, and some of the Apocalyptic literature, but drawing its content mainly from the description of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah liii. That the disciples took offence at His announcement of His passion can be understood, as the disclosure came so suddenly to them (Matthew xvi, 21-3). That they never fully acquiesced in His purpose, but continued to cherish contrary expectations (xviii, 1-4) is no evidence of the inefficacy of His influence, but only proof of the persistence of the resistant elements in their convictions and characters. That their loyalty and devotion, despite a temporary desertion (xxvi, 31-5, 56), stood the shock of the Crucifixion proves the

¹ Jesus fulfilled prophecy, not in the literal correspondence of prediction and event, as the early Christian apologetic sought to show, often arbitrarily, but as the consummation of the progressive revelation of God.

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permanent reality of the change in them. That on the ground of the evidence afforded by His appearances after the Resurrection (1 Corinthians xv, 1-8) they gained the certainty that He was living, and mighty, still further proves the efficacy of His mediatorial function in bringing God to men and men to God in a new relation, hitherto unattained. Their conviction was the condition of the experience of Pentecost (Acts ii, 1-11), a fullness and freshness, vitality and vigour of life, which could find its explanation only in the presence and activity of God Himself in His Spirit. Many others there were beyond the immediate company of disciples, in whom Jesus in His earthly ministry, and after He was risen, wrought the saving work of God.

(b) The official title, the Christ, gradually came to be used as a personal name, for so completely for faith were function and person fused together. But this title, become a name, no longer sufficed completely to express what Christ was to the Christian community, He was confessed *Lord*. Not only as authoritative teacher but as Redeemer by His death and victor over death. The evidence of the New Testament to what He was in the experience of the Christian community, its holy enthusiasm and holy energy, makes of subordinate interest the question whether the title *Lord* is to be interpreted by

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Jewish or Gentile associations. The estimate of the person and work of Christ is more adequately measured by the Jewish use of the term for *Yahveh*, the covenant God of Israel, than the Gentile use for the object of any one of the pagan cults. Paul's Aramaic phrase *Maran atha* (1 Corinthians xvi, 22), "Our Lord cometh" does bring the title not only into close association with the primitive hope of the Second Advent, but also with the primitive community, which spoke Aramaic. Both titles thus sprang out of personal experience of the sovereign sufficiency of Jesus as Revealer of God and Redeemer of men.

(c) The reasons for assigning this title Lord call for a fuller treatment. (i) Meek and lowly in heart, making His burden light and His yoke easy for His disciples, dependent on and submissive to the Father (Matthew xi, 25-30). He was the authoritative Teacher, the Master who called men to come to Him, to learn of Him, to follow Him even if a cross must be borne, to lose life for His sake (xvi, 24-6). In the divine judgment He would confess those who confessed Him, deny those who denied Him (x, 32-3), and as Judge render unto every man according to his deeds (xiii, 41). Such were His demands, but proportionate and more were His gifts, which could be comprehensively expressed in the possession of the Kingdom of

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God (the term which Jesus probably Himself used) or of Heaven (Matthew's Jewish equivalent), the blessings of which are described in Matthew v, 1-12. As Son of Man He had authority to forgive sins (Mark ii, 10), an authority He exercised with such certainty Himself, and inspiring such confidence in others that the sinful knew themselves forgiven, and saved, and could go in peace (Luke vii, 36-50). The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (xix, 1-10) and transformed the despised outcast of Jewish Society. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as ransom for many (Matthew xx, 28).

(ii) The ministry of His life was completed in the sacrifice of His death. He not only anticipated His death as the inevitable historical consequence of the clash between His message and mission and the unbelieving and resistant leaders and rulers of the Jewish people (Mark ii, 21-2) but also recognized in it the will of God (viii, 31), from which He shrank, and yet to which He pressed forward, as the record of the journey to Jerusalem and of the agony in the Garden shows. A close study of the Gospels has led me to the conclusion, contrary to current opinion among many scholars, that Jesus from the first anticipated a tragic close to His ministry,¹ that He never intended an earthly reign, but

¹ See my book, *The Inner Life of Jesus*, chapter xvii, pp. 317-335.

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that guided by the vision of the Suffering Servant, He hoped to win, if not the whole nation, yet a large circle of disciples, who would be willing to share His martyrdom for the world's salvation. This conclusion is both in harmony with the general interpretation of Isaiah liii as referring not to a solitary individual, but a community, and also the demands Jesus made on His disciples, and the disappointment He experienced at their failure to meet those demands. The tragedy of His Cross was increased because it was so solitary. He died forsaken of all His disciples. We must not erect any theory of the atonement on the phrase "A ransom for many"; but this at least it means, that Jesus anticipated that His death would complete what His life had only begun, the emancipation of His disciples from their old life of bondage under the prejudices, limitations, and restrictions as Jews into the new life of freedom as sons of God in the Kingdom of God, the saving sovereignty of His Fatherhood. Such an emancipation, if not complete, did take place. His death at first imperilled their faith, but faith was restored by the Resurrection. The offence of the Cross for them as Jews ceased, and they came to interpret it as a necessary fulfilment of prophecy because of divine appointment, and as a necessary condition of His continued presence in His community by the Spirit. Into Paul's attempts

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to interpret the Cross as not only securing emancipation from the law, but as vindicating God's righteousness in the reckoning sinners righteous by His grace through their faith, it is not necessary for my purpose here to enter. Suffice it to say that through all the changes in the theory of the atonement, which the history of Christian theology has witnessed, the conviction has persisted, and when for a time abased, has again become exalted in the revival of religious life, that in the Cross of Christ the love of God the Father through the grace of Christ the Son has so suffered with and for men as to judge sin and forgive sinners, saving them from the bondage of sin and estrangement from God into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God (Romans viii, 21). For half a century my mind has been wrestling to find an ever more adequate intellectual formulation of the constant and confident conviction, based on the effective and satisfying experience that Christ Crucified is the power and the wisdom of God for personal salvation to all that are called in Him to be the children of God (1 Corinthians i, 22-4).¹

(iii) The Cross would have been for the disciples an unrelieved tragedy—an irrevocable defeat had the Resurrection not followed. In

¹ See my book *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead*, ii, pp. 195-213.

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my judgment not only is the evidence of the appearances adequate to prove that Christ had not been holden of death, but had returned from the bourne from which no other traveller had in the same convincing presence and power returned ; but the transformation of the primitive community, its holy enthusiasm and energy, confidence, courage, and constancy—and conspicuously the new creation of Paul—offer an assurance that the witnesses were not subjected to any illusion, but became aware of, came into contact with, supersensible, supernatural, superhuman, even divine, reality in the risen and living Christ. It is because He still lives that the Church lives. It is because He still exercises His mediatorial efficacy that sinners are being saved, saints perfected, and God's Kingdom is coming.

(*d*) "Jesus is Lord" was the primitive confession ; and we should not demand more or expect less from any Christian believer. But the New Testament offers us theological interpretations of the Christhood and the Lordship. Paul develops the doctrine of Christ as Son of God beyond the content of the Sonship as presented in the Gospels, and so does the Johannine literature, where it goes beyond historical reminiscences to theological reflexions ; it also associates that conception with the current philosophical and theological idea of the Logos.

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These interpretations we must not dismiss as vain speculation to be disregarded by Christian thought. The closing words of the posthumous volume by Dr. Andrews, *The Christ of Apostolic Faith*, deserve quotation in this connection.

“The condition which Christian experience imposed on the thinkers of the Apostolic Age it imposes still upon us, and that condition is : None but the highest terms and categories of thought are adequate for the true interpretation of Jesus Christ ” (p. 164).

In these Apostolic writings Jesus as Christ and Lord is endowed with *cosmic* functions in the Creation, Preservation, and Government of God in His Universe, as well as His mediatorial functions in the relation of God to man. If man has a place of significance and value in the Universe, if he is the consummation of the cosmic evolution so far disclosed to us, if he can understand the Universe, and through his understanding exercise some control over it, if he has affinity of nature and community of character and purpose with God, if God for man's redemption from sin and completion of his development revealed Himself as man in the Incarnate Son, if God is, through faith in that Son, imparting to men for their perfecting His own Spirit, then it is not unintelligible or incredible that that saving activity of God in revelation and redemption should be essentially related to the whole activity of God in the Universe.

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If God is revealed in His eternal reality in Jesus as Incarnate Son or Word that medium of His self-revelation may be medium also of the other divine activities. But to speak as is often done of the pre-existent or the cosmic *Christ* is a confusing mode of speech. It is the historical function of the Christ or Messiah which Jesus fulfilled, and the terms should be used only in regard to that function. We may speak of a pre-existent cosmic Word, God's self-revealing in His world, who became flesh, that is truly and fully man, in Jesus the Christ ; but for the reason just given we should not speak of a pre-existent cosmic Christ, attaching to the historical personality, functions not essentially belonging to Him as such. Whatever judgment of value we reach on these apostolic interpretations, we must distinguish them from the experience of Saviourhood and Lordship on which they rest, and must admit that many believers may share this experience, who in their own thinking cannot accept the interpretations. Such acceptance must not be required as a condition of membership in His Church.

In the last lecture I shall attempt to offer a constructive doctrine of the person of Christ in its essential relation to the manifestation of the one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But before this can be attempted the experience in the Church of the Holy Spirit as Life-Giver must be considered in the next lecture.

LECTURE III

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS LIFE-GIVER

(a) *Analogies in Religious Revivals*; (b) *An original experience.*

The Old Testament and the New—The Charismata: (a) *Paul's Correction of Corinthian Error*; (b) *Two Considerations* (i) *Reality of Spirit's Activity*, (ii) *Value of Religious Emotion—The Work of the Spirit and of Christ*: (a) *Challenge of Distinction by Dr. Thomas Rees: the distinction a depreciation of the work of Christ*; (b) *Challenge of Distinction by Dr. Denney (Rom. viii, 9-11)*, (i) *Operations of same character*, (ii) *Christ as Spirit*, (iii) *Distinctness of person of God and Christ, but not of Spirit—Paul's Apparent Identification (2 Cor. iii, 17-18)*: (a) *The sense of the passage*; (b) *The contrary teaching (1 Cor. xii, 4-11; 2 Cor. xiii, 14; Ephesians iv, 4-6)—Reasons for maintaining distinction to avoid the Confusion of the Objective and the Subjective.*

The Old Testament and the New Meaning—The Sanctification by the Spirit (1 Cor. xii, 31—xiii, 13): (a) *Paul's Emphasis on "Holy"*; (b) *Morality and Religion—Christian Life as Progressive Process and Spontaneous: the Danger of Licence and of Legality.*

The Meaning of the Word: (a) *Common Possession and Community*; (b) *Unity and Uniformity—The Church as Object and as Organ of Divine Activity*: (a) *Soteriological and Sociological Aspect*; (b) *Inspiration and Organization—The relation of the Church to God as the human manifestation of His social personality—The Activity of the Spirit and Human Liberty*: (a) *Spatial Thinking*;

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(b) *Mechanical Thinking* ; (c) *Deistic Thinking* ; (d) *Correction of Errors in Doctrine of Divine Fatherhood* ; (e) *Liberty for Man in the Spirit of God—The Spirit and mystical, sacramental, subconscious experience.*

INTRODUCTION : “ FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT ”

The characteristic of believers in the Apostolic Age was that they were “ filled with the Holy Spirit ”, that is, inspired by God as Spirit, full of enthusiasm and energy, fervour and force, fully alive in the new life which for them had been begun through faith in Jesus as the Christ and the relation to God as Father which He mediated for them. That life meant pardon for the past, power in the present, promise for the future ; it meant faith in forgiveness, love as the motive of new life, hope of the coming of the Kingdom of God in the return of the Lord in power and glory ; with such possessions is it a surprise that there were restored joy, comfort, confidence, and courage ?

