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THE GOSPEL
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THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW WORLD

A STUDY IN THE CHRISTIAN
DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

By
OLIVER CHASE QUICK

LATE REGIUS PROFESSOR
OF DIVINITY OXFORD

With a Prefatory Memoir by
THE MOST REVEREND
THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY



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INTRODUCTION

THE lectures on the doctrine of the Atonement which form the substance of this book were part of a course on doctrinal subjects given at Oxford by Dr. Quick while he held the Regius Professorship of Divinity. They were accepted for publication only a few days before his death and have been set up in print from his manuscript lecture notes. He had expected to be able to correct and revise them in proof himself, but they must now appear in the form in which they were originally delivered. Neither the few cross-headings which he had already inserted in the first lecture nor the references to unpublished lectures in the same course have been removed.

I should like to take this opportunity of expressing my warmest thanks to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his kindness in writing the prefatory memoir and appreciation of my husband's work, and to Dr. Hodgson, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford for the ready help and advice which he has given in preparing this book for publication.

F. WINIFRED QUICK

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MEMOIR

By THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

I FIRST met Oliver Quick in January 1905. He had come from Harrow to Oxford as a freshman at Corpus in the previous October. At the same moment I had migrated from Balliol to Queen's where I was to spend six delightful years as Fellow and Lecturer in Philosophy.

Two friends of mine—H. W. Garrod, afterwards Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and John L. Stocks, late Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University, were taking a small reading party to Lyme Regis and asked me to join them there. We had a most hilarious time, and I was at once fascinated by the eagerness with which Oliver threw himself into whatever was going on, but especially any kind of argument. He was, of course, little more than a schoolboy, but his mind already showed that capacity for clean-cut distinctions and subtle analysis which are, I think, the chief features of his theological work.

From that time onwards I saw him with increasing frequency, which culminated in his membership of the Commission on Doctrine and his membership of the Northern group of that Commission to which he belonged as Professor at Durham.

During the first two years of the Commission's activity, an attempt had been made to go forward with the work by means of committees chosen specially for the handling of each subject, but it naturally happened that those chosen in this

way were specialists in that subject, with the result that the drafts which they prepared had not been under the criticism of folk whose special interests lay elsewhere. It seemed desirable to secure that each group preparing material should be, as far as possible, representative of all the shades of opinion in the Commission, and it also became apparent when we looked into it, that three geographical groups could be formed—one based on Oxford, one on Cambridge, and one on the whole area of northern England.

This Northern group used to meet in my house, first at Manchester, then at Bishopthorpe, twice a year, and each time for three nights, giving us two full days of discussion. Oliver was quite invariable in his attendance, and through those years I was thus seeing him constantly at regular intervals, and in connection with the subjects that drew out the very best of his mind. At meals, and during any other intervals in the discussion, we relaxed into complete frivolity in which Oliver joined with as much distinction as in the really close theological arguments of our sessions.

Besides these two meetings of the Northern Group each year, there was the annual meeting of the full Commission from Monday afternoon to Saturday morning towards the end of September. Here Oliver showed just the same characteristics with the addition of enthusiastic, if somewhat erratic, participation in a "four" at lawn tennis which we managed to arrange on any fine days in most years. But though his help was invaluable in the full Commission, he did not shine there with quite so constant a brilliance as in the Northern Group. The larger numbers led him to make his speeches a little more formal in shape, and he was always put off his stride by any interruption, which it was harder to prevent in the larger gathering where each member was

eager to be sure that he understood each sentence as it was uttered.

His effect upon the Commission was extremely great and the value of his contribution can be, to some extent, appreciated by readers of his admirable book *Doctrines of the Creed* which may be described as what the Report of the Commission would have been, for a very large part of its contents, if he had written it and no one had been allowed to modify his draft. But his combination of close and clear thought with immense capacity for friendship and reckless enjoyment of intellectual nonsense such as we indulged in during all intervals, contributed a great deal to the atmosphere of intimate co-operation, which made possible the production of a Report which all were glad to issue.

There were times when the biting quality of his tongue would of course have pained, if he had not been so careful about the company in which he gave it freedom. I remember a day in the great Missionary Conference in Jerusalem in 1928 when one of its leading members thought we stood in need of uplift ; he accordingly addressed us in words and tones designed to produce that effect. As we went out through the door I found Oliver close to me, saying in the iciest tones : " When X speaks like that it becomes important to distinguish between the things which he says *although* they are not true and the things which he says *because* they are not true."

That memory recalls the valuable distinction between " reasons " and " causes " for beliefs that any man may hold, both covered by the apparently innocent word " because ". This was a favourite theme, and was specifically handled in his lectures at Sion College in 1931, published under the title *The Ground of Faith and the Chaos*

of Thought. But the same analytical exactitude had shown itself much earlier, perhaps first in full vigour in his Paddock lectures *Liberalism, Modernism and Tradition* (1922) and in *Catholic and Protestant Elements in Christianity* (1924). In both of these books clear analysis is the very essence of the argument. The result is, indeed, suggestively constructive, because the analysis shows so clearly how the distinguished elements supplement each other. But even here his own personal convictions are manifest and control the treatment of the various currents of thought which he defines by distinguishing them from one another.

It was always a delight to me to watch his mind at work. I think he shared my temperamental disposition, fortified by the fact that my master in logic was Edward Caird, to start from the assumption that every conviction strongly held is at least partly true, and that, as a rule, our wisdom is to find out, if we can, where this partial truth fits into the whole fabric; further, that if two parties of good and sincere men differ violently, like Catholics and Protestants at the Reformation, it is almost certain that some misunderstanding, or some error common to both, underlies the difference. But with him this was secondary or tertiary. His first concern was to separate the tangled threads by clear analysis.

Facing the title page of this book is a list of his published works with the date of each. Of these, two stand out by reason of their size and scope—*The Christian Sacraments* and *Doctrines of the Creed*. The former is an extended treatment of one subject; the latter is a survey of the whole range of Christian belief as articulated in the Apostles' Creed but grasped in a unitary comprehension. Together these two books show his special qualities in the highest degree. No

one who has read *The Christian Sacraments* can forget the disentangling of the "instrumental" and the "symbolic" followed by the weaving together of these in a pattern where each is necessary to the other yet neither loses its identity. Similarly readers of *Doctrines of the Creed* find that they have both gained a fresh understanding of many of the "articles" regarded separately and also a new sense of the "body" of belief which is "articulated" in those "articles" so that each has its place alike in relation to the other articles and to the whole.

His theology and his religion were admirably integrated. He did not start with a "religious experience" of which he sought in his theology to give a rational account; nor did he start from an accepted system of thought which he endeavoured progressively to appropriate in "experience". He sometimes said that he had never had a "religious experience", and in the misleading sense of that phrase popularized by William James this is probably true. But of course his whole experience was religious, because it was his apprehension of the world as God has made it and therein also of the God who made it. For him, to think at all was to theologize, for God was in all his thought. This does not mean that he was preter-naturally solemn; no one was so gay or laughed so helplessly. He bore out the remark of Neville Talbot when a group of people were asking why modern Christians are so often gloomy, while one mark of the early Church was its irrepressible joy: "Oh, I suppose if we believed in God we should all be as merry as grigs." But while full of humour Oliver was never irresponsible; it is God's world, so we ought to enjoy it, and in fact it is very enjoyable; but there is the divine purpose to be found and served everywhere, always, and in all relations.

His life gave him many opportunities of contact with the world at different points. He was Head of the School at Harrow ; he took a full share of undergraduate life at Oxford ; he was a curate at Beckenham ; he was Vice-Principal of Leeds Clergy School, and later on the staff of St. Martin-in-the-Fields with Dick Sheppard. As resident chaplain at Lambeth with Archbishop Davidson he saw deep into problems of administration and the relating of principles to practical possibilities. He was a Chaplain to the Forces in the first World War, and was associated with his former Principal, B. K. Cunningham, at the School for Chaplains at St. Omer. He was then a Vicar—of Kenley in Surrey—and thereafter Canon of Newcastle, Carlisle, St. Paul's, Durham and Oxford—the last two as Professor of Divinity. Such a career gives a man a wide range of human associations and calls for a capacity for wide sympathy.

That these opportunities were fully used is proved by the wide circle of real and close friendships formed in every place where he worked. And this must be the closing note of any sketch of his work and personality. He was a theologian of penetrating insight and wide comprehension ; he was a man whose whole attitude and every reaction were governed by Christian faith so that he had no “ religious experiences ” because all his experience was religious ; and more than all he was a loving and lovable human being. He is one of those for whose friendship all of us who knew him will thank God while life lasts.

WILLIAM CANTUAR :

March 29th, 1944.

THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW WORLD

I. THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

RELIGION AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

THE problem of evil is commonly, and in a sense rightly, held to furnish the strongest of all arguments against belief in God. Yet it is no less true, as Berdyaev has shown, that belief in God is both historically and philosophically bound up with the problem of evil ; since it is the consciousness of evil that has from the beginning stimulated man to feel after God. It is the experience of evil that conditions all man's beliefs in the supernatural and all his hopes of salvation.

Objectively considered, man's consciousness differs from that of all other animals in two main respects : first, in its fundamental discontent with the present conditions of existence, and secondly in its notions of God, gods, or supernatural powers. The problem of evil is the result of the first, religion of the second, and the two are inseparably inter-connected.

A biologist might say that man is restless because he has to live by his wits. His wits enable him to do much more than live ; yet he remains unsatisfied by the best his wits can do. Religion originates in man's conviction that he cannot get what he wants without obtaining the aid, or at least placating the hostility, of supernatural powers. And, if in an age of enlightenment man rids himself of all belief in the supernatural, his restlessness and discontent only increase, until he wages holy and murderous wars against his own species of a sort which has no parallel in the animal world. It certainly seems that something has gone radically wrong with man.

Three facts stand out clearly from the tragic history. The problem of evil is the result of man's unsatisfied needs. It is his unsatisfied needs which have impelled man to believe in God. To renounce belief in God brings no satisfaction at all.

The Christian contends that the fundamental cause of man's dissatisfaction, and therefore of the problem of evil, lies in man's own sin ; and that the only hope of true and final peace lies in God's forgiveness and redemption. These lectures will be concerned with the exposition of this Christian doctrine. Increasingly to-day men are being driven to consider that there is more to be said for it than they suppose. Perhaps after all the problem of evil is more a reason for believing in God than a reason against it.

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of evil has two aspects, a practical and a theoretic. The practical problem is to escape from or to conquer evil. The theoretic problem is to determine its true nature and origin. And of these two problems the theoretic is necessarily subordinate to the practical. Theoretic as well as practical reasons can be given for this subordination. Practically of course it would be waste of time to enquire into the nature and origin of evil, if the enquiry were in no way to assist salvation from evil. But even theoretically it seems that we cannot know or recognize evil as such at all except in relation to some effort to escape from or overcome it, which is itself essentially practical. Herein, it may be said—and the contention is both true and important—good stands in a different relation from evil to theory, i.e. *Θεωρία*. For good, in the form of beauty, can be appreciated in pure contemplation, which is not itself a practical activity. It is a mistake, however common the mistake may be, to confuse the pure appreciation of value with any kind of practice. On the other hand to contemplate evil as such without practical reactions would only be possible for a soul which is itself wholly evil. And such

a soul is by its very nature debarred from knowing the true nature or reality either of evil or of good.