(a) We have an analogy to the condition of the primitive community after Pentecost in the religious revivals which from time to time have come to the Church. Whether a rhythm of less and more, more and less vitality and vigour in religious experience be a law of spiritual development, it is certain that the ebb and

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flow of such experience has always been greater than any for which there could be any normal reason. It is because routine doctrine, worship, practice produce indifference and stagnation, that there seems to be again and again need of a violent stimulation of interest and effort. Pentecost was a recovery from the distress and despondency which the death of Jesus had brought about. Religious revival has often come by a rediscovery of some forgotten or neglected truth ; at the Reformation it was that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone ; at the Evangelical Revival, that there can be assurance of salvation.

(*b*) Pentecost was so original an experience because it followed not on a rediscovered truth, but on a truth for the first time revealed—that Jesus was not dead, but lived in power and glory, and would so return. The experience of the Spirit's presence and power was dependent on the revelations of God as Father by Jesus, in the revelation of Jesus as the Christ and Lord in His Resurrection, His triumph over death for man's salvation. Such revelation of God as there is by the Spirit does not supersede, correct, or complete the revelation in Christ. The Spirit in the Church declares, interprets, and applies, according to the need of each age and people, the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day, yea and for ever".

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Although in the next lecture it will be necessary to deal more fully with the inter-relation of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the historical revelation and the eternal reality of God, at this point it seems desirable to emphasize, as does the New Testament, the dependence and the subordination of the work of the Spirit to the divine revelation and the human redemption in the Son. It seems best to use the phrase in the Apostolic Benediction, "the communion of the Holy Spirit," as the guiding principle of the discussion of the function of the Holy Spirit.

I

SPIRIT

(1) It is first of all to be observed that while in the Old Testament much is said about the Spirit of God, the idea of holy or of communion is not specially associated with it, and we must recognize that as the historical fact of Jesus led to a change in the conception of God, so the conception of Spirit was enlarged. We must not ignore, however, what is common to the New Testament and the Old Testament conception, and, indeed, in both to the conception of spirit generally. It is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of religious ideas, and, indeed,

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may be said to appear in all religions. If there was a pre-animistic stage in religious thought, animism may be regarded as emerging at an early stage in man's religious development. The mysterious powers, by which man was conscious of being surrounded and controlled, were soon thought of as spirits, akin in nature to, though greater in power than, the soul, of which he was conscious as part of himself in contrast to his body. The general conception of spirit is that of life and power, immanent in nature and man, yet as divine transcendent.¹ When monotheism emerges in the Hebrew religion God is conceived as spirit in contrast with man as flesh, as omnipotent in contrast to man's impotence. While God is Himself Spirit, the Spirit of God is distinguished, but not separated, from God as the mediating agency in the world of the God above the world, parallel to the conceptions of Word and Wisdom. While recognized as present and active in the world around, the Spirit of God stands in intimate relation to man, as the source of his life, power, talents, especially where there appears an exceptional endowment of strength, knowledge, skill. While not excluded from the normal, the Spirit is most clearly recognized in the abnormal, especially in the prophetic inspirations as a possession, direction, and control of man

¹ See my book, *The Christian Belief in God*, pp. 122-130.

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by God, so that he can speak and act for God. We can trace a development of the conception of inspirations from so crude a form as is illustrated by Saul when he was among the prophets (1 Samuel x, 10-13), in a religious ecstasy or even frenzy to the illumination of mind and elevation of purpose of an Isaiah or a Jeremiah, in which human personality was not suppressed, but stimulated. What is common to the Old and the New Testament is the recognition of a human experience of the divine presence and activity within.

(2) Just as even the prophetic inspiration was accompanied by abnormal psychic conditions, visions seen, or voices heard (Isaiah vi), so at and consequent on Pentecost the new life of the Christian community was marked by abnormal activities ; the *charismata*, the gifts of the Spirit (Acts ii, 4 ; Romans xii, 6-8 ; 1 Corinthians xii, 4-11).

(a) How far any of these were not only abnormal, such as the speaking with tongues, but also miraculous, such as the healings by the apostles, it is not necessary for my purpose now to inquire. On the one hand I do not find it necessary to deny all supernatural character, although the evidence does not compel any such admission, and on the other hand I recognize that in that age no sharp line of distinction was made, as we now should make, between the

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abnormal and the miraculous. It is quite evident from the First Epistle to the Corinthians that there was a tendency in the Church to exaggerate the importance of these gifts (xii-xiv). Paul does not deny their reality or their source in the Spirit; but he distinguishes between those of more and those of less value to the community, and insists on the control of their exercise by the supreme principle of love. It is the sanctifying activity of the Spirit to which he attaches the supreme value, as we shall insist at a later stage.

(b) Here two considerations are immediately relevant. (i) *First of all* because some of these phenomena now appear to us abnormal, and it may even seem pathological, let us not distrust the reality and the efficacy of the Spirit's presence and power. The realization of a new life of so gracious a character and so glorious a purpose necessarily and properly deeply stirred the emotions. Such a change from guilt to forgiveness, from disobedience to submission, from dread to love of God must have been deeply felt. That in some persons, owing to their physique and temperament, this emotional intensity had such abnormal accompaniments does not prove that such emotion is not a response to a reality of apprehension of, and surrender to, God. We must not expect such abnormal phenomena whenever and wherever the Spirit is acting in man, but the presence

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of them does not disprove the presence of the Spirit.

(ii) *Secondly*, that there are dangers in religious emotionalism does not justify the suppression of intense emotion in religion. While religion is not feeling only, yet feeling is an integral element, and its intensity is not to be suspected, but desired. The word Spirit does indicate fullness, freshness of life, vitality, vigour, spontaneity. Were there more experience of the continuity of the Spirit's activity in the inner life, there could be much less dependence on creeds, codes, rituals, politics for the preservation of the truth and grace of Christ in His Church; tradition and convention would be less dominant, and the Church could adopt new methods and adapt itself to new needs with a greater confidence and courage. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians iii, 17). But it is the revelation and redemption in Christ which is the source of, and the standard for, that liberty.

(3) This seems the most appropriate place at which to discuss a question which is of crucial importance for Christian theology. If the work of the Spirit is so dependent on, and subordinate to, the work of Christ, are we justified in making any distinctions? May we not regard the operations of the Spirit as identical with the activities of the Living Christ?

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(a) At the close of a book, dealing with the history of the doctrine of *The Holy Spirit*, Dr. Thomas Rees states a conclusion which presents itself almost as an anti-climax.

“ If the Spirit is conceived as another divine presence, distinct and different from Christ, operating as a distinct activity and in a different province of religious experience, it so far ceases to be the Spirit of Christ, and the presence and activity of Christ are, therefore, neither universal nor co-extensive with religious experience. If, on the other hand, Christianity is the universal and final religion, if all knowledge and communion and action of God are mediated to men through Jesus Christ, then the Holy Spirit for Christian thought and experience cannot be separated or distinct from Christ Himself in His living presence and power in the hearts of men, and the Church burdens itself in vain with the formula of three hypostases which it inherited from Greek theology.”¹

As the next lecture will show, I do not commit myself to the Greek theology, as its categories seem to me altogether inadequate, still less do I commit myself to the tritheism into which a misunderstanding of the real meaning of the word *person* as used by Greek theology has led a great deal of popular religious thought: I affirm unequivocally the unity of God as Father, Son, and Spirit; and yet on account of the experience of the Apostolic Church, verified

¹ *The Holy Spirit*, p. 211.

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in the experience of the Church throughout its history, I hold that there is good reason for distinguishing without separating the activity of the one God as Spirit from the activity of that same God as Son in Jesus Christ our Lord. If the above statement is intended as a description of popular thinking it may pass, but if it is meant as a statement of what the theologians in teaching this distinction commit themselves to, it is a caricature, for, as has just been argued, the operation of the Spirit is sequent and dependent on the manifestation of God in history, and is subordinate to it, making it real in personal experience.

(b) Before I offer a constructive solution of the problem thus raised, another theologian, writing in a similar strain, may be quoted.

“As has often been pointed out,” says Dr. Denney, “in Romans viii, 9–11, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ Himself are practically indistinguishable. It is all one if we can say of people that the Spirit of God dwells in them, or that they have the Spirit of Christ, or that Christ is in them. All these are ways in which we can describe the life of reconciliation as it is realized in men; they make it plain that the explanation of that life is divine, and they prevent any misapprehension about the Divine Spirit by frankly identifying the indwelling of the Spirit in the Christian sense with the spiritual indwelling of Christ Himself. But there is no justification in this for representing the Spirit as a third person in the same sense as God and Christ. Paul never

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knew Christ except as Spirit, except as a being who could enter into and tell upon his life as God Himself entered ; and his whole concern in this passage is not to distinguish Christ and the Spirit, but to show that nothing is to be recognized as really Spirit among Christians if it is distinguishable from Christ and from the divine power with which He acts in the souls and in the life of men.”¹

On this statement three comments may be made : (i) That the character of the operations of the Spirit in Christian experience is the same as the influence of the living Christ, as apprehended in His continued reality, may be fully conceded ; but this does not exclude such difference of mode even in the human receptivity as justifies the distinction which has been usually made. (ii) That Paul also knew Christ, not as a physical but only as a spiritual presence, not by outward sight, but only inward vision, does not exclude the possibility of distinguishing that presence from the Spirit's operations. (iii) That the definiteness of the teaching of Jesus about God as Father has made the conception of God more concretely personal, and that the distinct historical activity of Christ Himself has made Him more concretely personal than the account of the Spirit in the New Testament has made the Spirit, is obvious, since the Spirit is that divine presence and

¹ *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 311.

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operation, immanent in man's inner life, which is most immediate, and so least distinguishable from his own spiritual activities. If by person Dr. Denney means individual, then he separates Christ from God as I am not prepared to do, since for me Athanasus' *homoousion* does not adequately express the immediacy of the presence of the Father in the Son, even as Incarnate, nor the intimacy of the communion. We may, in our ordinary thinking, distinguish Christ and God more definitely than we can Christ and the Spirit; but common sense is too superficial to be a guide as regards the deep things of God. I cannot regard the arguments of either of these writers as decisive, and both their statements seem to me to show less discernment and discrimination than one might have expected. I return from them to the New Testament.

(4) There is another passage than that mentioned by Dr. Denney which would seem to afford more support to the contention for the identity of Son and Spirit.

(a) In 2 Corinthians iii, 17-18, Paul does affirm twice that the Lord is the Spirit; but he there also speaks of the Spirit of the Lord. We must not, however, base dogmatic conclusions on impassioned religious utterances. What, broadly interpreted, he surely means is this, that in contrast with the covenant of the law

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there is now the covenant of the Spirit ; bondage marked the one, liberty marks the other, because the believer lives not in the letter, but the Spirit. Where Christ is, the Spirit also is, since it is in the contemplation of Christ that the Spirit's re-creative energies are released.

(*b*) The Old Testament, which for Paul had divine authority, distinguished from the Spirit the Messiah as dowered by the Spirit (Isaiah xi, 2). Jesus Himself at His baptism was conscious of such an endowment (Mark i, 10-11) ; and Paul must have known the story. In His teaching Jesus speaks of the Spirit as well as the Father (Matthew xii, 28). Paul shared the spiritual gifts, which were imparted to the primitive community at Pentecost by the Spirit. In the description of those gifts in 1 Corinthians xii, 4-11, he differentiates the same Lord and the same God from the same Spirit amid the diversities of gifts. And in the benediction in 2 Corinthians xiii, 14, the communion of the Holy Spirit is distinguished from the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father. So also in Ephesians iv, 4-6, the one Spirit, the one Lord, and the one God and Father are mentioned as the source of the one body, the one faith, and the one baptism. The evidence of the New Testament appears to me to necessitate a recognition of the distinction. No less sure am I that continuous

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Christian experience justifies the maintenance of that distinction for our thinking.