It may even be urged that it is essentially wrong, if not impossible, to regard evil as such theoretically at all, and on that ground to deny the very existence of a theoretic problem of evil for anyone who thinks rightly. But this contention goes too far. For it belongs to our rational nature that we must seek to study and understand even that which we would effectively destroy, or escape. And this study demands not only a suspension or temporary inhibition of the practical activity of destroying or escaping, but even a positive and attentive interest in that which is ultimately to be destroyed or escaped. The mind is thus obliged to examine and interest itself theoretically in what it would combat practically. Obvious illustrations of this truth are to be found in the treatment of disease both by the physician and the bacteriologist, and of sin both by the pastor and by the moral theologian. And it is in this way that a genuinely theoretic problem concerning the nature and origin of evil itself arises, though it vanishes or becomes meaningless, if it be not ultimately subordinated to the practical problem of salvation. If the necessity of this subordination be forgotten, the practical reaction to evil as such may be not so much inhibited as destroyed by the study of the theoretic problem ; and in that case evil ceases to be recognized as evil, with the result that the mind is rendered incapable of discerning the truth about it.

EVIL AND CREATION

To the Christian the problem of the origin of evil may appear at first sight to be part of the problem of creation. But reflection shows him that it is not so. The two problems are quite distinct. Creative power as such is good, not evil, and everything, in so far as it is created, must be good. The problem of creation sets the question how and in what sense it can be intelligibly affirmed that the eternal and perfect

goodness of God has brought into being a world characterized by temporality, finitude, and development, and therefore, not by evil, but by imperfection. I have already suggested in previous lectures that the answer to this question lies in some doctrine of divine self-limitation. But no such answer can account for the origin of evil. For the root of evil, as distinct from mere imperfection, lies in *agency*, as the parable of the wheat and tares makes clear. And it is the nature of evil agency not to be creative, but to destroy or pervert some already created and still imperfect good. Thus the problem of the origin of evil, considered theoretically, is a separate problem from that of creation.

From the Christian point of view it is the essential error of monism in all its forms, even in those which contain elements of dualism, to confound the distinction between these two problems, and thereby to reject the Christian doctrines both of creation and of redemption. The confusion has its root in the identification of evil, in its essential and original nature, with the imperfection which necessarily belongs to all beings which are finite and in process of development and change. Once this identification is made, the origin of evil and the origin of finite things are seen as merely different aspects of a single problem. Such is evidently the teaching of Hegelian idealism. But the influence of this same error upon philosophy can be traced from the earliest times ; it is already apparent in Plato and Aristotle, from whom it passed into the thought of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Consider the theory of evil suggested by Plato's Republic. This theory is based upon extreme intellectualism. The contemplative knowledge attained by the philosopher is man's supreme good ; the only object of genuine knowledge is being and is found to consist in a hierarchy of changeless and eternal ideas or forms determined throughout by the idea of the good which as the ultimate ground of all reality is itself "beyond being", ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας. The changing,

phenomenal world of our primary experience is the object not of knowledge but of opinion, *δόξα*, because, being changeable, it is mixed with non-being and is in part illusory. Error or defect in knowledge appears as the *fons et origo* of all evil.

The obvious weakness in this intellectualist theory is its failure to determine whether the defect in our knowledge causes the appearances of the phenomenal world, or whether the phenomenal world, by illuding our minds, is the cause of the defect in our knowledge. If the former, the phenomenal world does not exist and it is impossible to see what it is that illudes our minds. If the latter, the phenomenal world must exist, and it is impossible to see what made it *become* or come into being. In either case, the origin both of evil and of the things that appear remains inexplicable. To reduce all evil to intellectual evil or error only makes the existence of evil as error harder to account for, and not a whit less real.¹ Plato attempted other solutions of the problem than that suggested in the *Republic*; but none of them is satisfactory.

Aristotle avoided some of the difficulties of Platonism by frankly positing a dual basis for the reality which we experience. At one end of the scale of reality there is God, the one perfect being, eternally enjoying his own perfection: at the other end there is primary matter, utterly imperfect and merely potential being, which is capable of some measure of actualization through receiving a form which makes it become something definite. Change and becoming are the process of this defective actualization. It is a real process set in motion by the attraction which God's perfection has for the imperfect world: the cause of it is the desire for God which pervades all things. Evil then appears simply as the incompleteness or imperfection which is the

¹ Generally speaking all theories which suggest that evil in the ultimate analysis is illusion are sufficiently met by the retort that the fact that the mind is illuded is not itself illusion and therefore, according to the theory, cannot be evil.

negative aspect of all becoming. It is not mere illusion ; it is not rooted in ignorance or error. Yet it is nothing positive or actual ; for everything, in so far as it attains to actual being, is good. Its ultimate cause is the inherently defective being of primary matter which is the stuff of things and limits, while it makes possible, their attainment of actual perfection. According to Aristotle the inherent defects of matter account for a certain element of irrationality in all things.

Whatever be the merits of Aristotle's theory of evil, when compared with Plato's, it clearly denies both that the world is altogether God's creation and that anything in it can be wholly redeemed. The highest gospel Aristotle has for man is to bid him *ἐφ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται ἀθανατίζειν*.

In St. Augustine's theory of evil we need only notice the curious inconsistency between the doctrine of evil as mere negation or defect which he derived from Greek philosophy, and the doctrine of evil as very positive sin, which he learned from the Bible.

St. Thomas Aquinas's teaching, which has become the orthodoxy of Western Catholicism, requires further examination. Its basis is Aristotelian ; but it seeks to adapt and amend Aristotelianism so as to produce a theory of evil which is consistent with Christianity. Christianity insists that everything in the world and even matter, in so far as it is the stuff of things, is the creation of God's perfect goodness. Accordingly St. Thomas cannot follow Aristotle in ascribing evil to the inherent defects of primary matter. He therefore emphasizes the doctrine that evil is not to be found in any mere absence of actual being or perfection, but only in the absence of some actuality or perfection which belongs to the full and proper nature of a particular thing, so that it may be said that the thing in question, in order to realize its own nature, ought to have had it. In other words evil is, not the mere absence, but the *privation* of actual being. Nevertheless, evil, thus identified with

privation, is nothing positive or actual : it remains no more than a certain kind of incompleteness or lack. By carefully defining the kind of lack which is evil, St. Thomas avoids the conclusion that evil is inherent in finitude. He succeeds in separating the origin or cause of finite things from the origin or cause of evil. Nevertheless, since evil for him is only a lack of being, he holds it both wrong and unnecessary to seek for any efficient cause of evil as such at all. According to him evil in finite things, unlike good and being, can only have an efficient cause (or indeed any cause at all) *per accidens*.¹ Thus the question, What actually brought evil into the created world ? is shown to be a mistaken question, which ought not to be asked.

This solution of the problem, for all its subtlety, is open to damaging objections both from the logical and from the Christian point of view.

(a) The logical objection may be stated thus. We must beware of confusing any particular defect or lack with the results of which it is the cause or condition *sine qua non*. A disease, such as an attack of influenza, may well be occasioned by a mere defect in bodily health which lowers the body's power of resistance. But it does not follow that the disease itself is a mere defect in health : on the contrary it is something positive. It would seem therefore that, according to St. Thomas, influenza is good in so far as it actually is influenza. If he would be logical, he must maintain that everything which we call actual "disease" is good in itself, and only evil in relation to the human body where it causes (as it is caused by) defect in health. But this seems too paradoxical to the plain reason of the ordinary man who speaks of a severe attack of influenza as a bad, not a good one.

Somewhat similar reasoning may be applied to the instruments which man himself fashions for evil purposes.

¹ *Summa Theologica*, Ia, Q. 49, Art. 1. "Malum secundum nullum modum habet causam, nisi per accidens."

Even if we grant for the sake of argument that it is mere defect in the virtues of justice and mercy which leads to the manufacture of instruments of torture, the instruments themselves are actual entities, and it seems almost impossible to hold that a thumb-screw is good in so far as it actually realizes the nature of a thumb-screw. We cannot speak of "a perfectly good thumb-screw" without a sense of oxymoron.

If we leave Christian theology out of account, it seems on the whole much more reasonable to say that certain existing things are evil in themselves and yet in certain relations may be productive of good, than to say that all existing things are good in themselves, but that some of them in certain relations are productive of evil.

The objections to St. Thomas's theory which may be urged from the standpoint of Christian theology are not less serious—even if some of them be regarded as *argumenta ad hominem*. They are principally three, and they are concerned respectively with the first creation, the new creation, and the final condition of man.

(i) Clearly, Adam as first created can have lacked nothing that belongs to the perfection of human nature. How then on St. Thomas's theory is his Fall to be accounted for? St. Thomas commits himself to the assertion *Malum quod in defectu actionis consistit semper causatur ex defectu agentis*.¹ But what defect can there have been in Adam to cause the action by which he fell?

(ii) How can St. Thomas's theory account for the fact that sinful man must be forgiven, converted, or created anew in order to be saved? If sin itself were a mere lack or privation, all that man could require for deliverance would be the supply of that which he lacks or has been deprived of. But the terms forgiveness, conversion, and new or fresh creation, imply something different in kind from the mere supply of a defect. If man needs forgiveness, his

¹ *Summa Theologica*, Ia, Q. 49, Art. 2. See also *ibidem*, Art. 1, ad. 3.

need is other than a mere lack, just as forgiveness is other than a mere gift of something which the recipient has not.

(iii) If all evil is privation of being, it follows that the greater the evil the less the being in the human soul. Would it not be logical to conclude that souls which are finally lost are annihilated? St. Thomas would reply, presumably, that, since the soul is immortal by nature, it can only be invaded by evil up to a certain point. The lost soul retains all that is necessary to its existence as that particular soul, while it is deprived of all other being and goodness. It is, however, difficult to see how the existence of the lost soul can be said to be in itself good and the soul good in so far as it exists. The argument that its existence is good as a manifestation of the divine justice in punishing sin hardly seems to meet the point, and it raises other difficulties as well which we shall have to discuss in connection with eschatology.

By way of comparison and contrast with St. Thomas it may be interesting to notice how two modern philosophers under the influence of Christianity have developed and modified the theory of evil which originated with the Greeks.

Berdyayev, in contrast with St. Thomas, develops the dualistic element in Aristotle. He allows a more positive character to evil while at the same time he regards it as a necessary constituent of the world created in space-time. His doctrine is in part explicable by his intense sensitiveness to the problem of pain. He finds the origin of evil in the inherent recalcitrance of the primary matter or potential being which is the uncreated raw material out of which God formed his creation. This element of potential recalcitrance in all potential being Berdyayev calls "meonic" freedom, and he finds in it the cause both of evil and of freewill in man. It follows from this metaphysical theory that God is not the absolute creator of the world, and that, if the doctrine of his omnipotent goodness is to be maintained, redemption

is a necessary consequence of creation, redemption being simply the end of the process which creation begins.

A. N. Whitehead is equally convinced that evil is inherent in the temporal world which the Christian calls "creation". "The ultimate evil" he writes "in the temporal world is deeper than any specific evil. It lies in the fact that the past fades, that time is a perpetual perishing. . . . In the temporal world, it is the empirical fact that process entails loss: the past is present under an abstraction. But there is no reason, of any ultimate metaphysical generality, why this should be the whole story. The nature of evil is that the characters of things are mutually obstructive."¹ According to Whitehead the essential activity of God in the world is one, not of creation, but of redemption or salvation, which he achieves through the operative growth of his own nature. We may picture God's chief characteristic as a tender care that nothing be lost.² The ultimate origin both of God and of the world Whitehead finds in what he calls creativity, the ground and cause of the process which is reality. Creativity plays the part in Whitehead's system which primary matter plays in Aristotle's and meonic freedom in Berdyaev's. It is, that is to say, the womb of things, potential being. But, whereas in Aristotle's system this potentiality of being is a passive potentiality, and in Berdyaev's mainly passive, in Whitehead's it is definitely active; it is creativity, while God and the world together make up its product, the created universe. Whitehead is thoroughly Hellenic in finding the ultimate form of evil neither in sin nor in pain, but in death or transiency, which is the negative element in temporal process.

From a religious point of view Whitehead's system may be said to represent an attempt to mediate between Christianity and Buddhism; and we may fittingly conclude our survey of monistic theories of evil with a few remarks about the latter.

¹ *Process and Reality*, p. 482.

² *Ibid.*, p. 490.

Buddhism provides no theory of the origin of anything. It starts from the assumption that evil is an all-pervasive reality in our present experience, and it offers us simply a way of salvation from it. The fundamental form of evil it finds in the pain of unsatisfied desire, and it teaches that the life of every finite being is essentially constituted by desires which can never be satisfied. Thus the desires of the finite being both to be and to have may be said to be the cause of evil, and the only remedy is to extirpate them by self-discipline ; for the extirpation will certainly not be achieved automatically by physical death. The soul which has been thoroughly purged of desire ceases to be finite and is merged in the infinite changeless unity which from one point of view is eternal being and from another annihilation.

From this system the notions both of God and of creation have disappeared altogether. Indeed, as Whitehead has pointed out, original Buddhism is hardly a religion at all. Yet, if it be more a metaphysic than a religion, it is scarcely a rational metaphysic in its premisses. It has no explanation whatever to offer of the insatiable desire which illudes and agonizes all finite things. Nevertheless it is manifest that our physical appetites *are* rationally explicable, since they are caused by that which in the environment of the physical organism provides for the maintenance of physical life. And it is reasonable to argue by analogy that if the spiritual element in human nature has fundamental desires which the physical world cannot satisfy, then there is cause for them in some spiritual environment in which their satisfaction can be found. Buddhism appeals only to those who, having despaired of the world of common experience, seek no longer to explain but only to escape it. There is indeed a striking agreement between Buddhism and modern neo-Calvinism in teaching the inevitable frustration of all human desires and hopes. During periods of gloom and agony in the history of the world both are sure to find disciples.

The common defect of all the six theories which we have briefly examined is the failure to distinguish adequately between the origin of finite things and the origin of evil. St. Thomas alone makes this distinction, while all the others find evil to be involved in the genesis of finite things as such. But, since St. Thomas holds that God as creator must be the ultimate efficient cause of all that is, he is obliged to conclude that evil can have no real or positive being at all.

The paradox of the nature and origin of evil lies in the fact that, when we consider it theoretically, we can see that it is dependent on good, and yet cannot be caused by it. Evil is a perversion of created being which tends in the end to its destruction ; but it is not for that reason merely a defect or privation of being, though it causes both. As Streeter says, evil being is essentially parasitic upon good. How then can we account for its being at all ?

The Christian answer lies deep in the mystery of finite freedom. Finite freedom in itself is good, but it involves the possibility of evil. This possibility simply as such is also good. What actualizes evil and therefore may be said to be the cause of all real evil is the act of a finite will in exercising its freedom wrongly, i.e., so as to disobey God.

It is important to notice where precisely this doctrine differs from St. Thomas's. St. Thomas argued that God, being the absolute Creator, must in the last resort be the efficient cause of all that is. Since he cannot be the efficient cause of evil, it follows that evil cannot positively *be*, and that, since evil is a mere privation of being, it cannot as such have any efficient cause at all. This is the only account of the matter possible for a Christian theologian who, like St. Thomas, does not admit the possibility of divine self-limitation in creation. We, on the other hand, have felt obliged to conclude that creation does involve divine self-limitation. We are not therefore bound to maintain that the absolute creator of all being must necessarily be the efficient cause of everything in his creation that comes to be.

And, looking at the world on this assumption, we can see that there is indeed something, and it alone, which, by force of its own nature, can have no efficient cause at all, viz. the act of a free will. The absence of an efficient cause is precisely what differentiates the act of free will, whether good or bad, from every other event or act. Precisely in so far as any act has an efficient cause, it ceases to be an act of free will. No doubt every free act has a *reason* which is its final cause. No doubt it has an *occasion* in the agent's particular circumstances. No doubt, again, it is itself an efficient cause of the bodily movements which it initiates. But the act of will is uncaused, so far as efficient causation is concerned ; it is self-initiated.

If then we may ascribe the origin of all evil to finite free will, we can account intelligibly for the fact that evil has entered a world wholly created by God, and as created, wholly good. But is it credible that the wrong use of freedom by finite wills is the self-initiating cause of all the evil in the world ? Does not the theory raise more difficulties than it solves ?

I think that the theory can and must stand. In later lectures we shall consider its bearing upon the Christian doctrine of man. At present we must examine what appears to many to be its weakest point. How can it deal with the existence of evil which apparently neither has nor can have any human cause ? Above all, what are we to say of the cruelty in sub-human nature ?

To begin with, it is vitally important to notice that in asking this last question, *cruelty* is the word which we almost inevitably use. For cruelty is an essentially moral term, and is properly applicable only to beings which act with free will. If no free and moral agency is in question, there can, properly speaking, be no cruelty at all ; for cruelty does not consist in the mere infliction of pain, however grievous, but in the deliberate infliction of pain with intention to hurt. And to call attention to this point is not a mere

quibble. It is most important to notice that when we wish to emphasize the universal significance of evil, we instinctively describe it in moral terms. Our unreflecting use of language is witness to the fact that we regard the problem of evil as fundamentally a moral problem. If we seriously consider the infliction and suffering of pain in the sub-human creation to be completely devoid of any moral significance, if, as we think of them, we dismiss from our minds every suggestion of cruelty and injustice, the very problem which they raise begins to disappear. It is their apparent incompatibility with any moral order in the universe which really distresses and perplexes us.

What then are we to say about this appearance of cruelty in the behaviour of animals, birds and insects? We may argue with some force that, after all, the appearance is appearance only and not reality. It is as absurd, we may say, to attribute cruelty to a stoat or an ichneumon fly as it would be to a cancer-cell or a streptococcus; and we must not be misled by the "pathetic fallacy" of ascribing to the rabbit or the caterpillar the same sort of suffering as is felt by the human victim of disease. Pressing these and similar considerations, we may go to the length of contending that what appears to be evil in the sub-human creation is not really evil at all, and that we need not be distressed by it. If my own cat's behaviour is sometimes a little too much for me, I may attribute it to the creature's domesticity and the corrupting influence of sinful man.

But there are many whom this line of argument will not satisfy. We do not, they will say, attribute actual cruelty to creatures which are predatory by nature; yet we cannot escape the conviction that at least in certain cases their behaviour is somehow expressive of cruelty on the part of the power which made their nature what it is. If there is real cruelty in nature, there is only one way in which the Christian can account for it. Obviously he cannot adopt the belief, common in antiquity, that the creation

itself is the work of an imperfect or partially evil spirit, other than the Supreme God. And the notion of a fallen world-soul or life-force is but doubtfully intelligible. But, if he thinks that the facts provide sufficient evidence, there is nothing either unorthodox or irrational in the supposition that God created in the beginning free discarnate spirits and that one or some of these, using freedom to oppose God, have in some degree marred or perverted life in the material creation. Such a belief may claim support from Jewish and Christian tradition about fallen angels, and something like it seems to have been accepted by the writers of the New Testament. It is in accordance with our theory of evil, in that it finds the origin of evil in the voluntary act of a being created with free will.

At this point a further question may be raised, the consideration of which shows how closely in Christian doctrine creation and redemption are connected, though we may not say that the latter is a necessary consequence of the former. May we say that, although the original creation was altogether good, it was nevertheless constituted in the light of the divine knowledge that, because sin would enter in, it would need redemption, and, because of that knowledge pain and death in some form were made part of the order originally created? There are strong reasons for answering Yes to that question. An order of nature in which life has constantly to be taken and lost in order that evolutionary progress may be made seems somehow to point forward to a universal salvation wrought through sacrifice; and it is very difficult to attribute the whole principle of this evolutionary progress to sin. St. Paul certainly believed that the whole course of life in this world with its pain and struggle looked forward to a great consummation of redemption in which all life was to share¹; though he does not attempt to tell us how far pain and death in the natural order are the consequence or penalty of sin, or how far we

¹ See Romans viii.

might say that God subjected his original creation to them, knowing that they would become the means of redemption.

Of course the main objection to this line of argument, when regarded from the point of view of Christian orthodoxy, is the fact that it obliges us to deny that pain and death are in themselves evil. I have argued elsewhere that pain is not really evil in itself, though certainly it is a mark of imperfection in the world. But in the case of death the objection is stronger. For St. Paul explicitly says that death entered the world through sin, and speaks of it as the last enemy that is to be destroyed ; and in the Bible as a whole life and death seem to be contrasted as good and evil. On the other hand, death is certainly not without qualification evil, as sin is ; for even the sinless and perfect manhood of the incarnate Son was subject to death, and St. Paul himself looks forward to death as a means of departing to be with Christ. The truth is that "death" is inevitably an ambiguous term. It may denote a merely physical and natural fact, of which the value is relative ; it may denote that final destruction of life which the physical fact is taken to symbolize—and that undoubtedly is evil.

On the whole we must, I think, conclude that the original relation of sin to death is a problem which we have no means of solving and perhaps need not seek to solve. Undoubtedly death, as we now know and experience it, is part and parcel of a world-order everywhere marred by sin, and it symbolizes the final evil of destruction and perdition towards which sin is tending. But on the other hand even final destruction appears as relatively good, in that it is better that radically evil, that is sinful, beings should be destroyed than that they should continue to do harm everlastingly. In any case physical or natural death is not evil in the same absolute way as sin. And who can say what the order of nature would have been, if sin had never entered the world ?

It is time to sum up the results of our discussion of the origin of evil. There is one truth to which the Christian must hold fast : that the ultimate source of evil in the world is the free act of the finite and created will which uses its freedom to do wrong and to disobey the will of God. This answer to the central question is the only safeguard of a metaphysic which is at once rational and consistent with the Christian revelation. Let us briefly review its main implications :—

(1) It shows us how, without admitting any ultimate dualism, we can separate the origin of evil from that of finite beings. The created nature of the finite being is altogether good, but, in so far as it has free will, the finite being, though good, can choose to do evil. Since its act in freely choosing has no efficient cause, that act is not the Creator's work, though the Creator's self-limitation is its condition *sine qua non*. Nor is the act of choice, in so far as it is wrong, creative ; on the contrary it perverts creation, and the ultimate issue of wrong action, if unchecked, is to destroy creation. Nevertheless even wrong action is in itself a positive act, an act of self-affirmation, not a mere defect or privation, although of course it may be the cause of many evils which can themselves be truly described as defects or privations.