(5) I am not here concerned with what needs to be said in this regard about the *ontological* Trinity; I am dealing here only with the *economic*, not with God as He is in Himself, if we dare to claim any such knowledge, but with God as He has been pleased to make Himself known in human history. We are, of course, dealing with one personal God, not a society of individuals, as the word *person* in this connection suggests to those who do not always recall the original intention in the use of the word in the creeds. This one God is known to us as Father revealed by Jesus as Son Incarnate, as Christ, and Lord, and experienced in the Christian Church after Pentecost as Holy Spirit. Owing to the ambiguity of the word I am not contending for a distinction of *persons*, but of *modes*, although the word says too little even as the word *person* says too much about the difference of the divine presence and activity in human history. It does seem to me, however, important to maintain the *objective* historical reality of the Incarnation of God as Son, as distinct from the *subjective* personal experience of inspiration by God, even though the second is sequent on, and subordinate to, the first. It is beyond our intellectual capacity to conceive how the reality of the Incarnation is continued

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within the reality of the eternal God, but we cannot believe that it had only a local significance and a temporal value, but God is in Christ "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever". Nor can we conceive how that reality of Incarnation is related within the divine activity in and for man to the reality of the inspiration of the believer. But it is necessary to avoid the confusion of the permanent and universal *objectivity* of this Incarnation, God in Christ, with the varied and varying *subjectivity* of the Spirit's operations in the inner life of believers. As I conceive it, man's receptivity and responsiveness to the divine revelation, inclusive of human redemption in Christ, is not man's sole endeavour, but God's presence and power in the Spirit within him. The continued reality of the Incarnation, Christ as Saviour and Lord, is apprehended and appropriated by the human faith which the Spirit inspires (John xv, 26 ; xvi, 13-14). From beginning to end it is the one God, God above and beyond man as Father, God as man in objective history as Son, and God in man in subjective experience as Spirit, who is redeeming and reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians v, 18, 19).

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2

“ HOLY ”

(1) What distinguishes the New Testament representation of the Spirit from that in the Old Testament is the distinctive epithet *holy*. In the Old Testament God Himself is described as holy, and men are required to be holy as He is (Leviticus xix, 2) ; but as the Spirit is not fully hypostatized, the quality of holiness belongs to it only as an activity of the holy God (Psalm li, 11, “ Cast me not away from Thy face, and take not Thy holy spirit from me ”). Although the word holy had not a distinctively ethical content originally but rather expressed God’s separation from, and elevation over, man, an idea which Otto has coined the word *numinous* to express¹ ; yet already in the Old Testament by the teaching of the prophets regarding God’s character and purpose it is acquiring such a connotation ; and in the New Testament what is distinctive of God is His perfection (Matthew v, 48). Hence the Spirit, by whom men are made to share that perfection is spoken of as Holy.

(2) He is not only holy, but makes men holy.

(a) It is the merit of Paul that in opposition

¹ *The Idea of the Holy.*

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to the tendency in Corinth to lay stress on the abnormal psychical conditions, the *charismata*, he emphasizes the ethical operation of the Spirit in the sanctification of the believer; and of that sanctification the dominating principle is love (1 Corinthians xii, 31, and xiii, the more excellent way is love). The virtues and excellencies of human character, generally recognized, are not negatived but affirmed, harmonized, and energized by love. The inheritance from the Hebrew prophets, and even from Greek moralists (Philippians iv, 8), is not destroyed, but fulfilled in love as the revealed reality of God in Christ, and the progressive ideal for man to be realized in him by the Spirit.

(b) In the history of religions morality and religion have often been separated, and even opposed, as when religious rites from a lower stage of moral development persisted into a higher, or as when a theological creed enshrined conceptions of God which ethical reflection had left behind. Even the veneration and authority accorded to the Old Testament has been a confusion and distress to the Christian conscience. A recurrent danger of religious revivals also in the history of the Christian Church has been that intense emotionalism has broken loose from sensitive conscience, and has even been followed by a reaction, in which a moral lapse was involved. It must even be recognized that a

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religious temperament is not always accompanied by a corresponding moral discernment. There are preachers who can by their religious sensibility move their hearers, but who show a moral instability. And we must not too hastily condemn as hypocrites men whose moral practice does not fully conform to their religious profession ; experience and character do not always correspond. Where, however, the Holy Spirit is suffered to do His work—enlightening, strengthening, cleansing, hallowing—the children of God become less and less conformed to the world around them, and are becoming transformed (Romans xii, 2) to the likeness of the divine perfection as manifested on earth in Him, who was ever “holy, guileless, and undefiled” (Hebrews vii, 26).

(3) In view of the subsequent lapses into legalism in the Christian Church, it is necessary to lay stress on the fact that sanctification by the Spirit is an inward, spontaneous, progressive process, and not an outward casual adaptation of action to commandment. As the Christian is not under law but under grace (Romans vi, 14), he is no longer in the bondage of the letter, but in the freedom of the Spirit (2 Corinthians iii, 6). He does not disregard or disobey the law as approved by conscience or required by society, unless by the Spirit’s enlightenment his discernment carries him so far forward on the way to

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perfection that he discerns the imperfections of the law, and is under constraint to disregard and disobey that law in his pursuit of the newly revealed perfection. If his conscience or his conduct falls below the level of the morality already attained, he can no longer for inferior doctrine or practice claim the liberty of the Spirit, wherewith Christ has made him free; not every conscientious objector can claim toleration, for there is a perverse as well as an enlightened conscience. Thus polygamy is rightly forbidden to the Mormons, and widow-burning and child-marriage to the Hindus. Paul so completely trusted the sufficiency of the Spirit's guidance that he insisted on the Christian's entire emancipation from not only the Mosaic law, but even all law. And yet his moral rebukes and requirements, addressed to his converts, show that at conversion few men pass so completely under the dominance of grace by the operation of the Spirit that they can be entirely released from the constraints and the restraints of law (Galatians v, 13-15). It is in the measure in which a man is under grace, living in and walking by the Spirit, that the law has no more authority over him. In view of this infirmity of human nature, to use liberty for licence, to claim the authority of the Spirit for self-will, the Christian Church in its history has tended to relapse into legalism, to maintain the tutelage

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of the laity by the clergy far beyond any measure which the development and discipline of the Christian conscience and character could justify. Against this tendency we must assert that the Christian conscience can be so enlightened by the Spirit as to discern ever more clearly and fully what the Christian ideal of absolute love to God and equal love to man in its progressive realization enjoins as binding, relative to the moral needs or dangers of any age or people. We must assert further that the Christian character can be so formed from within by the constraint of the love of Christ (2 Corinthians v, 14) as no longer to need the compulsions of law, whether civil or ecclesiastical, but to do spontaneously as a free expression of the new life in God all and more than all that law at its truest and best could ever decree or enforce.

3

“ COMMUNION ” OR *Koinōnia*

(1) So far we have been dealing with the Holy Spirit in individual experience and character; but the term *communion* (*Koinōnia*) carries us beyond this. The English rendering *communion* is, indeed, misleading, as it might suggest the individual relation of the Spirit.

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The literal meaning is *partnership* and outside the N.T. it is frequently applied to the marriage relationship, and in the N.T. itself it means *contributory help* (Acts ii, 42 ; Rom. xv, 26 ; 2 Cor. viii, 4 ; ix, 13 ; Heb. xiii, 16), or *sharing in* (Phil. i, 5 ; iii, 10 ; Philemon 6) partnership in giving or in getting. Thus it passes easily into the meaning spiritual *fellowship* (1 Cor. i, 9 ; x, 16 ; 2 Cor. vi, 14 ; xiii, 13 ; Gal. ii, 9 ; Phil. ii, 1 ; 1 John i, 3, 6, 7). (Souter's *Pocket Lexicon*.)

(a) As the Spirit is the common possession of believers, by that common possession they are constituted a *community* of interest and purpose, which expresses itself and becomes active in an *association*, the Church, entrance and continuance in which were symbolized by the sacraments, the corporate action of which is embodied in *institutions*, such as *ministry* as well as *sacraments*. In such a community the individual becomes most himself in his relations to the other members. This is a general social law, that individuation and socialization go together. In the Christian Church there is more community than in any other society ; the social bond is the one divine Spirit in all as the motive on the one hand, the law of love as the guiding and controlling principle of conduct on the other. Just as believers are receptive of, and responsive to, the one Spirit, despite differences of disposition, talents, experience, character, circumstance, will the life of each be as the life of all ; and the surviving

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outward differences will be transcended in the inward unity.

(b) Some differences will remain owing to these individual variations; but surely contradictory doctrine and conflicting practice could not have emerged as they have done had the community in the Spirit been preserved. It is not the fullness of spiritual life which leads to division and discord, but lack of the Spirit. The attempt to secure and maintain unity by means of outward authority, an apostolic canon, an apostolic creed, an apostolic ministry was not, despite the claim to be apostolic in character, an advance on, but a relapse from the prevailing spirit of the Apostolic Age, which found its unity in the one Spirit, however necessary it may have been under the historical conditions of persecution on the one hand, and heresy or schism on the other. The New Testament abounds not only in exhortations to, but also evidences of, community: the collection in the Gentile churches for the Church of Jerusalem, (2 Corinthians viii, 1-15), and the voluntary communism which had at first obtained there (Acts iv, 32-5), are both tokens of the sense of brotherhood in Christ, of the *philadelphia* (Romans xii, 9-10), which was not an exclusion of the *philanthropia* but a concentration of it (Galatians vi, 10), as was inevitable in an association in which common interests were felt, common

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purposes pursued, in contrast to the indifference or hostility of the world around.

(2) Believers were the *object* of the activity of God in His Spirit ; but as a community became the *organ* of that activity in the world through the common witness worship and work. The church was brought into being not for its own sake primarily, although the moral and religious treasure which in its fellowship it offers is itself an absolute good, the fulfilment of human personality according to the will of God, but that it might become God's saving agency in the redemption and the reconciliation of the whole world. The Church *gains* as *object* of the divine grace as it *gives* to the world as *organ* ; for Jesus said : " Freely ye received, freely give " (Matthew x, 8).

(a) It has a *soteriological* aspect as the channel of divine grace. The Saviour uses it for the salvation of mankind ; it is thus that the Church becomes the body of Christ, " the complement of Him who is completing all things in all men for God " (Ephesians i, 23) : in it the Incarnation is continued, for the Church is the voice of the now otherwise inaudible Lord, the means by which He reaches and changes men as He did in the days of His flesh. To be thus effective as His body, the organ of His activity, it cannot remain invisible as He now is ; whatever truth there may be in the distinction of the visible and the invisible Church, invisible it cannot remain. It must

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become a society of men : its *sociological* aspect is the necessary complement of its *soteriological*. *Inspiration* must be, as it were, translated into *organization* ; even as dynamics must find a supplement in mechanics, for power needs a machine to work. As life is related to the organism, so must inspiration be related to organization.

(b) In the Apostolic Age the beginnings of subsequent organization are already found, but, as I understand the New Testament, the unity of the Spirit was not expressed by uniformity of organization, but as life by adaptation to environment, whether Jewish or Gentile. Whatever historical justification there might be for the rigidity of the organization which was developed in the second and third centuries, in my judgment not uniformity but adaptation should be the mark of an organization which claims to express the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The constancy of the Spirit's presence and activity within the Church is a surer guarantee of the preservation of the original deposit of divine truth and grace than could be the continuity of any uniform organization. On these matters of present, urgent interest I do not further enlarge, but content myself by saying that the *sociological* aspect of the Church must always be considered in relation to the *soteriological* : how can the Church be most

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fitted for the service of the Kingdom of God? I myself, however desirous of the reunion of the Christian Churches, must hold, contrary to what may be broadly described as the *Catholic* view, that no one rigid sociological form of organization is essential as a necessary condition of its soteriological function, but only the inspiration of the one Spirit.