(2) Our theory enables us to explain how there may be things the actual being or existence of which is evil. Such are things fashioned to be the instruments or expressions of an evil will. Anything fashioned to be an instrument derives its nature as well as its existence from the purpose of its maker. Thus, e.g., a thumb-screw derives its nature and existence from man's purpose to torture his fellow men, and for that reason its nature and existence are evil, although the material out of which it is fashioned is good and God-created. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to works of art which are fashioned to express evil thoughts. And if we are constrained to judge that a germ of disease such as

a streptococcus, or some horrible parasite is in itself evil, we must, I think, suppose that it has been brought into being, or at least that its nature has been perverted, by some spiritual will which has used its freedom to oppose God.

(3) It is impossible for the mind to take a purely theoretic or dispassionate attitude towards evil as such without falsifying its nature ; and the most essential form of evil is the wrong act of will. Hence it is especially impossible for the mind without self-perversion to regard dispassionately anything which it recognizes as morally wrong. This is a fact of which the propaganda departments of belligerent governments are well aware. And it is confirmed by introspection. Even in order to do wrong deliberately, the will must first pervert or obscure the intellectual recognition of the wrong as wrong, before it can do it. And this is so, precisely because the mind intuitively acknowledges that moral wrong is evil in its purest and most absolute form. There is an implied, though obscured, recognition of this truth even in the doctrine of logical positivists and others that moral judgements have no objective validity at all and cannot be true nor even false, except in the sense that it is false to suppose that they can be true. This doctrine is arrived at first by assuming that any judgement, in order to be true, must be purely dispassionate, and then by observing that no moral judgement can be purely dispassionate since its very nature as moral involves approval or disapproval. Carried to its logical conclusion, logical positivism would deny objective validity to *any* judgement of value other than instrumental ; it would thus deny that truth is in any absolute or objective sense *better* than falsehood, and so stultify its own effort and claim to attain truth.

(4) What of the relation of the fundamental or original form of evil to other forms ? Error, in so far as it is positively evil, and not a mere defect in knowledge incidental to learning and growth, is, as St. Paul and St. John so clearly

perceived, the consequence of a wrong act of will. It is sin that blinds the intellect, not ignorance that causes sin. As to pain, it has been argued that it is not in itself evil, though in creatures it is a mark of their imperfection, and in God it is the effect of their sin upon his love. As to death, we have noted the ambiguity of the term which denotes either a natural fact or law of this world or else the final effect of the fundamental evil which is sin. It seems impossible to determine the relation between sin and death in the former of its two meanings. But this much at least seems clear. If we take death to denote the destruction of existence, its value must be relative to, and dependent upon, the value of that which is destroyed. In so far as any existence is in itself an evil, its destruction must be a good. Hence death can be absolutely evil only to a philosophy which finds evil to consist in a mere absence, defect, or privation of being.

(5) Finally we must say that the full story of the origin of evil has not been revealed to us, but only the essential nature of evil, which is sin, and the way of salvation from it, which lies through suffering and death in Christ. We must be content to leave the theoretic question of origins imperfectly answered, until we have fully entered into the salvation which will make the answer clear. If the source of evil is sin, not ignorance, it naturally follows that the salvation of the will must precede the full illumination of the mind.

II. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN

THE Bible defines the distinction of man's nature from that of all other creatures by saying that man was created in the image of God. In what does this image of God, which is the mark of human nature, consist? And what has been the effect of sin upon it?

In answering these questions Irenaeus hit upon a distinction which, as Brunner points out,¹ has become classical in the theology of Western Catholicism. He distinguished two elements in the image of God: (a) the *image* proper, *imago*, εἰκὼν; (b) actual *likeness* to God, *similitudo*, ὁμοίωσις. The *imago* consists in the free will and rationality which characterize human nature as such. The *similitudo* consists in man's self-determination according to God's will and the communion with God which accompanies it. After the fall man still remains human, which means that he retains the *imago Dei*, although doubtless the operation of his free will and reason is marred, so that, as the Schoolmen said, he is *vulneratus etiam in naturalibus*. On the other hand the *similitudo* was enjoyed by unfallen man as a special divine gift which is identified by theologians with original righteousness and all its fruits. This gift is supernatural; it is something added over and above human nature as such (*donum super-additum*); it is altogether lost by the fall, but it is restored by Christ's redemptive work to all those who truly believe on him.

Brunner protests against such attempts to discriminate between what the fall took away from man and what it left intact. Against Catholic theologians he asserts strongly what I do not understand them to deny, that sin has affected human nature as a whole and in every part. On the same

¹ See *Man in Revolt*.

ground he rejects the doctrine of many Reformers that some relic of the divine image has been retained by fallen man. Nor, on the other hand, is he better pleased by Barth's uncompromising assertion that the image has been totally destroyed, and that the difference between man in his fallen condition and a cat, though it is an obvious fact, is theologically unimportant.

Brunner's own account of the divine image in man is somewhat difficult to follow. Its chief importance seems to be that it discards almost altogether the notion of any actual *similitudo* or direct likeness of man to God. According to Brunner the divine image consists in two characteristics of human nature : (1) Man's being is wholly constituted by its relation to God upon whom it depends ; in God man lives and moves and has his being, and in this way he is a reflection or *είκων* of God, something unintelligible apart from its original. (2) Man, as he is called into being by God, is also called to respond actively to God's love. From this point of view the divine image in man consists in man's God-given capacity to respond to God's love, which capacity to be addressed by God and to respond Brunner, by an ambiguity of the German language, seems somehow to confuse with man's responsibility to God. What then of the fall ? The fall according to Brunner is not a historical or temporal event at all ; it is not something which took place at the beginning of the history of the human race. Rather it is a transcendental or pre-temporal event, which must be conceived to have happened in the life of every man and of all humanity before the temporal experience of the individual begins. By it every man has lost the ability to make the response which God's love requires ; he has set his will in opposition to God and has become powerless to do anything but sin. On the other hand what fallen man has not lost is his direct relation to God, to which his uneasy conscience gives an obscure and sin-distorted witness. According to Brunner fallen man retains the theological

structure of his being, the necessity for constantly responding to God, and the responsibility for his now inevitable failure to make the response which God demands.

In all essentials Brunner's doctrine closely resembles that of Reinhold Niebuhr in his Gifford Lectures, and the agreement between the two authors is fairly representative of modern Protestantism of the orthodox type. Many of our younger Anglo-Catholic theologians, by emphasizing the scholastic doctrine that fallen man is *vulneratus etiam in naturalibus*, seek to effect a reconciliation between the modern-Protestant and the traditional-Catholic theories. I do not propose, however, to examine either in detail. Rather, I would seek to consider the doctrine of the divine image in man from a fresh point of view.

Leaving for the moment out of account the question of the fall and its effects, let us ask, What is it in man's originally created nature that most truly resembles God? What is the *similitudo* of the divine image in man? Surely, in the first instance, it consists in man's power of choice and of conscious control over things. Within limits man can choose both the ends of his action and the means whereby he pursues them, and in so doing he exercises a purposive control over his environment, over nature, over his fellow-creatures, and even over himself. He knows in his own experience what ownership and lordship mean. And thus, alone of creatures, he possesses a limited and relative independence of his own, wherein he is like, while still unlike, the Infinite Creator who is dependent on nothing outside himself and can fashion and control all things according to his will.

The power of conscious choice resides in the individual man, not in the group, society, race, or nation; and Christian theology has always maintained that it is the individual who is the bearer of God's image. Hence arises a paradox. The very power in the individual which makes him God-like involves him in a capacity utterly ungod-like,

the capacity to choose and do wrong. It is because the individual is God-like that he may be sinful. Only the creature made in God's image can really sin against God. To call animal instincts sinful is mere confusion of thought—unless indeed we suppose them to have been already perverted or disordered by the agency of some evil spirit. No doubt they are, as it were, the raw material of sin, the *fomes peccati*, the tinder which the spark of wilful rebellion kindles into actual sin. But they are also the raw material of virtue and goodness, the *fomes caritatis*, the tinder which willed obedience kindles into love. In themselves the instincts are *morally* neutral, though all the Creator's work is good. It is no instinct, but the free and spiritual will, which is the source of virtue and vice. Christian theology owes a great debt to the heresiarch Apollinarius for making this truth clear.

But the paradox of man's God-likeness has deeper implications. All things are utterly dependent on God, the author of all, the one Owner and the one Lord. How then can there be anyone except God who has any real independence at all? Theologians must, I think, answer that such a thing can only be because of the mysterious self-limitation of the Creator whereby he permits to his creatures free action of which he himself is not the efficient cause. But theologians surely must go on to say that this equivocal position, in which God-likeness involves the capacity and possibility of resisting God, though it may be man's beginning, cannot be man's end. Man cannot rest in it eternally. His reason at its highest seeks a harmonious universe with no such contradiction at its heart. God, we must say, has assigned to man such a position for a time and for a purpose—in order that man may of his own free will surrender himself, with all he has made his own, to God's love which gave him power so to give. From the beginning man's true end is not so much to be *God-like* as to find himself *in* God through the voluntary sacrifice and offering

up of the independence which even in making him God-like severed him initially from the fullness of communion.

This line of reasoning cuts across the distinctions made by Irenaeus on the one hand and by Brunner on the other. In the initial condition in which man was made we find both the *similitudo* of God's image and the fullness of responsibility which should both complete itself and be given up in voluntary self-surrender. In the final condition for which man was made we find the fullness both of the divine *imago* and of man's responsiveness to God, as man perfectly reflects God's love in the eternal communion of God's kingdom. To each condition corresponds its characteristic freedom. To the first the freedom of responsible choice, ownership, government. To the second the utterly unburdened and glorious liberty of the children of God, where man is finally at home in his heavenly Father's house.

What further light does our argument throw upon the origin and nature of human sin? The possibility of sin is due to man's initial freedom of choice which makes him relatively independent and, in a sense, God-like. But this freedom and independence are, like man's nature itself, evidently finite and therefore unlike God's. And inevitably the finitude of man's mind splits up the full unity and harmony of goodness and makes different goods appear as in rivalry and competition with one another. Man's freedom thus becomes a freedom to choose between mutually exclusive alternatives. To choose one is to reject the others: hence the very freedom is under another aspect the burden of responsibility. It belongs to the condition of an imperfect and unfulfilled being. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." These words contain the precept and promise of the gospel, both of which can be finally fulfilled only when the weight of responsibility has vanished in the complete responsiveness of communion. Meanwhile man's will must be trained

for final self-surrender by constantly choosing the higher good in preference to the lower.

We may, I think, rightly imagine that such training would have been necessary even if men had never actually sinned. Nevertheless there would have been no such inner conflict and perplexity as we now experience. For man in his unfallen state would have discerned and chosen the higher good naturally by the constant supernatural help of God's grace. But, however that may be, we know in the light of the Christian revelation that the critical and crucial moment of man's choice must always come when the supreme good of love has to be absolutely preferred to the lower good of lordship, acquisition, or self-assertion. In God and in the soul wholly and finally surrendered to God these two goods are perfectly one and harmonious, so that no choice between them is required or even possible. It is indeed by the final self-surrender of love that the soul wins its own royal lordship in God's kingdom. But in man's initial state of finite independence, in which he must choose, the good of love and the good of lordship must come into competition with one another : one must be taken and the other left. Sin is fundamentally the choice which affirms the finite independent self, its lordship and acquisitiveness, against love and obedience to God. Once that fatal choice has been made, sin with all its dire consequences of corruption has gained a foothold in human nature ; and the consequences are transmitted to every soul that is naturally born. Henceforth man's nature is marred. Not that there is no good left in him, or that the divine likeness has been lost. But now man's goodness is insufficient to attain salvation without a fresh and special intervention of divine grace. " There is no health " (i.e. healing, saving power) in him. He has still the capacity (*δύναμις*, *poientia*) to be a true son of God, but has lost the power (*ἐξουσία*).

Notice with what inspired insight the myths of Genesis depict this truth. The temptation which leads to the

original fall is contained in the words of the serpent, "Ye shall be as gods". The fall, to use St. Paul's expression, comes through "snatching at equality with God"; it is the assertion of man's God-likeness in opposition to God. The result is that man's life becomes a life of toil and labour, intellectual, moral and manual. The responsibility of man, which is his initial freedom, becomes not only a burden but a bondage. For now he has to choose without clear insight to guide his choice; he has asserted his independence, forfeited the immediate constancy of God's help, and the greater the range of choice he wins, the greater the anxiety to which he is a prey.

Notice again how the consequences of Adam's sin work themselves out in Cain. Cain has known good and evil; but he represses and will not face his sense of his own guilt. His pride therefore issues in a bitter sense of grievance against God, which distorts his whole outlook. And in Cain there appears for the first time that perennial conflict in the soul of fallen man, the conflict between the passionate claim to be let alone, the assertion of independence, and the no less passionate terror of being left alone, the obscure foreboding of the hell to which mere independence leads. The first produces the indignant question "Am I my brother's keeper?", the second the bitter complaint, "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid!" Is it not the same conflict within the soul which has produced the clash between *laissez-faire* individualism and totalitarianism in modern politics?

Be that as it may, man fallen and unredeemed is indeed *vulneratus in naturalibus*. He cannot escape his unnaturalness. Dogged by the conflicting moods of self-assertion and fear, he seeks to avoid the latter by further self-assertion—the familiar behaviour of those who suffer from what we now call an "inferiority complex". The larger the control he gains over nature, the more his conduct is like that of a

parvenu within it. He alternates between pretentiousness and a humility which is no less exaggerated and artificial. At one moment he builds a tower of Babel or a world empire, and proclaims himself to be the measure of all things : at another he represents himself as the plaything of demonic forces, or as an insignificant speck in a decaying universe ; he declares all metaphysics to be nonsense, or makes wild efforts to return to nature. But the more he struggles to return to nature, the more deeply he is plunged in artificiality. Witness the disciples of Rousseau. The more desperately he repudiates morality in order to seek salvation in economic revolution, the more evidently his efforts are inspired by a sense of grievance which has a moral origin. Witness the disciples of Marx. Man's nature is in conflict with itself. There can be no true naturalness for him, until his inner harmony is restored.

The Christian doctrine is that the source of man's inward conflict and restlessness is the act of the selfish will setting up its own God-likeness against God. This is the underlying cause of all man's intellectual errors and delusions. If man's eye were single, his whole being would be enlightened. But his eye is not single, because his will has become selfish. Because he gets in his own light, he cannot see straight or clearly ; he surveys the whole universe through the distorting spectacles of his own grievances and ambitions. That is why no theophany could save him. For a theophany must make its appeal primarily to the intellect, to powers of mental and spiritual vision. But the root of evil is in the will. A man impure of heart *cannot* see God. In order to touch man's will and heart the very Godhead had to veil itself from human sight in human flesh.

But, if no theophany could avail to save mankind, neither could any merely moral teaching or example. Moral teaching and example are indeed addressed to the will, and it is in the will that the root of evil lies. But by themselves they are unable either to clear the eyes of

conscience from the selfish grievances and prejudices which blind it or to give the weakened will fresh power to perform what conscience does perceive to be right. Kant's doctrine of the autonomy of the will, though it expresses a profound truth about human nature as originally created, takes no account of the fall.

Perhaps the nearest approach to a purely moral gospel is contained in the philosophy of Stoicism which originally supplied Christianity with the concepts of conscience and natural law. According to Stoicism everything in the world has a law of its being or nature ; and in the case of man part of this law is the moral law apprehended by conscience. But Stoicism assumes that, because this moral law is a law of man's nature, every man must always be able to know and follow it, just as in Jeremiah's prophecy the stork and the swallow and the crane know and follow the divine ordinance for them.¹ This assumption ignores the fact that man's very consciousness of the moral "ought" as imposing an arduous duty implies that in one sense he does not and cannot follow the law of his being naturally. Stoicism takes no account of what is involved in the fact of sin and in the difference between man and purely natural creatures. Modern philosophers are of course familiar with the inconsistencies of Stoic moralism ; and for the most part they seek to avoid them by denying the reality of the moral law and the validity of the "ought" which expresses it. Thus Professor John Macmurray, who is an optimist about the real nature of man, follows the Stoics in ignoring the difference between natural physical law and moral law, in order to argue that the distinct concept of moral law is a false concept, whereby man subjects himself to an unnatural slavery.² And at the opposite extreme neo-Calvinist theologians, who regard human nature as corrupt throughout, equally deny the reality of the moral

¹ Jeremiah viii. 7.

² See *Freedom in the Modern World*, Chapter IX.

law, which according to them is an illusion produced by the sinner's experience of God's love as his wrath.

Thus on all sides there is agreement that man cannot be saved by any exhortations or appeals addressed in the name of morality to his will.

NOTE A

The question may be asked: Are we bound to regard the fall as an historical event? In one sense, I think, we are. Brunner's doctrine of a transcendental or "meta-historical" fall of each individual soul seems hardly intelligible; and in any case, if the fall did not happen in history, it seems impossible that man should be saved from its consequences by an historical atonement. St. Paul's parallel between Adam and Christ (Romans v.) demands that both should be, in a sense, historical figures, though it by no means follows that Adam must have been a single individual as Christ was.

On the other hand we have no historical evidence for the fall, as we have for the atonement. The evidence for the fall consists solely in our present experience of its results. The fall therefore can only be described in terms of myth or speculation not historically verifiable. But in this case the myth, in order to fulfil its function, ought to tell a story of what may be reasonably supposed to have happened (*εἰκὼς μῦθος*, in Platonic phrase). And as historical and scientific research advances, we need fresh myths, not of course to take the place of the story of Genesis, but to interpret it in the light of new knowledge. C. S. Lewis's book, *The Problem of Pain*, contains some interesting suggestions on this subject.

NOTE B

It should be noticed that in so far as man's original God-likeness has been marred in those to whom "original" sin is transmitted, their personal responsibility for acting sinfully is diminished. The freedom of choice which belongs to man's originally created nature can exist fully and completely only in those who grow up into an uncorrupted and unweakened manhood—and since the fall none, save Jesus, has done so. The fact that man needs a special intervention of divine grace to attain salvation is but another aspect of the diminished responsibility of the individual for his sin. The exaggerated doctrine of original sin, which would declare fallen man to be totally corrupt from birth, must in logic destroy the individual's responsibility altogether, and can find no remedy for sin except in irresistible grace. But if saving grace be irresistible, there can be no reason why God should not save all men, if he saves any. Hence Barthianism readily passes from absolute condemnations of everything human into a doctrine of universal salvation for all men. On the other hand Pelagian humanism, which exaggerates the responsibility of the individual, may easily become pessimistic as to his ultimate fate. These are paradoxes of extremism, which our modern extremists would do well to ponder.

III. THE OLD TESTAMENT PREPARATION FOR THE ATONEMENT

“THE root of evil is in the will. A man impure in heart cannot see God.” The Hebrews were enabled to grasp those truths more firmly than any other people in the world : that is why the Old Testament is the necessary preparation for the gospel. For the most part our modern theologians emphasize exclusively the anti-humanist aspects of Biblical teaching. But from another point of view, as Berdyaev has repeatedly insisted, the Biblical doctrine of sin is the most profound affirmation of the dignity of man. It may even be said that the main endeavour of the Hebrew prophets from first to last was to substitute in the chosen people the noble sense of guilt for the ignoble sense of grievance which was distorting their notions of God. That is why the prophets strove so earnestly to justify Jehovah’s ways to a constantly distressed and complaining nation. The struggle between the sense of grievance and the sense of guilt can be traced again throughout the Psalms.

It was the intense conviction of the Hebrews that religion is concerned with the relation of the personal will of God to the personal will of man. That gave them their profound insight into the nature of sin and gave them also their special liability to temptations arising from the sense of grievance. Both the insight and the liability spring from the same source, the conviction that God’s fundamental nature is that of personal will. What I called in my first course of lectures the “thelematism” of Hebrew religion flowers in the prophets. Before them Hebrew religion was still under the influence of animism ; after them it degenerated into the extravagances of apocalyptic or the legalism of the scribes. But to the prophets the revelation of God’s will was no mere enigma of the future, nor had it

been embalmed long ago in a written code which the living teacher could only annotate and apply by methods of casuistry. To the prophets the will of God was constantly being revealed in personal messages which it was given to them to declare to God's people.

Nevertheless the religion of the prophets suffered from two great defects, or rather perhaps from one principal defect which can be considered from two points of view :

(1) It had no real doctrine of grace, no message of a present divine power which would change man's heart and strengthen his will for righteousness. The prophets habitually assumed that their hearers could do God's will if they chose, and even sometimes that they could do it easily. Often indeed they spoke of God's mercy and forgiveness. But according to the general teaching of the prophets these divine qualities implied little more than God's willingness to overlook the past and renew his favour as soon as his people turned from their sins to obey him. The initiative in conversion was left to man. The prophets betray little realization of the fact that the sinner cannot always of his own volition, change his conduct from sin to obedience at a moment's notice, however plainly the prophet points out to him the error of his way. "What doth the Lord God require of thee," says Micah, but—and then he announces an ideal which is sometimes the despair even of honestly professing Christians.¹ In this respect Jeremiah's more pessimistic insight is the deepest of all ;² and it gives added significance to his prophecy of a future day (supposing it to be authentic) when God will make a new covenant with his people and put his law in their hearts³—a prophecy which is echoed by Ezekiel.⁴ These passages among others⁵ show that the prophets' thoughts occasionally looked

¹ Mic. vi. 7, 8. See also Isa. i. 16-19 ; Ezek. xviii., etc.

² See, e.g., xiii. 23.

³ xxxi. 31-34.

⁴ xi. 19 f.

⁵ e.g. Isa. liii. 10 f. ; Joel ii. 28 f.

forward to a time when God would himself work a change in the inmost heart of man. But in the present they knew nothing of a divine grace which itself brings repentance and converts the will. Their message, however Augustinian in its emphasis on the complete and irresistible sovereignty of God, was nevertheless Pelagian in throwing upon man the whole responsibility for changing his ways and in assuming that he was able of himself to do so.