(3) It is not because of my personal concern with this question of the Church's inspiration and organization in relation to the problem of the reunion of the Church that I am discussing it here; but because I am convinced that we can have no adequate doctrine of the Church unless we relate it as closely as I have tried to do to the doctrine of God. For me the Church is no merely voluntary association of men for human purposes which they accept and approve. It came to manifestation in time, but its source is in the eternal purpose of God, and as the progressive revelation of God to the Hebrew nation had its consummation in the revelation of God as Father through Christ, so that revelation is finding its consummation in the Church, the community of the saved, through whom Christ is still saving until the end, when a redeemed and reconciled humanity will become the manifestation of the sons of God on earth (Romans viii, 19). The eternal reality of the love of God, revealed in the historical sovereign saving activity of God as Father in the Incarnate

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Son, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, has as its end, the community of the Spirit, mankind as the habitation of the Spirit of God, God's temple (Ephesians ii, 19-22). Only in the light of such a vision, as came to Paul as the outcome of this experience of the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile, in the Church, of the transcendence of all the differences, which caused division among men (Colossians iii, 11), in a common life in Christ can we think worthily of the Church. If, as the next lecture will seek to show, God as Father, Son, and Spirit is in some ineffable sense, of the glory of which we can at moments catch a glimpse, *social personality*, then it becomes more intelligible why we should look for the full reflection of that glory, not in any individual believer, but in the community of believers, expanding until it becomes worldwide as a redeemed and reconciled humanity. Then the distinctive functions of Father, Son, and Spirit will be merged in the one God who is all things in all men (I Corinthians xv, 28). It is thus that Christ Crucified and Risen by the Spirit consummates Creation in the Church as the expression in time and space of the eternal, infinite reality of God.

(4) This conclusion, to which my constructive thinking on the data of the Holy Scriptures as the literature of the divine revelation has led me, and which I trust none will regard as mere speculation, a "vain philosophy", may form

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an appropriate transition to a subject of much controversy in dogmatic theology without touching on which, however, the treatment of the subject of this lecture would not be complete. I mean the relation of the divine activity by the Spirit to the liberty and responsibility of man. Into the details of Augustinianism and Pelagianism, Calvinism, and Arminianism I do not need to enter, as both controversies, and all similar controversies, are due to false assumptions, which I may describe as *spatial*, *mechanical*, and *deistic* thinking, and which can be disproved only by the distinctively Christian view of God and man and their relation, which the Incarnation yields.

(a) By *spatial* thinking I mean the importation into our ideas of the relation of God and man of the externality of physical objects, such as human bodies to one another. Science has so modified this superficial view as to assume an all-pervasive ether, if atomic matter be not some formation in the ether. Because human persons are incarnate, they are regarded as external to one another; two bodies cannot be in one place. But in the higher life of man, in the fellowship of love, this externality is transcended, and there can be, and is, a common life, in which the separation of body no longer divides. The relation of God and man is often conceived and described as the analogy of this externality;

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despite the assertion of the divine omnipresence such mutual externality is assumed. Where God is, man cannot be ; where man is, God is not. It is in the highest human personal relations, the common life in the fellowship of love, that we should look for any analogy of the relations of God and man. In Him " we live and move and have our being " (Acts xvii, 28), for " Spirit with spirit can meet ; Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet ". This interpretation of God and man should not be described as the *Higher Pantheism*, but as *Panentheism*, a mode of thought quite consistent with Christian faith, for according to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus enjoined on His disciples : " Abide in me and I in you " (John xv, 4).

(b) Akin to *spatial* is *mechanical* thinking ; here the analogy of physical force is applied to the relation of personal wills. God is supposed to act on man as one physical force acts on another (to use popular language which science corrects). A determinism is assumed in the relation of God to man as in that of the motives to the will in choice. In the latter case even the physical analogy breaks down. The choice is not the resultant of the motives, nor is there any representation of the motives possible in a parallelogram of forces. If a man is tempted to steal to appease his hunger, there is no resultant of part stealing and part hunger in calculable

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proportions. Still less can God's activity in man be conceived as an action in man similar to that of one physical force on another. Man neither moves as an automaton, nor is moved as a puppet by God. The relation of the infinite Creator to His finite creatures cannot be conceived on any such analogy within His creation.

(c) In deism this externalization and mechanization of the relation of God and man becomes theologically explicit. God is removed as far from His world as the possibility of some sort of relation to it as Creator, Ruler, and Preserver will allow : for quite outside of His world acting upon it He cannot altogether be ; but the distinction and separation are made as great as the minimum necessary connection will admit. Christian theology has often shared the assumptions of those whom it opposed on account of their attitude to a supernatural revelation. The use of the term *supernatural*, unless it be very precisely defined in distinction from *natural*, itself betrays a deistic tendency ; so does the desire to multiply miracles, and the disappointment felt when an alleged miracle is resolved into an ordinary occurrence. My faith in Christ would not be affected if His miracles found an explanation within an expanded conception of nature, although I hold that in the restricted conception of to-day they remain inexplicable. What is of primary importance is that certain

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events—such as the Resurrection—did occur ; secondary in importance is the consideration whether they can be described as miracles or not. If we separate the Creation with its regular processes from God the Creator, then all God's activity must be described as *supernatural* ; if nature be the orderly activity of God, infinite power in finite forces, infinite wisdom in finite laws, infinite purpose in' finite process—then all His activities may be described as *natural*. When we use the term *supernatural*, let us apply it only to events, which we cannot explain by the order of nature as we know it, not dreading any discovery which might widen the range of our knowledge of that order, so that we might be able to include even these events in it.

(d) While the relation of God to His world and man in it, as Creator, Preserver, and Ruler, must be much more immanent than such deistic thinking, whether Christian or not, allows, it is when we apply to it the revelation of God's Fatherhood by Jesus, that its utter inadequacy appears. Jesus taught the divine immanence without any reserve : for Him there was no system of nature between God and man. God feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the flowers of the field (Matthew vi, 25-34), and no bird falls to the ground without His knowledge (x, 29). If the phrase " which art in heaven " indicates a transcendence, it is the transcendence

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not of time or space, but of personal perfection which Jesus is asserting. If we consistently and courageously carry out to its consequences the conception of God as Father and man as child, that means such an affinity of nature and such a community of life between God and man as condemns and excludes all spatial, mechanical, and deistic thinking. It is not omnipotence overwhelming impotence! It is love wooing and winning love. God active in man is not an external force, irresistibly imposed, enslaving man to the alien will of God. It is the divine potency in man which belongs to the inmost life of man, being actualized for the fulfilment of the divine promise, the manifestation of the divine pattern in man, not suppressing man's personal activities, but energizing them, since man's personality can be preserved only as thus he makes himself, and so God makes him the organ of the divine activity.

(e) As has already been pointed out in dealing with the temptation of Jesus, the freedom of choice—the *posse peccare* and the *posse non peccare*—in which a man can identify himself with his appetites or his aspirations, and thus choose the bad or the good, is an inferior stage of his development, in which there is the possibility of a still lower, the *non posse non peccare* (whether any man ever sinks to such a condition may, despite appearances to the contrary, be

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doubted), but which is intended to be a transition to the higher stage—*non posse peccare*, which is the freedom for which man is destined. Can the relation of Creator and Creature, of Father and Child, be conceived as so immediate and intimate that we may say that when man acts as he pleases God least acts in him, when he acts most purely to please God God most acts in him? The life of God in man is emancipation, the life of man without God is enslavement. To be bound to any finite object is bondage; to surrender to infinite reality is deliverance. For man related to God as he is, to please self is licence, to please God is liberty. Paul realized himself most fully, as he was so identified with Christ that he was crucified and raised again with Christ (Romans vi, 4, 5), and Christ lived in him (Galatians ii, 20). Perfection will exclude the possibility of sin; but it will be liberty. Man was made for God, and is most himself as God is most in and for him. Imperfect human personality is perfected only as united to the one perfect personal God.

(5) This discussion is relevant to the subject of this lecture, as it is God as Spirit who is immanent and operative in man's life of goodness and grace. Whatever form the immanent activity of God may take in physical forces and in natural laws, or in life in plant or animal (in man also as animal), in man as personal it is a personal relation, in which, to repeat

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Tennyson's words " Spirit with spirit can meet ". Whatever be the value of *mystical experiences* of trance or ecstasy, of visions or voices, it must not be exalted above the life of conscious human faith receiving and responding to divine grace in the Fatherhood of God, the Saviourhood and Lordship of Christ, the sanctification by the Spirit. Whatever be the value of the *sacraments* as channels of divine grace to human faith, for apart from faith I can assign no efficacy to them, they must not be exalted above the Gospel heard, believed, and obeyed. Whatever be the value of the *subconscious with its suggestibility* as a condition of spiritual influence, it must not be exalted above the conscious life, in which God in Christ is clearly known, fully trusted, and freely chosen. Whatever the mystical, sacramental, or subconscious operations of the Spirit may be, the Spirit is surely most *potent* in grace, where He is most *patent* for faith. Not in shadowed lower chambers, but in the lighted Upper Room the Master meets His disciples, speaks to them His peace, and breathes on them His Spirit (John xx, 21-2).

LECTURE IV

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT ONE GOD

The Rudimentary Doctrine of the Trinity: (a) The teaching of Jesus (Matt. xxviii, 17-20); (b) The teaching of 1 Cor. xii, 4-6; (c) The teaching of 2 Cor. xiii, 14; (d) The teaching of Eph. iv, 4-6—The Relations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: (a) The teaching of Paul (1 Cor. viii, 6; Eph. iv, 8); (b) The teaching of John (John xiv, 28, 26; xv, 26-7; xvi, 13, 14); (c) The need of this emphasis to avoid sacramentarianism and mysticism.

The sufficiency of the Economic Trinity challenged by man's pursuit of truth—The encouragement of the mutual relation of God and Man—The duty of using the highest available terms.

The Jewish inheritance and the Gentile Environment (Yahveh and Logos)—God as Personal and Supra-Personal (immanence and transcendence)—The Universal Fatherhood of God as transforming our conception of World and Man: (a) The meaning of Fatherhood (Communion and Conformity); (b) The Relation of God to the world (i) Pantheism, deism, and monotheism, (ii) Kenōsis and Plērōsis; (c) The relation as affected by man's sin; (d) The inadequacy of the word Creation.

The Divine Fatherhood and Christology: (a) The metaphysical attributes of God not involved in the Incarnation; (b) The progressive divine Immanence and the Incarnation, as creative

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act of God as transcendent—The Formulation in the Creeds :
(a) *The insufficiency of the terms ;* (b) *The historical personality as starting-point ;* (c) *The relation of God to man ;* (d) *The progressive Incarnation ;* (e) *The two difficulties removed* (i) *The enhypostasia,* (ii) *The pre-existence.*

The Scriptural basis and historical development—The economic and the ontological Trinity : (a) *The human analogies ;* (b) *The word “person” ;* (c) *Society as personal and personality as social—Conclusion : Christian Theology necessarily Trinitarian.*

I

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE

(I) We have so far been dealing with the successive phases of the revelation of the Christian conception of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the earthly ministry Jesus revealed God as Father (Matthew xi, 25-7) ; at Cæsarea Philippi Peter for the other disciples confessed Him Christ (xvi, 16) ; after the resurrection the confession of the primitive community was *Jesus is Lord* (Acts ii, 36). At and after Pentecost the presence and power of God as Holy Spirit was experienced. It is a dogmatic interpretation of the Holy Scriptures to find the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament, although the conceptions of Spirit, Word, Wisdom of God indicate the necessity of relating the transcendent

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God by some mediating agency of immanence in the world.

(a) Jesus clearly teaches that God is Father, that He is Son, and that the Holy Spirit is already present, but will on His departure be more manifest as the other Paraclete; Comforter, Advocate, Helper (John xv, 26; cf. I John ii, 1). The last verses of Matthew's Gospel belong to a later stage of the history of the early Church than the post-resurrection appearances, and indicate an advance in doctrine and practice. Instead of the ardent hope of an immediate Second Advent there is the assurance of the constant presence and the supreme authority of Christ, and the universal commission to preach and to baptize, not into the name of Christ alone, the early practice (Acts ii, 38), but into the threefold name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew xxviii, 17-20; cf. *Didaché*).

(b) The *charismata* are primarily associated with the Holy Spirit in the manifestation at Pentecost; but Paul advances to the association of the Lord (Christ) and God (the Father):—

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all” (I Cor. xii, 4-6).