After the great succession of the prophets had ceased, the same Pelagianism persisted in the Pharisaic and Rabbinic doctrine, against which St. Paul directed his polemic in Galatians,¹ that God's fulfilment of his promise to redeem his people was a conditional promise, dependent on their fulfilment of the law—a doctrine which was picturesquely expressed in the saying that, if only the chosen people would keep the law perfectly for two sabbaths or even one, the Messiah would appear.²

(2) The prophets did not fully realize the nature of sin, and regarded it too exclusively as the immediate choice of the individual will. The wrong choice for which the individual is responsible is indeed a real element in sin. I have tried to show that it is the original element, the ultimate source of evil in the world. But such choices have affected for evil the environment in which individuals are born and nurtured, and perhaps also their actual heredity, the nature with which they are born. And moreover within the life of the individual himself wrong choices in the past distort his perception of what is right in the present and weaken his will to do it. All these evil influences from past sin in varying degrees impair the individual's power to do what is really according to God's will; and in so far as the individual is actually deprived of this power, he cannot be blamed for sinning or doing what is wrong. The individual is never *solely* to blame for his wrong acts—

¹ See especially iii. 17 ff.

² See Rawlinson, *New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, p. 21.

according to the myth of Genesis two were to blame even for the original fall—often he is only *partially* to blame, and sometimes he is not to blame at all.

It is this situation which makes necessary a clear distinction between sin and guilt. All acts are sinful in so far as they are wrong and contrary to God's will. But the agent in such an act incurs guilt only in so far as he is blameworthy, because personally responsible, for sinning. And the agent is personally responsible, guilty, and blameworthy for his act, only if he knew, or could at the time have known, it to be wrong and sinful, and could in the light of that knowledge have acted differently. Such are the conditions of guilt broadly recognized by the laws of states in so far as they are just. And the moral theology of Western Catholicism has recognized them also in its two distinctions : (a) between formal and material sin, and (b) between the *reatus* of sin and its *vitium*. Material sin covers every action which considered in itself is wrong and sinful ; formal sin is committed only through the wrong choice of an individual who both could and ought to have chosen differently. Again the *reatus* of sin is the sinfulness for which the agent is responsible through his free choice to do wrong when he might have done right ; the *vitium* of sin is the evil influence from past sins which renders the individual here and now unable to choose and do right. Thus formal sin alone involves the agent in *reatus* or guilt—or such at least is the conclusion which justice demands. It is important to re-emphasize these distinctions, because Protestant theologians persistently tend to obliterate them—the liberals in order to show that the doctrine of original sin is irrational, the traditionalists in order to defend it, in defiance of reason, by making the individual responsible and guilty for sins which he could not help committing.¹

¹ Among recent works one of the most lucid and persuasive statements of the liberal doctrine is to be found in J. S. Bezzant's *Aspects of Belief*, while Brunner (*The Divine Imperative and Man in Revolt*), and Niebuhr (*The Nature and Destiny of Man*) are representative of the traditionalists. The latter indeed

St. Paul in Romans at least makes a firm distinction between *ἁμαρτία*, which is not imputed where there is no law, and *παράβασις*, the witting transgression of God's will which involves the imputation of sin.

We may therefore say, using the language of moral theology, that the prophets in general recognized only such formal sin as implies *reatus* in the sinner. They took little account of material sin which is not formal, or of the *vitium* of sin which is distinct from *reatus*. Even when they speak of ignorance, blindness and deafness in God's people they have in mind rather an ignoring of God, a refusal to perceive his workings and to listen to his message, than a mere lack of intellectual knowledge. They do not think of man's nature as *fallen*, even when they insist upon his sinfulness.

The apocalyptists who followed the prophets were much more alive to the *vitium* of sin. They felt that the mass of mankind were involved in a state of sin which was almost irremediable. They attained to no full expectation of grace or redemption from God, and they were fully convinced that the Holy One was bound to visit with his extreme wrath every sinful soul. Hence their pictures of divine judgement at the end of the world were dark indeed, as in 1 Esdras. Joel's hope that God would one day pour

does admit "equality of sin and inequality of guilt" but strangely maintains that "Guilt is distinguished from sin in that it represents the objective and historical consequences of sin. . . . Guilt is the objective consequence of sin, the actual corruption of the plan of creation and providence in the historical word". (Op. cit., p. 235 f.) He seems to have fallen into a confusion between (a) what the sinner's act causes and may loosely be said to be "responsible for", and (b) that (in the act and its consequences) for which the sinner is personally responsible. Even Vincent Taylor does not make clear the true distinction between sin and guilt. "Guilt", he writes, "is an ambiguous word, which either describes the mind of the man who is conscious of his state as a sinner, in which case it is best expressed as "a sense of guilt"; or describes his condition as resting under the divine judgement which in a moral universe must overtake sin." (*Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, p. xix, n.). In a moral universe guilt is precisely that which makes a man liable to the strictly penal operation of God's law, or, as St. Paul would have put it, to the imputation of sin.

out his spirit upon all flesh was forgotten. Final salvation could only come to a very few elect.

But outside the writings of prophets and apocalyptists the later documents of the Old Testament display two other attitudes to sin which must be noticed as completing the Old Testament preparation for Christianity.

The first is that of the penitential psalms—particularly Psalm li., if we omit the final verses about sacrifices. The Psalms are the utterances of saintly men who knew in their own experience the reality of the forgiving grace of God, even though they had no Christian language to express it and could not prophesy any general message of redemption. The prayer, “Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me,” indicates the writer’s knowledge that God will and does take the initiative in helping the sinner towards conversion and holiness, and that Jeremiah’s prophecy of the new covenant and Ezekiel’s of the new heart need not after all be only foretellings of a distant future. Some of the psalmists were almost Christians before Christ in their deep insight into God’s attitude towards sin and his power to save not only from its *reatus* but also from its *vitium*—“its guilt and power”, as Toplady put it.

The second of these other ways of treating sin is that followed by the priestly religion of sacrifice developed in post-exilic times and described chiefly in Leviticus. The significance of the sacrificial way of regarding and treating sin lies in the fact that it is exactly opposite and complementary to the prophetic. All the ceremonies of expiation including those of the Day of Atonement, as they stand in the Pentateuch, deal with sin as material rather than formal, and they make no provision for sins “done with a high hand”, deliberate sins which involve the agent in full *reatus*. The expiations are for ceremonial uncleanness accidentally contracted, and for wrongs done “in ignorance”. No doubt the Rabbis stretched the latter term to include all sins of weakness or ἀκρασία, and even taught that the ceremonies

of the Day of Atonement covered much of what we should call deliberate sin. But there is a striking difference between the sins for which the Pentateuch provides sacrificial atonement and those which the prophets denounced.

No doubt all sacrificial ceremonies for getting rid of sin have their origin in primitive notions according to which sin is less a moral offence than a quasi-physical uncleanness or defilement which is contracted like an infection. These notions were partially but incompletely moralized by the priestly religion of later Judaism. One sign of this moralizing process is the exclusion of deliberate sin from sacrificial atonement. But over against the priestly conception of sin the uncompromisingly ethical doctrine of the earlier and greater prophets stands out in clearly defined contrast.

Nevertheless the priestly conception possessed a certain truth and value to which the prophets were to some extent blinded by the very splendour of the ethical revelation which came to them. At three points the priestly religion had at least some partial advantage over the prophetic.

(1) The notion of *reatus*, i.e. of personal responsibility and guilt, does not exhaust the whole nature and operation of sin. There is also the element of *vitium*, the moral disease or deordination of nature which deprives the individual of power to act rightly. And although the priestly religion sometimes tended to de-moralize sin altogether and to identify it with a purely ceremonial uncleanness, it did nevertheless bear some witness to the truth that sin is a defiling and disabling influence from which the individual cannot free himself at will.

(2) The ceremonial and sacrificial means of expiation provided by the priestly religion were regarded as means provided and appointed by God and were such as to be within the ordinary man's power to use. Man was not left by the priestly religion, as he too often was by the prophetic, to achieve the impossible by himself. One wonders if Micah ever asked himself such a question as : " Whether it is easier, to give the fruit of my body for the sin of my

soul, or to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God?" Of course the priestly religion of the Jews utterly forbade human sacrifice; but it did provide something which an ordinary sinner could do without enormous difficulty in order to put himself right with God in God's appointed way. Even such a ghastly perversion as human sacrifice itself may serve to remind us that the real way to fulfil God's requirements as stated by Micah was only found when God gave his only begotten Son for the sin of human souls. Prophecy apart from sacrifice cannot save mankind.

(3) Priestly religion placed in the present the means of atonement which it taught. Precisely for that reason it laid no emphasis either on the hopes or on the forebodings concerning the new world in the future which inspired prophets and apocalyptists. The Sadducees, the priestly caste at the time of the Christian era, did not believe at all in the life of the world to come. In their case a religion of this world accompanied a life of worldliness. Yet the emphasis on the present rather than the future, which is characteristic of priestly religion in general, did enable the best exponents of that religion to attain to a theistic humanism which has a spiritual truth and value lacking in the fierce denunciations of the prophets and the lurid visions of apocalypse. The book of Ecclesiasticus is to some extent Sadducean in its point of view, though it dates from a period before the Sadducean party came into existence in opposition to the Pharisees. And that book, with its shrewd yet charitable insight into ordinary human nature and God's ways of dealing with it, has its own special message of preparation for the incarnation of God's eternal Word in the carpenter of Nazareth.

Undoubtedly the great prophets and psalmists represent the high-water mark of Old Testament spirituality; yet it would be a grievous mistake to find in their writings alone the whole witness of the Old Testament to the Christ whom it foreshadowed.

IV. THE FULFILMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

IN this brief study of the doctrine of the atonement in the New Testament I desire to draw attention to certain main features of that doctrine as we find it developed in the writings of St. Paul, St. John, and the author of Hebrews. While dwelling mainly upon their remarkable consensus, I shall mention certain differences of emphasis between St. Paul and St. John. But I shall avoid as far as possible all minutiae of exposition ; and I shall say nothing about more rudimentary notions of the Christian gospel, which were or may have been current among Christians before the great apostolic theologians did their work, and of which traces are still apparent in the New Testament itself. The modern study of the New Testament, minute and thorough as it is, brings with it a great danger lest we should lose sight of the wood through examining the trees. And there are many works in which details of criticism and exegesis can be investigated, one of the most recent and noteworthy being Dr. Vincent Taylor's great trilogy, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, *The Atonement and the New Testament*, and *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*.

Taking then the doctrine of the atonement as it is presented in the developed theology of the apostolic age, I would call attention especially to three of its general characteristics :—

(1) The atoning death of Christ is regarded as inseparable from his risen life ; and its effect in the individual Christian is inseparable from the gift of a new life to him. This new life is sometimes called “ new ” and sometimes “ eternal ” ; it is sometimes described as a new birth, sometimes as a resurrection ; but in any case it is recognized to be the beginning of the fulfilment of ancient prophecies concerning the coming of the new age or world associated with the

Messiah's reign. Resurrection of the dead, we must remember, was one of the great cosmic events which according to Jewish apocalyptic was to mark the inauguration of this new world ; and belief in the resurrection of Jesus was the very foundation of the Christian gospel. Hence from the beginning atonement and eschatology were inseparable from one another in Christian thought ; both together were included in God's redemptive act. The more distinctly Christ's death was associated with atonement for sin, the more clearly also his resurrection was found to signify the beginning of the world to come, of which Christians, with their sins forgiven, were already made partakers through faith. To be made a son or child of God through Christ's atonement meant nothing less than to be already an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven which is eternal life.