In this passage we have no merely rhetorical

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parallelisms, but a rudimentary distribution of the functions within the Godhead. The comment of Rev. G. G. Findlay, M.A., may be quoted :—

“ While the Spirit prompts in all Christians the simultaneous confession *Jesus is Lord*, this unity of faith bears multiform fruit in ‘distributions of grace—gifts, services, workings’. There are not separate classes of *πνευματικά* but varied designations of the *πνευματικά* collectively—a *trinity* of blessing associating its possessors in turn with the *Spirit, the Lord, and God*, the fountain of all. What is a *χάρισμα* (see i, 7), is a *διακονία* in view of its usefulness (see 21–5), and an *ἐνέργεια* in virtue of the power operating therein. The identity of the first and the second of the *syns.* rests on that of ‘the *Lord*’ and ‘the *Spirit*’ (cf. 2 Cor. iii, 17 f.), and that of the second and third upon the relation of Christ to the Father (see John v, 17 ff., xiv, 18–19). For the Trinitarian structure of the passage cf. 2 Cor. xiii, 14 ; Eph. iv, 4 ff.”¹

(c) The Apostolic benediction in 1 Corinthians xvi, 23, runs : “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” As in the baptismal instruction in Matthew xxviii, 19, so in 2 Corinthians xiii, 14, there is also an advance in trinitarian doctrine. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” is now carried back to its eternal source, “the love of God,” and on to its temporal result, “the communion of the Holy Spirit.”

¹ *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ii, p. 887.

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The eternal reality of "the love of God" is revealed in the historical personality, described in His distinctive character and function as "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ", and through this revelation is realized in personal experience as "the communion of the Holy Spirit".

(d) In Ephesians the trinity is related to the Church, a dominant interest of this epistle :—

"There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling : one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in all." (iv, 4-6.)

Without entering into any minute exegesis attention may be called to the following points. The apostle's thought ascends from the *Church* in which the *Spirit* is the bond of unity as the common possession of believers and the source of their hope, through *Christ*, as the object of the faith, confessed in baptism as the symbol of the change which that faith effects, to *God* himself. There is an ascent from God realized as Spirit in the inward life to God incarnate in Christ, and thence to God transcendent as well as immanent, the Father revealed by Christ.

(2) Before we attempt, however, to construe the inter-relation of Father, Son, and Spirit, we may consider several passages bearing on that relation.

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(a) Paul formulates his monotheistic belief in 1 Corinthians viii, 6 :—

“To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him ; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.”

The transcendent God, the ultimate cause and final purpose of all things, men included, is the Father : the subordinate mediating agency is the Lord Jesus Christ, as also in the Ephesian passage. As the Lord is thus subordinate to the Father, so the Spirit to the Son. It is the ascended Lord, who “led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians iv, 8) ; and elsewhere the divine agency of the distribution of these gifts is the Holy Spirit.

(b) Even in the teaching of the Fourth Gospel the Son is subordinate to the Father :—

“The Father is greater than I” (John xiv, 28).

And the Spirit is also subordinate to the Son. The other Paraclete is sent by the Father in the name of the Son, and His function is to bring to remembrance what the Son had taught (xiv, 26). It is the Son Himself who sends the Paraclete from the Father, “even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father” and His function is to bear witness to the Son (xv, 26-7). The

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Spirit cannot be sent till after the Son's departure, and the convictions which He, as guiding into all truth, works in men all bear on the Son's mission. He speaks not of Himself but takes and declares the things of the Son (xvi, 13-14). Even if on critical grounds we discount these words as expressing the mind of Jesus, they are valuable as indicating how one Christian theologian conceived of the relation of the mission of the Spirit to the ministry of Jesus.

(c) More evidence need not be quoted, since this is not an essay in New Testament theology. Enough has been produced to justify an insistence on the recognition of the subordination of the Spirit to the Son, and of the Son to the Father. The redemptive and reconciling function of Christ lies within His revelation as Son of the Fatherhood of God, a revelation made, as we have seen in the relation of sonship, dependence on, and submission to God, as well as communion with Him (Matthew xi, 25, 26). The illumination and sanctification by the Spirit is not an addition to, or a substitute for, this redemption and reconciliation in Christ, but its realization in personal experience, character, and fellowship within the Church. This insistence is corrective of two errors into which Christian thought has often fallen. A verse from George Matheson's hymn will illustrate the tendency to separate the adoration of the human image in Christ on the

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one hand, from the revelation of the Father in heaven, or the craving for the "spirit vast as life and love" from the work of Christ Himself; but the poet clearly indicates that the beatific vision includes all three manifestations of God, and more than present experience can attain.

"Some seek a Father in the heavens above,
Some ask a human image to adore,
Some crave a spirit vast as life and love :
Within Thy mansions we have all and more ;
Gather us in."

An emphasis on the *Incarnation* as an historical event apart from the eternal reality of God, of which it is a revelation, and apart from the redemption and reconciliation which is its purpose, leads to a *sacramentarianism*, which does not offer an open channel for the whole, full activity of God for man, but lays undue stress on the *flesh* of the Word (John i, 14). An emphasis on the Spirit's presence and activity apart from the historical revelation in Christ of the eternal reality of God leads to a *mysticism*, which may very easily, (as faith has no hold on fact, and through fact on truth,) lapse into rationalism, moralism, or humanism, according to the fashion of the hour, or even into pantheism, the confusion of the inner life of man with the life of God Himself.

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2

THE ECONOMIC AND THE ONTOLOGICAL TRINITY—THE THREE QUESTIONS

We have so far been concerned with the *economic* trinity or the trinity of the temporal revelation, not the *ontological*, or the trinity within the eternal reality of God. Now there are three questions confronting us. Should we not be content with the economic trinity without presuming to go any further? Should we not heed the poet's warning?

“Man, know thyself. Presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man.”

If we presume, are we able with the limitations of our mind to press our inquiry beyond the bounds which God has set in His revelation? If such a possibility disclose itself at all, in what terms can we express our conception of the eternal reality of God?

(1) In answer to the first question, we may call attention to the constant and urgent demand of man to reach beyond his grasp (to use Browning's terms) in his pursuit of truth, and to the rewards which have attended his persistent and audacious attempt. Human thought has been pushing back the frontier of its knowledge further and further; it may halt for a time at one resting-place of

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achieved knowledge, but soon fresh questions compel it to renew the march. The Copernican succeeds the Ptolemaic astronomy, the physics of Einstein that of Newton. In religion especially man's reach is always exceeding his grasp. His aspiration soars from the finite to the Infinite, from the dependent to the Absolute, from time to eternity, from appearance to reality, from the many to the One. Agnosticism is but an impertinent attempt to secure a monopoly of knowledge for physical science. Pragmatism is but an irrelevant excuse of the practical American mind for its lack of theoretical interest. The history of philosophy no less than of religion disproves the prohibition: "Thus far, and no further." The theology which covers up its lack of courage to think by taking hasty refuge in asserting mystery in God's ways and works will not satisfy the hunger or the thirst of the soul for God. At last we may have to confess that thought can go no further in penetrating the mystery; but we must not make any such confession until our mind has tested its powers to the uttermost. If we cannot know *all* about God, we must try to know *as much as we can* by the most strenuous use of our power of thought.

(2) The answer to the second question encourages and does not discourage our quest. If God be love, as He has in Christ revealed Himself as being, then we may believe that, since

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His children want to know Him as He is, so surely He will want to be known, and, to meet both the desire of His children and His own, He will make Himself known. God's revelation of Himself is not concealment of Himself. The good man who has nothing to hide will not try to deceive others by making himself appear other than he is ; to be transparent and consistent is reckoned an excellence in man. Should it be denied to God ? Why should God reveal Himself in human history at all, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, if there be not in God a corresponding reality ? The *economic* trinity would be no revelation if there were not an *ontological* trinity, ineffably *transcendent*, as man cannot fathom the abysmal depths of the divine even in the revelation, which he can receive, and to which he can respond, but adequately *correspondent* to sustain the mutual relation to God, not merely in temporal appearance, but in eternal reality, the eternal life of man in God. Again, if God be Father, if Christ be the Son incarnate, if the Holy Spirit be not alien to the spirit in man, but actualizes its potency and fulfils its promise, man is sufficiently like God to know God as He is. The conception of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit falls, not into the metaphysical region, but the realm of the personal relation of God to man, where affinity of nature makes possible community of life. Different as

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God is in what are called His metaphysical attributes, infinity, eternity, etc., man is capable of forming some conception even of these ; and if he thinks but deep enough he is driven to form some conception. Different as sinful man is from holy God, sin has not so completely degraded him that he cannot become aware of the difference, that he cannot repent and aspire, that he cannot exercise faith in the grace which restores him to fellowship with and likeness to God. When man is forgiven, cleansed, renewed, hallowed by the Spirit of God, the God who had become *the refuge* from sin, becomes *the home*, in which he can dwell, and feel *at home*. The *via negationis* is not the Christian way to God ; the *via eminentiæ*, which ascribes to God, only in infinite measure, all the excellences which man in his finitude partially possesses, is the way Jesus took in the analogies between God and man in His teaching, especially when He qualifies any saying with the words : "How much more." The *via causalitatis*, drawing inferences from the made to the Maker is legitimately used in the theistic proofs, and can, I believe, not originate, but sustain our religious belief in God's power, wisdom, goodness. The distinctively Christian way is the *via paternitatis* ; the child knows and loves the Father, because the Father loves and makes Himself known.

(3) The answer to the third question then is

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this : we must formulate our conception of God in His eternal reality in the highest available terms from our knowledge of what man is. That is what the creeds did ; they used the philosophical terminology available. In my judgment man's knowledge of himself has advanced, and he has now categories more adequate to apply to God than were any available to the Fathers. Theology must advance concurrently with the whole range of man's knowledge. This is the task we must now attempt.

3

THE DOCTRINE OF THE NATURE OF GOD

In this constructive endeavour the two questions with which theology has mainly concerned itself have been the relation of the human and the divine nature in Christ, and the inter-relation of the persons—Father, Son, and Spirit—within the Godhead ; but before dealing with these we must consider how the revelation of Fatherhood transforms the general conception of God.

(1) The conception of God was taken over from Jewish piety on the one hand and Greek philosophy on the other. It was not realized that the conception of God as Father revealed and realized in Jesus the Christ and Lord involved a transformation of the borrowed ideas, whether

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Jewish or Greek. In religion man has the sense of God as *above* and *beyond* as well as *within* and *akin to* himself, or in philosophical terms, as transcendent as well as immanent. As a quotation previously given from Dr. Claude Montefiore recognizes, there was a tendency in Judaism to emphasize God's transcendence, and that was modified by considerations confined to the particular relation of *Yahveh* as covenant-God to His chosen people Israel. In opposition to the current polytheism Greek philosophy laid stress on divine transcendence—the indefinable and ineffable nature of deity—separate from the finite, and temporal world. That tendency appears in extreme form in Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism; but it affected the thought of the Fathers, and to it the *Logos* doctrine owes its crucial importance. How it prejudicially affected Christology will be shown soon; now we must briefly consider its bearings on theology proper.

(2) It seems to me a constant and insistent demand of religion that the transcendence and the immanence should both be recognized. In Hegel and in the Neo-Hegelians, though in lesser degree, the tendency has been to what has been called *immanentism*, and this appears in poetry, as well as in philosophy. The moral conscience and the religious consciousness seem to me to forbid so complete an identification of God and the world as absolute idealism makes.

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It seems necessary to-day to maintain, but not to exaggerate, *transcendence*, God's difference from and elevation above the world. While for religion it is essential that God be conceived as so far personal that He can have personal relations to man, and man can approach and appeal to Him as personal, nevertheless it must be recognized that, while man's highest category of thought—personality—must be applied to God, if he is to have a conception adequate to the questions of the mind and the needs of the life, and man can conceive personality as ideal, as free of the defects and limitations of human personality, yet man's widest and loftiest conception of personality must fall short of the reality of God as the universe discloses it, and we may speak of God as *supra-personal*, not by way of negation of what we know of God, but as a confession of the limitations of our mind in conceiving even personality.