It follows therefore that, in the thought of the New Testament, the effect of Christ's atonement is something much more positive and more tremendous than mere forgiveness, if by "forgiveness" we mean simply the remission of past sins, the wiping out of a debt, or a cleaning of the slate. If St. Paul had been asked : "Why could not God forgive sins apart from the death and resurrection of Jesus ? Did not Jesus himself teach that God does in fact thus forgive ?" he would, I think, have found it hard to understand the difficulty raised. "No doubt", he might have said, "it always has been in God's power to remit sins and his mercy has always been ready for every repentant sinner ; but what the forgiven Christian has received in Christ is admission to the life of sonship in God's new-created world, and this is inconceivable apart from the fact that the new creation has had its beginning through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Forgiveness loses its full redemptive effect and issue, unless it implies communion with and in the manhood of him who died and rose again not only that we might be forgiven but also that we might be created anew and set in a new relationship to God".

There is much significance in St. Paul's use of the word "justification" where we might have thought "forgiveness" much simpler and more or less equivalent. In reality *δικαίωσις* (justification) means much more than *ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν* (forgiveness or remission of sins). The word *δικαιῶν* (justify) is untranslatable by any single word in English. Perhaps the most misleading translation of all is "acquit", which unfortunately is insisted upon by a majority of modern English commentators. Not only does "acquit" suggest a narrowly forensic point of view which is quite foreign to St. Paul's mind ; but also it must, if used accurately, exclude the notion of forgiveness altogether, since the acquitted man is declared to be simply innocent or not guilty of the crime with which he has been charged, and there is therefore nothing to be forgiven. It is clearly outrageous to suppose that when St. Paul said he was "justified", he meant that he was declared by God never to have sinned. In St. Paul's theological use of the expression, to "justify" a man means neither to acquit him by a sort of legal fiction, nor yet to make him actually just or righteous whereas he had before been a sinner ; rather it means to set him in that right relation to God which he would have enjoyed if he had been actually righteous. How can that happen in a world where all have sinned, where none is yet impeccable, and where legal fictions must not be attributed to God ? St. Paul answers that the Christian is indeed justified both by receiving forgiveness of his past sins and by being made partaker by faith of the new manhood which in the person of Christ has triumphed over sin and death. If either forgiveness or the gift of the new life is lacking, there can be no justification. The same conjunction of ideas is evident in St. Paul's teaching about baptism which to him signifies both the washing away of sin and a sharing of Christ's death and resurrection, the entry on the new life.

It should also be noticed that, where the word "forgive"

occurs in our English versions of St. Paul, the Greek verb so translated is *χαριζέσθαι*, not *ἀφιέναι*, which is the usual word elsewhere, or *ἀπολύειν*, which is rendered "forgive" at least once in St. Luke vi. 37. *Ἀπολύειν* means strictly "to release", and its accusative is the person forgiven. *Ἀφιέναι* means "to remit", and its accusative is the sin or debt remitted. *Χαριζέσθαι* also has a sin or debt as its accusative, the person forgiven being in the dative; but the word means literally "to make a free gift of", being derived from *χάρις* in the sense of "grace" or "free gift". When it is a question of forgiving of debt, *ἀφιέναι* and *χαριζέσθαι*, are practically synonymous, but, whereas the former means strictly to remit the debt and so to release the debtor from his obligation, the latter means rather to make a free gift of what had hitherto been a loan, and by so doing to show generosity to the debtor. When St. Paul speaks of forgiveness in or through Christ, he prefers the verb *χαριζέσθαι*, because it emphasizes the fact that such forgiveness is part of a free generous positive act of giving which includes more than a mere waiving of a right or refusal to insist on the fulfilment of an obligation.

St. John's explicit teaching about forgiveness is confined to the references in his first Epistle; and he describes the positive gift of the atonement as a new birth and as eternal life rather than in the Pauline terms of resurrection and new creation. But in his own way he indicates no less clearly than St. Paul that the washing away of sin and the gift of a new life are in Christian thought inseparable aspects of a single act or process. This becomes apparent when we examine St. John's symbolism of water and blood. In St. John both water and blood symbolize both life and cleansing; it is not at all true that life is symbolized by the one and cleansing by the other. The double significance of water is seen if we compare the discourse to Nicodemus with the story of the *pedilavium*; the double significance of blood, if we compare the teaching of John vi. with the

statement of 1 John i. 7, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin". In St. John water represents the divine life which in Christ comes down from heaven and through the Spirit causes Christians to be born anew or from above (*ἄνωθεν*), washing away their sin at the same time. Blood represents the human life of Christ suffering, dying, and sacrificed upon earth, which also cleanses Christians by being communicated to them in the Eucharist. Water and blood both come from Christ's body on the Cross. There is one sacrament of water and another of blood ; but both water and blood are cleansing in respect of sin and life-giving in respect of *ζωή*. (At the marriage feast in Cana water is turned into wine which, by its association with the Eucharist, suggests to the Christian understanding Christ's human life suffering and sacrificed. The miracle therefore is also a parable of the incarnation which is wrought by the divine power of God the Son through the unquestioning obedience of his human mother. So the atonement is accomplished by the life from heaven becoming the human life sacrificed on earth. The ruler of the feast's protest, like Mary's impatience, serves to emphasize the truth that God works in his own way and in his own time, not according to human methods or expectations.)

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the author's more elaborate sacrificial theory of the atonement conveys substantially the same teaching on the connection between the gift of the new life and the forgiveness of sins. Christ's blood here symbolizes his life that has passed through sacrificial death into the world to come which is also the eternal world ; and for Christians this blood is both a cleansing and a life-giving power. The author points to the fact that even under the old law there was no remission of sin without shedding of blood ; and he speaks of Christians who have had their consciences purged by Christ's blood, as men who have tasted the powers of the world to come.

Again we see in Hebrews, as to some extent also in 1 John, how the thought of the inseparability of forgiveness in Christ from the gift of the new life gave rise to the rigorism of the early Church which made men doubt the possibility of forgiveness for post-baptismal sin. This doubt sprang from the very intensity of the conviction that forgiveness in Christ must mean and had in fact meant a new birth or resurrection into the eternal life of the world to come. Once this radical transformation had taken place, once this new life had been really entered, it seemed that further sin was either impossible or, if committed, unpardonable. To understand that this difficulty was a real one throws a flood of light upon the New Testament doctrine of the atonement. To the first Christians the forgiveness brought by Christ was not just, as it is to liberal theologians, the signal revelation of God's universal loving kindness ; it was also an eschatological event, the first of the last things, the beginning of the new creation, the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers. From their point of view to believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting was all one thing.

(2) The next point to be noticed in the New Testament doctrine of the atonement is this : that the new life initiates a transformation of man's whole being and not merely of that part of it which in modern language we should call spiritual. This point is obscured by the fact that we tend quite mistakenly to interpret the biblical antithesis of spirit to flesh as though it were equivalent to our modern antithesis of spirit to matter. It needs careful discrimination to determine the identity and difference in meaning between our words spirit and spiritual and the Greek words *πνεῦμα* and *πνευματικός* as used in the New Testament. On the one hand Mr. Edwyn Bevan¹ has shown that in biblical Greek *πνεῦμα* is used to denote non-material reality ; and

¹ Gifford Lectures, *Symbolism and Belief*, Chapters VII and VIII.

in this respect it is the equivalent of *νοῦς* as used by Gentile authors for whom *πνεῦμα* always meant some sort of material breath or afflatus. On the other hand there is no term in biblical Greek equivalent to our "matter", and the Cartesian dichotomy of reality into spirit and matter is quite foreign to ancient thought as a whole. Even the Manichees were certainly not Cartesians, since they thought of matter as something which debased and hindered spirit rather than as a kind of being altogether disparate from spirit.

When we look closely at the text of the Greek Bible we find that, although the words *πνεῦμα* and *πνευματικὸς* do properly denote non-material reality, they are nevertheless used in a secondary and derivative sense of material things which are wholly quickened by, or responsive to, spirit. It is in that sense that St. Paul could speak of a spiritual body, and St. John could say that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. St. John's language certainly does not imply any dichotomy of human nature as though man's spirit had a quite different origin from his body. The meaning is that man's whole being can be quickened anew by the Divine Spirit, and that, until he is so quickened, man is just "flesh", alive like an animal but without true *ζωή*.

The importance of these considerations for the doctrine of the atonement is to show that the new life bestowed upon Christians is not confined in its effects to the human spirit, and above all is not to be identified with anything that we moderns commonly speak of as "a spiritual experience", i.e. some kind of inward awareness or apprehension which appears to be unmediated by the bodily senses. The new life which St. Paul calls "walking in the spirit" is as much manifested in outward and bodily acts as it is in inward and spiritual apprehensions, though its source is spiritual and divine. It is often hard to understand exactly what modern theologians have in mind when they speak of the spiritual experience which they take to be the inner essence of

Christianity. St. Paul however clearly distinguishes faith from spiritual sight, and he does not regard "visions" and "revelations" as belonging to the essence of life in Christ; he values them rather as particular gifts of the Spirit which are bestowed on some Christians. It would appear that according to him the really essential content and characteristic of the new life in all who have it is the *agape* of Christ shed abroad by the Spirit in human hearts; and here St. John emphatically agrees, though the author of Hebrews is curiously silent on this central point.

In fact the expression "spiritual life" seems to have three meanings which must be distinguished if we would avoid confusions introduced by the modern use of terms into our understanding of the New Testament.

(a) Spiritual life may be used to describe a power or faculty which belongs to human nature as such, in virtue of the fact that man is a spiritual creature made in God's image. In this sense all man's intellectual, moral and aesthetic activities, his regard for beauty, truth, and goodness are proof of his spiritual life. And such in a true sense they are.

(b) Spiritual life or spiritual experience may denote a purely inward and quasi-perceptual apprehension of non-material reality apparently not mediated by the bodily senses. In this case the word spiritual is almost synonymous with mystical, when the latter term is accurately used. Whether this faculty of inward apprehension belongs to human nature as such may be and is disputed. Many men appear to lack it altogether; but it may be contended that this appearance is due to the fact that the faculty, though present, has not been used or cultivated. In any case the faculty cannot be confined to Christians. Mysticism and the spiritual life which centres in mysticism have been the product or the basis of many different religions and philosophies. It should be noticed however that it is in this second sense that the ascetic theology of post-tridentine

Catholicism tends to use the expression "spiritual life". It is the chief aim of this theology to train and purify the inward eye of the soul by turning it away from all outward material and created things. It is significant that some Roman Catholic theologians have acknowledged in Plotinus, who rejected Christianity, a soul far advanced in spiritual life and illuminated by supernatural grace.

(c) Lastly, spiritual life may be taken to mean all human life in so far as it is quickened anew by the risen humanity of Christ operating through the gift of the Holy Spirit which followed upon the resurrection. This is the spiritual life of which the New Testament speaks. It belongs to Christians only and to all true Christians as such. It is the beginning of the life of the new creation or of eternal life; it is the tasting of the powers of the world to come. Its most essential and characteristic content is *agape*, God's triumphant love shed abroad in men's hearts through Christ, enabling them in faith to cry "Abba, Father", and establishing the Christian fellowship.

It may help us more clearly to distinguish this third meaning of spiritual life from the others, if we consider two words which St. Paul especially uses to describe it: calling and inheritance.