(3) Having, however, made this confession of the limits of our knowledge, we may seek to define as clearly as we can what we do know, what this Fatherhood as revealed in Christ means for us.

(a) It has already been indicated that God's Fatherhood means at least these two things, that God wills a personal relation of love with man, and that He wills in that relation a growing conformity in the character of man to

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His perfection in holiness. Further, as a result of this holy love He wills man's blessedness. Jesus also included in His teaching about God as Father His impartial goodness to all men in His providence (Matthew vi, 32 ; v, 45). Accordingly we may insist that the Fatherhood Jesus taught was a *universal Fatherhood* and not restricted to an elect number or even to believers, although only believers become the children of God in realizing in their experience and character the corresponding relation of man to God (v, 45-8). The divine revelation and consequent human redemption and reconciliation in Christ did not change God, but brought into temporal manifestation His eternal reality.

(b) Accordingly we must consider God's relation to the world and man from this new standpoint. Creation, Providence, Sovereignty, have all to be transformed by Fatherhood. We must, therefore, consider how this transformation affects our conception of what may be called God's metaphysical relation to the world and man. Is God revealing and realizing Fatherhood in His total relations, and not merely in His personal relation to man? (i) The pantheism which identifies, or rather tends to identify God and world, for a relative distinction is usually admitted, is in my judgment contrary to the moral conscience and the religious consciousness, however attractive to the speculative intellect.

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The deism, which separates, or tends to separate—for here also there is usually some qualification—is altogether unsatisfactory to theoretical no less than practical interests. The Christian theism or monotheism, which claims to combine immanence without identity, and transcendence without separation, leans in my judgment often towards deism. If God be eternally love, then the Universe is not due to an arbitrary decree of His will, but is a necessary expression of His nature.

(ii) Unchanged in His eternal reality, He is fulfilling a purpose essential to Him in the temporal process of nature and history, and that process has significance and value for Him. Jesus found God in nature and man; His parables are not merely poetry; they are philosophy; the whole world and all life, except sin, symbolize God, and as real symbols convey as well as signify God. For Jesus also there was the presence which disturbed Him with the joy of elevated thoughts, thoughts which always lifted His mind and heart to the Father in Heaven. The Universe, inanimate and animate, may at first sight appear other than God, a *Kenōsis*, a self-limitation of the Infinite to the finite; but surely as we watch the evolution from matter to life, from life to mind (if, indeed, they can be separated), from unconscious to conscious mind, from conscious mind to self-consciousness,

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from facts to values, the transitions probably appearing to us less gradual than they are, we must discern in the *Kenōsis* a *Plērōsis* also, a self-fulfilment in self-limitation. Christ is the consummation of that process as well as of the progressive revelation in the Hebrew religion, and through the Spirit of Christ as "the first-born among many brethren" (Romans viii, 29), that consummation is being completed in His body, the Church, as both object of God's love and organ of the world-redemption and reconciliation.

(c) As these last words indicate, I fully recognize the human tragedy of sin and all its consequences, challenging, delaying, and hindering the divine purpose, yet met and overcome in a gracious *Kenōsis* of sacrifice, and a glorious *Plērōsis* of salvation. Unless we take Genesis iii as authentic history, and are prepared to commit ourselves to the Augustinian and Calvinistic perversion of the teaching of Paul, it is simply not honest to write about man's Fall, as is becoming common in a deplorable theological reaction.¹ The reality, the universality, the hideousness and heinousness of sin, the appalling misery and shame, and the awful doom of persistent transgression are facts not to be denied, but to be reckoned with by

¹ I have fully discussed Paul's teaching on this subject in my commentary on "Romans" (*The Century Bible*), pp. 151-9. I do not believe that either Augustine or Calvin rightly interpreted Paul.

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any adequate theology ; and it was the fact of sin and its consequences which made me break away from the attractive Neo-Hegelianism of my loved and honoured teacher Edward Caird. Let us, however, in the doctrine of sin not repeat phrases now meaningless, but base it on a frank recognition of what modern knowledge has to tell us about racial evolution and individual development. Our conception of sin will not be less serious; our condemnation not less severe ; but our attitude will be more honest and hopeful. Sin has not taken God's world out of His hands ; it is still His, and He still lives, moves, works, suffers, reigns, in it. He who took the responsibility of creating has the resources to redeem and reconcile ; His lost world is being found, and there is joy in the presence of the angels of God (Luke xv, 10). He of whom are all things is reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians v, 18-19). May we not dare to hope that all shall end in whom all began (1 Corinthians xv, 28).

(d) The conception of God's Fatherhood makes it impossible for me to regard the word *Creation* as an adequate expression for man's origin from God, whether adequate for any other part of His universe or not. The old myth of the formation of man's body out of the dust of the earth, but the derivation of his life from the breath of God seems to me to contain a

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profounder truth (Genesis ii, 7). Some such origin in God seems to be a surer basis for man's potential fellowship with and likeness to God. As in Him we live and move and have our being, so also are we His offspring (Acts xvii, 28).¹ Different as must needs be the Creator and His creatures, the resemblance of Father and child is close. Man does not share God's metaphysical attributes, infinity, eternity, etc., yet His personal attributes God has shared with man, as the potency and the promise of that personal relation which was perfect in Jesus the Christ our Lord, and by His truth and grace, through His Spirit, is being realized in man. As Fatherhood belongs to God's eternal reality, so the conception of God as Father must transform all our thinking about the relation of God to the world and especially man. The view of God which the guilty conscience has as *quite other*, as alien to and estranged from man, is not what the saved child of God should continue to cherish : that too needs to be soundly converted ; he should enter into the peace of God (Romans v, 1), the joy of salvation, the reverent and grateful, yet confident and exultant intimacy of love, in which even penitence and forgiveness become blessed ; and this holy Father is the eternal God.

¹ Much as I am opposed to Indian pantheism and mysticism yet its teaching regarding the relation of *Brahman* and *Atman* can correct the deism of our Western thinking.

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4

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

(1) Whatever may need to be afterwards said about the difference of the Father from the Son and the Spirit in the Godhead, God in His unity in relation to man is Father. It is His Fatherhood which is revealed through the Son in the Spirit. When Jesus spoke of the Father it was surely God as the one God of whom He thought (John xiv, 6-10). In the New Testament, when God is spoken of along with Son or Lord and Spirit, it is God as Father who is intended (1 Corinthians xii, 6; 2 Corinthians xiii, 14; Ephesians iv, 6). The Son as revealing the Fatherhood, and the Spirit as realizing sonship in man are mediating the Fatherhood of God in His unity in His relation to man. Our answer to the two questions raised as regards the person of Christ and the nature of the Godhead must be determined by this basic conception. We must first of all attempt to deal with the problem of Christology. Much of the difficulty of the treatment of the subject was due to the fact that it was a non-Christian, a pre-Christian, not to say anti-Christian conception of God and of man which was assumed.

(a) Let it be at once quite frankly stated that the metaphysical attributes of God, which

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distinguish Creator and creature must be left out of consideration if the Incarnation is to be regarded as not a semblance, but a reality. The self-limitation of God in creating nature and man applies to His manifestation as Incarnate Son, and the problem of Incarnation is similar to the problem of Creation, and truly interpreted affords its solution. A passage written with speculative daring for a practical end, such as Philippians ii, 5-8, must not be used for dogmatic purposes, and many of the theories based on it Ritschl has rightly described as mythology.¹ I cannot imagine, although Paul evidently could, a solitary act of the pre-existent Son of God in divesting Himself of divine prerogatives, if not attributes, that He might submit to the humiliation of the Incarnation. Great as is Paul's authority for me, when his doctrine is interpreting his experience, yet with all respect and gratitude I dare to scrutinize his teaching when he departs from the basis of experience, and indulges in speculation.² And yet this passage does suggest the profound truth already mentioned that Creatorship, still more as Fatherhood, involves *Kenōsis* as well as *Plerōsis*. What Paul writes about Christ Jesus may be applied to God in His relation to

¹ See my book, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 271.

² The difficulties of this passage I have discussed in my book, *The Inner Life of Jesus*, pp. 463-5.

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the world. In Christ's humiliation and exaltation there is focussed in concentrated glory the diffused radiance of God's action and passion, self-limitation and self-realization in nature and history. The Incarnation is not "a bolt from the blue", but the noontide of a brightening day. It is not a distant or absent, but a present God, who comes as man to men. We must recognize in the Incarnation the supreme instance of the *divine immanence*.

(b) Not only so, we must regard the Incarnation as the final consummation of the whole creative process, the last stage of the cosmic and human evolution, and, therefore, not as only an expedient to meet the accident of sin. We have in recent thinking quite given up the idea of rigid continuity, the possibility of reducing each higher stage to the content of the lower, of explaining life by mind, or mind by life as mindless, and are becoming accustomed to speak of *emergent* or even *creative* evolution, that is, we recognize that something new does emerge, or is created at each stage. Accordingly, the Incarnation is not merely the product of the previous evolution in nature or history. It is not explicable by anything that went before, although it was prepared for, and its possibility in time did depend on necessary antecedent conditions. We may adopt Paul's terms, that while Christ *came* "in the fulness of the time",

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yet "God *sent* forth His Son" (Galatians iv, 4). There was the supreme divine initiative; there was the creative activity of God; the old Creation, which sin had marred and stained was ended, the new Creation of redemption and reconciliation was begun. Christ is the promise and the potency of the new order. He is typical and He is creative of the new manhood of the sons of God (Romans viii, 19). Thus, while relating the Incarnation both to the divine immanence and the cosmic and human evolution, we maintain that as He is not the product of the one, so the other does not explain Him. The divine transcendence of world and man is made manifest in Him, in those features in which He is solitary and unique as Revealer and Redeemer, for He is God as man and in man, and yet above and beyond man.

(2) It is generally admitted even by those who are jealous for the maintenance of the œcumenical creeds as standards of orthodoxy, that they do not so much contribute to the positive content of our conception of the person of Christ as they serve as a negative prohibition of any straying of thought beyond the limits of the doctrine of the completeness of the two natures—divine and human—and the unity of the person.¹ Whenever the attempt has been

¹ See the modest claim made for them by the late Bishop Gore in his Bampton Lectures, as summarized in *The Inner Life of Jesus*, p. 509.

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made to give positive content, thought has swung to the one extreme or the other ; if the difference of natures is emphasized, the unity of the person is sacrificed, as in Nestorianism and Calvinism ; if the unity of the person is insisted on, the divine nature more or less absorbs the human, as in Eutychianism and Lutheranism.

(a) In defence of the philosophical terminology, it has been maintained that the philosophy has permanent value, and yet it is conceded that ancient philosophy had not adequately developed the conception of *personality*, a development the main impulse to which has come from Christianity itself in its valuation of the individual soul. To the meaning of the word "person" in ancient thought we shall shortly return ; here it may be affirmed that for the thought of the Church—not its piety—the unity of the person was never concretely realized, but only abstractly asserted. With such terms and the conceptions which they connote, as *ousia*, *hypostasis*, *substantia*, *subsistentia*, theology to-day cannot operate. They belong to a *static* mode of thinking, and ours is *dynamic*. For us reality is activity, an agent, not substance but subject. The more neutral term *nature* we can still use, and can still speak of the divine and the human nature, as we could not of the substances, but we must beware of opposing them as did the Fathers to the injury of their Christology.

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(b) Our starting-point, however, must be *the historical personality*, and we must try to show how in its development the divine and the human nature are not merely juxtaposed, but united. As has already been indicated, we may conceive of God as *personal* in His relation to man, even if we concede that man's highest conception of even ideal personality cannot be made the exhaustive measure of the total reality of God. In defending the application of the category of personality to God Lotze has maintained that, while personality is defective in man, it is perfect only in God. As man's personality develops accordingly it may approach towards the perfect personality of God (Matthew v, 48). There is no inherent contradiction or opposition between divine and human nature as personal, since, as has been already argued, man's real freedom lies not in his opposition to, but in his conformity with, the will of God. Human personality, with its distinctive dower of freedom, with its law of progressive development is not inherently incapable of a more immediate contact, and a more intimate communion with God, even a personal unity with God as personal.

(c) Here we need not enter on the controversy between Lutheran and Calvinist as to whether *finitum capax infiniti*, or *finitum non-capax infiniti*, because there can be no question of the infinitude of the Incarnate Son as God under human

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conditions and limitations. The difference between God and man as personal does not divide, but unites ; for God as perfect personality is communicative and man as imperfect personality, yet developing towards perfection, is receptive and responsive. The Fatherhood of God, as revealed by Jesus, has led us to the conception of the universe as the progressive manifestation of God in matter, life, mind, consciousness ; and this manifestation is continued in the progressive revelation to the Hebrew nation, of which Christ is the fulfilment. There has been a manward movement of God in revelation, and a Godward movement of man in religion : God communicated His truth and grace as man was able to receive it, and respond to it in faith. These movements, as it were, converge in the Incarnation, where the human was able fully to receive and respond to the divine communication.

(d) As development is a condition of human personality, the incarnation was, as I conceive it, *progressive*, but at every stage as complete as at that stage it could be. The boy had not the consciousness of the man, nor at the beginning of the ministry was the realization of the divine purpose in human word and deed as wide in its range and deep in its reach as at the close ; although the temptation was without sin, the absolute surrender was made in Gethsemane

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and on Calvary ; and at the Resurrection in the living and reigning Lord the Incarnation was consummated, for then as Paul teaches was the Son constituted with power (Romans i, 4). Only thus can we safeguard the reality of the human development, experience, and character—the necessary conditions of a real Incarnation ; the humiliation resulted in the exaltation, the *Kenōsis* in the *Plērōsis* (Philippians ii, 9–11).

(e) Thus also, it seems to me, we get over the difficulty about the personality, whether human or divine, and the pre-existence. (i) The old solution, the *enhypostasia*, an impersonal human nature gaining personality in being assumed by the personal Logos, is replaced without violence to the conception of humanity. Man becomes more and more personal in his development, and achieves full personality as he becomes united to the perfect personal God. (ii) So also the difficulty about the consciousness of pre-existence is relieved (John viii, 58 ; xvii, 5), if it is not conceived as a continuous memory, but as an intuition, coming to the Incarnate when the world's hostility increasingly challenged His claims, even as the certainty of the eternal relation of His Sonship to the Fatherhood of God.¹ When we no longer “ see as in a mirror,

¹ While claiming that the Fourth Gospel continues historical reminiscences, I fully admit that these references to pre-existence may belong to the evangelist's interpretation more probably than to his record. See *The Beloved Disciple*, pp. 117–18.

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in a riddle" (1 Corinthians xiii, 12, R.V. marg.) and know, even as we are known, shall we discover that we, too, have been elected to sonship by the eternal Father (Romans viii, 29)? This Christology, the fruit of many years' study and reflection, I venture to submit as a solution in modern terms and modes of thinking of the problem of the divine and the human nature in the unity of the person, conserving all for which Christian faith need contend. There was the constant presence and activity of the whole Godhead, Father and Spirit as well as Son, at every stage of the human development as complete as that stage allowed. Thus can God be thought of as more completely in Christ than the juxtaposition of two divergent natures in one person as abstract unity would allow. If we can catch even glimpses of the glory of God in Christ, must not contemplation and interpretation pass into adoration, for "of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever, Amen" (Romans xi, 36).

5

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

(1) The interest of the Ancient Church was in Christology, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was formulated only because heresy in

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support of the Arian and also of the Athanasian contention as in Macedonius compelled the Church to express itself, and so to express itself that the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of the Spirit should be symmetrical. There was no independent interest, and no complementary development in the teaching about the Spirit. God's Presence and activity as Spirit in the inner life of the believer did not raise any such serious problem as the relation of the divine and the human nature in the unity of the person of Christ. The counterpart to the Christological controversies is to be seen in Augustinianism and Pelagianism, Calvinism and Arminianism, where the crucial problem was the relation of divine omnipotence to human liberty ; on this enough has already been said. In the ecclesiastical dogma the Holy Spirit as well as the Son, incarnate in Christ, came to be included with the Father in the one Godhead. The Holy Scriptures fortunately relieved the perplexity of the theologians to find a term for a distinction which they had not thought out by providing two terms, which enabled them to distinguish at least verbally the relation of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit to the Father ; these were *generation* (John i, 14 ; iii, 16) and *procession* (xv, 26), so that even where absolute equality is affirmed, the Father remains the primary

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aspect of deity, and a relative dependence and subordination of Son and Spirit must be recognized. Into the schism, between East and West about the *filioque* clause, in which the West affirms the procession of the Spirit from the Son as well as the Father, and the East denies, it is not necessary for our purpose to enter. If we are to be guided by the historical revelation in answering such a question, the modified Greek formula, *from the Father through the Son* seems more accurate. The Son did not claim equality with the Father, but confessed dependence and subordination; and the operation of the Spirit was, as we have seen, dependent on, and subordinate to, the work of Christ. Assuming the correctness of the conclusion reached in a previous lecture, we should not identify the Holy Spirit with the Living Christ, but recognize a difference of function and of mode of operation. We should accordingly accept the trinitarian, or tri-unitarian witness of the New Testament to God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(2) While Christian faith may well be content with the *economic* trinity, and seek to penetrate no further into the mystery of God, Christian thought must feel compelled as already shown to trace back the temporal manifestation to the eternal reality; and for many thinkers a

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trinitarian or tri-unitarian conception of God appears more satisfying to thought than a unitarian.

(a) On the speculative aspects of the matter only a brief reference is here possible. The combination of divine transcendence and immanence, of divine self-communication and self-conservation, of *Kenōsis* and *Plērōsis* presents difficulties unless we can conceive God as difference-in-unity, difference not dividing unity nor unity confusing difference. Again the conception of the divine self-consciousness presents a problem; man's consciousness is of ego and non-ego; is there in God object as well as subject, and is the contrast as real, even if within the divine consciousness, as that of ego and non-ego? A self-contemplating God seems too poor a conception for the fullness of divine reality; and a God who needs a world for an object becomes as dependent on that world as it is on Him. The problem is presented in its acutest form, when we conceive God as love, since self-love even in human personality does not give adequate content to love. Here we seem to get as near to an analogy as our human thought is ever likely to do. If God be subject loving and object loved, and yet one in the common life of love, we can think of Him as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some thinkers object that on this analogy we can get only a

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duality of the subject and the object. But here it seems to me the fact of human personality, because to our knowledge real only as incarnate, is apt to mislead us. Even in human relations at their very best is there not the unity of a common life transcending the separate lives of the loving and the loved, and making each greater? We speak of *esprit de corps*, of the character of a nation, the *genius* or the *ethos* of a people, the spiritual unity (*Koinōnia*) of the Church of Christ. Is this to be dismissed as mere metaphor, because there is no corresponding physical fact? If an analogy from nature may be excused: when two elements are brought together in a compound, something new emerges; water has qualities which we do not detect in the hydrogen or the oxygen. Is the spiritual less real than the material? In God must not the unity be as real as the difference, and conserved in the difference? Probably we can go no further than this in trying to think of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Corinthians ii, 10, 11).

(b) I need not labour the familiar consideration that for those who formed the creeds the word *person* had not the definite meaning which it has for us; and if we apply the word in the sense in which we now use it, we run the risk of thinking of God not as personal unity, but as a society of individual Gods. Much of the

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common language of piety and ritual is tritheistic. I cannot follow Dr. Tennant who suggests that we should accept this social instead of the personal unity. I must at all cost preserve my monotheism ; for me the absolute unity of God is fundamental, and I can recognize no differences which divide that unity.

I wish we could rid theology of the word *person*, or retain it only on condition of recognizing that in this connection it does not and cannot mean individual. *Mode* seems to say too little as to the differences within the Godhead as *person* says too much. Till we can find some more satisfactory formulation, it may be wise to confine ourselves to the New Testament language—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, always, however, remembering that we are dealing with one God, who is by His very nature God alone. If in the Church through the Spirit's gracious operations believers realized more fully their spiritual unity in Christ as His body and members one of another (1 Corinthians xii, 29), and as being built up into one temple of God (Ephesians ii, 21, 22), and thus the revelation by the Spirit became more complete, the unity of God as Father and Son in the Spirit might cease to bewilder, and become a blessing (1 Corinthians xv, 28). Opposed as is my thinking to the Catholic views regarding Church,

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Clergy, and Sacraments, the reunion of the Christian Churches, not in an invisible, but a visible unity (a universally recognized ministry and universally accepted sacraments) is for me a necessary condition of the full temporal manifestation of the eternal reality of Father, Son, and Spirit as one God alone.

(c) Recent thought seems to me to be pointing at least in the direction in which more adequate categories may be found. Sociology is teaching us that society is not a mere collection of individuals, but as it develops becomes more and more a community, a *Koinōnia* to recall the New Testament word, with common interest, purpose, and activity, thus assuming not the unity of a super-person, but a personal unity. So psychology is teaching us what the New Testament has already taught us—that the individual depends on, develops within, has obligations to, the society of which he is a member—in other words, that man is *social personality*; that personality can be realized only in society, and society realizes its ends the more individuals find a community of personal interests, in other words, that love is supreme reality for God and man. These two conceptions of personality as social, and society as personal, though they may still appear to diverge, are truly converging; and it may be as personality and

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as society realize their common ideal, humanity will offer us a more adequate analogy of the reality of God.

(3) Christian theology is for me nothing else or less than this trinitarian or tri-unitarian doctrine of the Godhead, for all it has to say about man and sin, grace and faith, duty and destiny, falls within God's relation to man, and man's relation to God. As we must not believe anything about God inconsistent with the revelation of the Father in the Son, and may dare to believe all that is consistent, so the whole range of theology must be simplified, purified, and transfigured by that revelation; and all our thinking must come to the judgment of Christ the Truth, the Word of God. The poet expresses what the progress of Christian theology, amid all critical and constructive changes of thought, should be :—

“ That one face far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Becomes my Universe that feels and knows ! ”

CONCLUSION

APPLICATION TO THEOLOGY OF CONCEPTION OF GOD

Revelation and Inspiration—God's Sovereignty and Man's Dependence : (a) The Sovereignty of God Fatherly ; (b) The Rejection of Calvinism—Sin and Salvation : (a) Rejection of Doctrine of Original Sin and Total Depravity ; (b) Rejection of Doctrine of Penal Substitution—Duty and Destiny : (a) Freedom in Service ; (b) The Larger Hope.

In my theological progress I have been guided, as I have already indicated, by two principles—one positive and one negative :—

(a) Theology proper is the doctrine of God, and as regards man and the world only that matter is to be included which belongs to the relation of God thereto. The nature and the purpose of the world must be discussed only as disclosing the mind, heart, and will of God. Man's duty and destiny come for consideration only as God therein reveals His character and purpose. We must rid ourselves of much which was included in the old systematic theology, because it happened to be mentioned in the Bible. The *formal principle* is not the whole Bible, but only the Word of God in the Bible, God's self-disclosure for man's highest good.

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(b) For Christian theology nothing can be included which is inconsistent with the revelation of God as Father in Our Lord Jesus Christ, and we may include all that seems legitimate and necessary inference from that revelation, e.g. as regards man's destiny. We need not confine ourselves, as some would have us, to the teaching of Jesus, for the prophets were preparatory for Him, the apostles are explicative of Him, and He Himself regarded His vocation as fulfilled in His Cross and consequent Resurrection. The revelation of God in Christ is our *material principle*: that does not displace the Reformation principle *sola gratia sola fide*, which is more adequate than that of *justification by faith*, but sets it in its complete context. I have in the previous lectures tried to expound this Christian conception of God; in this *Conclusion* I venture to indicate how by the application of this material principle the whole range of my theology has been transformed. Let me apply it to Revelation and Inspiration, God's sovereignty and man's dependence, sin and salvation, duty and destiny.

(1) In revelation we may include all self-disclosures of God in nature and history, reason and conscience, experience and character. If God be Father, He wants, not to hide Himself from, but to make Himself known to, man. And, if men are the children of God, they are

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made capable of receiving that knowledge. If this relationship means affinity of nature and community of life between men and God, then revelation is no strange thing, and the inspiration of men, which is the divine action that enables men to receive and communicate the revelation, is no suppression of human personality, but its fulfilment. To be aware of God's presence, receptive of His grace and truth, and responsive to His love is not an abnormal condition, but the normal for man according to the will of God. Theories of inspiration, apart from the interpretation of this immediate contact and intimate communion of God and man, are artificial, and can only lead theology astray. It is true that this relation is not uniform, but varies according to time and place, history and experience, inheritance and environment; all that conditions man's personal life conditions his relation to God—hence the variety of religious beliefs, rites, and institutions. Besides, we may recognize a selective action of God, not for damning or saving, but for use and service: not all men are equipped and called to be in the same degree saints, or sages. Without denying God's universal presence, interest, and activity in the religions of mankind, we may recognize a divine selection of the Hebrew nation, and of prophets within that nation for the distinctive function of being the channel of His progressive

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revelation of Himself as the sole Holy and Gracious God, as a preparation for His final full self-manifestation under human conditions in Jesus Christ. All revelation of God to men must be by *inspired* men, and its consummation is Incarnation: God manifest as man. The value of the revelation is determined by the approach in truth and grace to that Incarnation; and the measure of the inspiration is the receptivity and responsiveness of man to God by His Spirit. As man is sinful, his capacity to receive and respond to God is hindered, if not entirely destroyed; and God's action must be redeeming and reconciling as well as revealing, in order that that capacity may be restored. We do not minimize the supreme value of the Christian revelation and redemption by not severing it from, but relating it to, God's universal Fatherhood, and his universal presence, interest, and activity.

(2) That God is God, and man is man, is the fundamental truth of their relation: the recognition of God's absolute sovereignty and man's entire dependence is the inmost core of religion; God's all-sufficiency and man's utter insufficiency is the heart of all faith.

(a) In asserting man's liberty and responsibility, morality in contrast to religion may assert man's independence, and limit God's sovereignty; but that religion must correct, not by asserting

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a sovereignty which involves a dependence in man that in him excludes liberty and responsibility, but by conceiving that sovereignty as the Father's, not the exercise of compelling power, but of constraining love and enabling grace. I have already in the last lecture tried to get rid of the false ways of thinking which have led to controversy.

(b) All I need add here is that to assert such a relation between God as Father and man as child is not to relapse into Calvinism. I do not envy the man who to-day can avow himself as a Calvinist, since it was this type of theology which not only turned my mind for a time away from the ministry, but almost drove me into entire unbelief. Does God elect some to salvation and predestinate others to damnation? Does He give His Spirit only to the elect, and withhold His Spirit from others? Does He use the devil as His agent to secure their damnation? Does He, to ensure the salvation of the elect, and them alone, make His grace irresistible, and provide for the perseverance of the saints? Did God decree the Fall?¹ Unless a man accepts these propositions, he is mistaken in calling himself a Calvinist. Recognizing the personal greatness of Calvin, and the historical value of his influence, I have left Calvinism far behind, and, remembering Lot's wife (Luke xvii, 32) I am

¹ See Fisher's *History of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 299-301.

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not looking back to a theology which I hope is doomed to abandonment. May I add that it is surely only a heart not fully changed by the love of Christ which can find more assurance of salvation in an individual election by the divine sovereignty, which excludes others, rather than in a universal love which will seek and save the lost (Luke xix, 10). It is claimed that Calvinism made strong men ; but did it make them tender, meek, pitiful, as Jesus Himself was? We may hold what truth there is in Calvinism, and regret its errors ; but then we should not talk of a return to Calvin. Should a man call himself a Calvinist, if he does not accept Calvin's system as a whole ?

(3) The supreme instance of God's sovereignty and man's dependence is in man's salvation from sin by God's sacrifice in Christ.

(a) The reality of man's sinfulness, the necessity of his salvation and the sufficiency of Christ as divine Saviour can be affirmed with conviction, gratitude, and adoration without relapsing to any doctrine of Adam's Fall. The third chapter of Genesis is not history, but myth, and to make it the basis of evangelical theology is either stupid or dishonest. We cannot now hold that one man's transgression had as its consequence the original sin and the total depravity of all his descendants ; we cannot hold that babes are damned for their share in

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Adam's guilt before they have themselves sinned. On the other hand the facts of man's sinfulness are patent, whatever be the origin of sin in the race. Man has an animal ancestry, instincts, appetites, impulses, which in proper subordination to his higher endowments of reason, conscience, liberty, and responsibility as man, are natural and legitimate, but, insubordinate, lead him into sinning, and persisted in, may enslave him to sin. The evolution of the race has taken a wrong direction, and that wrong direction is taken in individual development, owing not only to the animal ancestry, but to racial heredity and social inheritance. Enough liberty remains for responsibility, as in each individual there is an original dower of promise and potency. How under the old view of man's total enslavement to sin and participation in Adam's guilt any responsibility could be asserted I cannot understand. Only an arbitrary omnipotence could secure salvation. I hold that this modern view takes man's need no less sincerely, but can regard the possibility of his salvation more hopefully. We may believe that in each man there remains enough of his original dower as man, made by God for God, not merely for self-discovery and self-recovery, but for the reception of the grace of God, and the response of faith. *Sola gratia sola fide*. Nothing permanently valuable in the Reformation

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theology need be lost in a modern restatement of the Gospel.

(b) Congruous with this conception of man's sin and God's grace was the conception of salvation. One may say without injustice that the religious aspect—man's fellowship with God as redeemed and reconciled—and the moral aspect—man's likeness to God in being sanctified—were thrown into the background, and the legal was thrown to the front, as the stress on *justification by faith* shows. The great reformers themselves largely escaped that one-sidedness; but their theology allowed smaller men to become lop-sided, as later Protestant dogmatics became. To only one consequence of that legalism do I now direct attention—the emphasis on the death of Christ as *penal substitution*. While Calvin shows his sobriety when he refuses to regard the cry of dereliction on the Cross as proof of God's actual desertion of the Crucified, yet he abandons that quality when he suggests an equivalence between what Christ suffered, and what man shall suffer as eternal penalty of their sin.¹ There must be law in any home; a father ought to rule. God is holy love, and His love is the communication of His holiness to men. His holiness expresses itself in both the natural and the moral order of the world as righteousness, as reward or punishment, as

¹ See Denney's *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 49.

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the inevitable consequences of conduct: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Galatians vi, 7). If God be the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of His universe, by describing these consequences as *natural* we do not relieve Him of responsibility for this sequence of cause and effect. To punish the guiltless for the guilty is not righteousness, although the innocent may suffer with the wicked in the solidarity of the family, nation or race, and the holy may willingly offer himself in self-sacrifice for the sinner. Without unutterable confusion of moral distinctions, the innocent cannot be held guilty, nor punished, although vicarious love may share the shame and sorrow of the loved. We must banish the analogy of the law-courts, though these even do not lend support to the theory of penal substitution. Holy love is the only key that will unlock the door for the understanding of the Cross. If one may dare to modify the parable of the Prodigal Son, it is the Elder Brother who leaves the comfort and security of the home, and in the far country shares the loss and misery of the prodigal that He may bring him back. It is the greatness of the sacrifice of God in Christ which measures the severity of God's reaction against sin and the urgency of His rescue of the sinner. Conscience recognizes the necessity of God's

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judgment on sin, even as faith claims the certainty and the sufficiency of the forgiveness. I have already written so often and so much on this theme that I need not pursue it further here, as my object is to show that the truth of God's Fatherhood must be applied to Christ's death as not the purchase price of God's love, but as the saving sacrifice of that love itself.

(4) Because it is holy love which saves, it saves not only from the guilt and the penalty of sin, but also from the bondage and the love of sin unto freedom and blessedness in holy love for God.

(a) The motive and the method of salvation are congruous. Hence, as I have already indicated, and I need not elaborate the matter any further, believers are no longer under law but under grace (Romans vi, 15); duty is no longer a heavy burden or a grievous yoke, but a light burden and an easy yoke (Matthew xi, 29-30). And the more the motive of the constraining love of Christ prevails, the more complete is the freedom from Law, and the more intense the delight in the service of God. The life in the Spirit is the fulfilment of the human personality. Legalism and its frequent companion Pharisaism are among the old things which have passed away in the new creation (2 Corinthians v, 17). Luther did show some appreciation of the freedom of the Christian

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man, but that can scarcely be claimed for Calvin and the Puritans, who lived too much in the Old Testament. It is because the Law-giver and Judge has obscured the Father that so many Christians are still slaves more than sons. The Church in its enslavement to creeds, rituals, polities, traditions, and conventions needs to give heed to Paul's summons: "With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (Galatians v, 1).

(b) As a man lives this life of freedom in the Spirit of God does he rise to the eternal life, and is raised above this world of space and time, and so becomes a sharer in God's eternity for which death has no dread, because it has no longer any power: "Absent from the body, at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians v, 8). I am convinced that the doctrine of eternal punishment must be abandoned if we apply the truth of God's Fatherhood to man's future destiny. No father would keep his child in existence for endless torture. Since I cannot believe that man's probation is limited to man's present life, I hold that there will be continuity of development between this life and the next. "He that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," even as "he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians vi, 8). "We must

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all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians v, 10). "Everyone who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew x, 32-3). I do not quote these words as proof-texts for a doctrine to be accepted on their authority; but as describing what seems to me the only sequence which the moral conscience and the religious consciousness can approve. There is and there must be divine judgment on human conduct and character. What it seems to me the truth of God's Fatherhood forbids our affirming is that for the wicked and unbelieving it is final, that the judgment is retributive only and cannot be redemptive. Pictorial as the language is, that the Judge is the Saviour emboldens us to hope. When Judas "repented himself" his fellow conspirators mocked him, and left him to his despair (Matthew xxvii, 3-4). When "Jesus looked upon Peter" there began the repentance which led to his restoration (Luke xxii, 61). Self-discovery in the judgment of Christ may mean self-recovery by the grace of Christ.

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“Thine is Judaea’s law with love beside,
The truth that censures, and the grace that saves.”

If the parable of the Last Judgment in Matthew xxv, 31-46, applies to the *nations*, who have never known Christ in the flesh, Christ here so identified himself with men, that it is the treatment of men which is the standard of judgment; and here, too, this sentence may be a summons to change. The possibility of repentance for the unbelieving hereafter does not involve any uncertainty regarding the blessedness of believers, for we may rest assured that the Father will provide for His loving and obedient children such mansions in His heavenly home (John xiv, 1-2) as will expose none to the peril of a lapse, but give all the conditions for progress in holy love. I cannot, however, confidently affirm that all shall at last be saved; sin may in some resist to the end. Only grace through faith and not omnipotence in compulsion can save persons, and not puppets. We need not assume the annihilation of the finally impenitent, if there are any; I am inclined to hold the theory of conditional immortality in the context of the assurance that God will do all He can do to save. A physical analogy holds here. The organism which is adapted to its environment survives; that which is not so

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adapted perishes. God is the environment in which alone human personality can find its fulfilment ; resistance to that environment must mean lapse of that personality. But if God be Father as well as Creator, may we not dare to believe that He would not have assumed the responsibility of creating, had He not in His Fatherhood the resources of holy love, truth and grace, judgment and forgiveness, which will finally redeem and reconcile the world to Himself? Those who quote Romans ix in support of the doctrine of election, should follow this argument to its conclusion in chapter xi. " God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all " (verse 32). A creed which begins in a benediction will end in a doxology.

Name of the Father ! pledge that we
Our inmost being draw from Thee ;
Name of the Son ! whereby we know
The Father's love to man below :
Name of the Spirit ! blessed sign
That now we share the life divine.

E. S. A. 1841.

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