The use of the words *κλησις*, *κλητὸς*, and *καλεῖν* suggests that the new life begins with the response of the human will to a divine summons rather than in any inward vision of divine realities. And in spite of the circumstances of his own call and conversion and in spite of the fact that he frequently received inward guidance, St. Paul's language implies that the divine summons is normally given through the outward ear in the hearing of the gospel message.¹ This message cannot consist in a purely inward appeal, since it is concerned with certain outward and historical events to which the apostles are commissioned to bear witness. The new creation by which men are

¹ See Rom. x. 17; Gal. iii. 2-5.

summoned to new life is in the first instance an historical fact.

The words *κληρονομία* and *κληρονομεῖν* are perhaps still more significant. The Christian life is called an inheritance because it is received under the terms of a divine *διαθήκη* or testament. This metaphor of testamentary disposition was especially appropriate because of the fullness with which rights of inheritance were secured under both Roman and Jewish law, and also because inheritance represents an unearned increment which the recipient cannot be said to have merited by any exertion of his own. The theological suggestions of the metaphor therefore are (a) that the Christian possesses his new relation to God and all that it implies with absolute security; and (b) that he has in no sense deserved or earned it by his own efforts. The Christian's inheritance cannot possibly be alienated from him, so long as he remains a Christian and does not become apostate. The foretaste or first instalment of this inheritance is the spiritual life which is the immediate gift of the atonement.

(3) We are thus led to the consideration of another general characteristic of the New Testament doctrine of the atonement. Although the transformation wrought by the new creation affects man's whole being and has already begun in Christians, it is still incomplete, and must remain incomplete as long as this world lasts and the Christian continues to exist in it.

St. Paul explains this incompleteness by teaching that the Christian, although spiritually and in respect of his spirit he has already risen with Christ into newness of life, nevertheless still awaits the redemption of the body together with the transformation of the whole material universe. The body, while it remains still unredeemed and composed of the mortal flesh and blood belonging to this sinful world, continues to be a source of weakness and temptation, of physical pain and moral struggle; and the Christian has

much to endure and a hard battle to fight in Christ's power, before having borne the cross to the end he can enter the full triumph of the kingdom. To St. Paul the whole difficulty and conflict of the Christian life spring from the fact that the Christian is now living in two worlds at once. As long as the old world lasts, Christ's atoning and redemptive work is still, from one point of view, incomplete ; though in his own manhood, of which the Christian is by grace a member, the triumph of the resurrection has been already attained—in Pauline language Christ is the first-fruit of the resurrection and the world to come. Meanwhile, though the Christian must bring his mortal flesh into subjection, he must not seek to hasten his full salvation by escaping from the body, still less by dishonouring it ; for the body too is Christ's. Rather he must wait for the redemption of the body by God, whether or not he has to die physically before the final event of the great cosmic transformation whereby the whole universe is to be spiritualized and become perfectly responsive to God's Spirit. Then at last God will be all in all.

It is here that we have to notice the main difference in emphasis between St. Paul's doctrine and St. John's, though it remains a difference of emphasis only. The Johannine theology is throughout a theology of Christ's *person* rather than of his *work*. In St. John's thought the whole end and object of Christ's work is simply to effect the manifestation of his eternal person ; the flesh of Christ born on earth, crucified, and risen is the vehicle or organ of that manifestation. The raising of Lazarus, preceding the resurrection of Christ himself, shows Christ *to be* the resurrection and the life. The miracles of restoring sight to the blind show Christ *to be* the light of the world. His sufferings and crucifixion show him *to be* the way, the way of atonement and reconciliation between God and man, because they express the divine *agape* which takes Christ's followers into itself and into him. According to St. John, whatever

Christ's life on earth in all its various phases and aspects has manifested him to be, that he is eternally ; and by the gift of the Holy Spirit his disciples, while still living in this world, are taken up into the same eternal and spiritual life, the only true $\xi\omega\eta$.

Hence St. John does not think, as St. Paul thinks, of the new creation and its life, the fruits of the atonement, as succeeding in time the old creation and the old life, as though an eternal reality could be thought of as the effect of Christ's work in time. In his mind the great contrast is between the true life which Christ has manifested and which consists in union with himself, and the life of the world which passes away and is not $\xi\omega\eta$ at all. It follows that the life which Christ gives is not usually conceived by St. John as a resurrection, i.e. a life coming after and restoring in glory an old life which has died. Rather it is conceived as something so new as to be out of relation to all that went before ; it is a new birth or a birth from above, the absolute beginning in the human creature of the $\xi\omega\eta$ which itself is without beginning or end, eternal. And again what the Christian has to look forward to is not so much a cosmic transformation to be wrought by God at some future date, as the full vision of the eternal Christ which will be the consummation of the Christian's own Christ-likeness. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he (or it) shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is."

This peculiarity in the Johannine standpoint explains the oddly contradictory attitudes which the Johannine writings show towards the world ($\acute{o}$ $\kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$). On the one hand, all things have come into being through the Logos, God so loved the world that he sent Christ to be its Saviour, Christ himself is the light of the world, and he takes away its sin, being the propitiation for the sins not of Christians only but of the whole world. On the other hand the world lies in the evil one, and is in darkness, Christians must not

love it, it is passing away, and the contrast between the Christian fellowship and the world is absolute. The root of the contradiction is to be found in the fact that to St. John's mode of thought radical change is an impossibility, because he takes the eternal point of view from which everything has always been and always will be that which it really is. Thus St. John suggests that the converted man was even before his conversion ready for the truth and about to welcome it (cf. John iii. 20 f.) and that the apostate shows by his apostasy that he had never been really a Christian (1 John ii. 19). That is why St. John does not use St. Paul's resurrection-language about the Christian life; for resurrection suggests the restoration and transformation of a previous life, whereas to St. John life in Christ is a birth, an absolute beginning. And again that is why Calvinism, which makes the contrast between Christian and non-Christian life in every way absolute, so that there can be nothing good in the latter at all, finds its strongest proof-texts more readily in St. John than in St. Paul. The characteristic doctrines of extreme Calvinism are one-sidedly Johannine rather than Pauline. The emphasis on justification by faith not works, with its implication of a radical change in human life, is Pauline and Lutheran. The emphasis on predestination, with its implied denial of radical change, is in its essential thought Johannine and Calvinistic, though the actual word "predestinate" is St. Paul's. Extreme predestinationism is the result of the finite mind's attempt to regard temporal things from the eternal standpoint, and it is an error for which St. John's theology especially gives the occasion. It sees a world devoid of alternative potentialities, a world in which men have always been, not potentially but virtually, what finally they become. St. John saves himself from such barren fatalism by verbal self-contradictions. But the logical consistency of Calvinism is its undoing. It neglects the Johannine texts which speak of God's love for the world,

of the mission of Christ to be its Saviour, and of the sufficiency of his atonement to take away its sin.

Thus the New Testament doctrine of the atonement, just because it is so radically eschatological, brings us back in the end to the impossibility of adequately conceiving the relation of this world to the next, of time and history to eternity.

V. FROM THE FATHERS TO THE MIDDLE AGES

IT is not my purpose to attempt any historical sketch, however sketchy, of the doctrine of the atonement in the Christian Church. There are many textbooks in which that history can be studied. I want to indicate only the main transformations which Christian thought has undergone as it has sought to apprehend the significance of Christ's death and resurrection for human life and destiny, and at the same time to trace some of the underlying causes which have brought those transformations to pass.

In the apostolic age the Christian mind was dominated by the cosmic eschatology of the New Testament. The end of this world was expected in the near future. In the present Christ had given to believers a new life of sonship to God and communion with himself; and, although, since Jesus had suffered in the flesh, suffering and even martyrdom might be the Christian's lot on earth, nevertheless this new life was a true foretaste of the glorious life of the world to come. The new life was the possession of every faithful Christian, and in the later books of the New Testament we find evidence of the belief that grave sin after baptism might be equivalent to apostasy and unforgivable.¹ On the other hand the new life was not thought of simply or even chiefly as a particular inward experience of each individual; rather it was essentially manifested in the *agape* which animated the whole of the new community and joined its members in fellowship with one another and with God. The day was soon coming when the universe would be transformed into the perfect expression of that *agape*, and all enemies would be judged and finally punished. Meanwhile the power of *agape* to triumph

¹ See Heb. x. 28 f., xii. 15 f.; 1 John v. 16 f.

over all the powers of sin and death had already been manifested in Christ.

The survival of this apostolic point of view is clearly discernible in the first main type of atonement-theory which from the time of Irenaeus onwards began to be formulated in different ways and remained the principal theory of orthodox theologians until Anselm's criticism dealt it a mortal blow. This theory represented the death of Christ as a ransom-price paid by God to the devil to deliver man from the devil's power, or sometimes even as a divine stratagem by which the devil was caught so that he had to let man go free. (According to one celebrated analogy¹ the manhood of Christ was as it were the bait at which the devil snatched, his deity the hook within.) It would be superfluous to discuss the many obvious difficulties and objections to such a theory. The point to notice is that it remains true to the thought of the apostolic age in giving the death and resurrection of Christ a primarily cosmic and eschatological significance. It emphasizes the fact that the power of evil over Christians is already broken; they are delivered and redeemed and set in a new positive relation to God as his children. Indeed one of the most substantial difficulties of the theory—insufficiently noticed by critics who are mainly concerned with its superficial crudity—is to account for the still surviving power of evil displayed in the continuing sinfulness of Christians.

Even where no particular theory of the atonement is suggested the emphasis on the cosmic-eschatological significance of Christ's death and resurrection is often apparent in the writings of the early Fathers, especially those who lived in days of persecution. St. Athanasius's little treatise *De Incarnatione* is an interesting illustration of this emphasis. The theme of the book is that God's image in man, defaced by sin and corruption, has been restored by Christ. Thus,

¹ First found in *Gregory of Nyssa*.

although St. Athanasius is explicitly dealing with the doctrine of the incarnation, he is led to lay as much stress on Christ's work as on his person, and he is quite clear that the death and resurrection of Christ have delivered man from all the powers of the devil and have given him the new eternal life of victory over sin and death. The great witness to this fact he finds in the heroic death of the martyrs. Indeed it may well be argued that, considered from the standpoint of orthodox theology, the treatise is more satisfactory as an exposition of the atonement than of the incarnation.

But already in the preceding century a quite different type of metaphysic had been influencing Christian theology in the very city where Athanasius was patriarch. The thought of the apostolic age had been set in the context of Jewish-Christian eschatology ; the end of the world and the transformation of all creation were at hand, and had been heralded by Christ's resurrection. But the Platonism or neo-Platonism which was the basis of the Alexandrian philosophy of religion had no such expectation. In this world-view time was related to eternity as appearance or image to ultimate reality, and the history of the world had no foreseeable " end " at all in either sense of that word. The divine essence was pure spirit (*νοῦς*, not *πνεῦμα*) ; and the spiritual struggle and unrest of man were explained by the supposition that some emanation from the divine element had somehow descended or been degraded into association with matter and was constantly striving to rise again and return to its heavenly source and home. It was held that there was a divine spark in the spiritual part (*νοῦς*) of every man's being, and that religious philosophy could enable that spark to free itself from clogging matter and rise into eternal life in the contemplation of spiritual or divine reality. On its practical side this religious philosophy had its natural outcome in the asceticism which opposed spirit to matter.

•Now this kind of Hellenistic thought evidently runs counter to Christianity at three main points :

(a) It supposes that by descent into matter divine or spiritual being is degraded and becomes less truly divine, whereas Christianity teaches that the Incarnate puts off none of his Godhead in entering flesh.

(b) It interprets the process of salvation as the soul's raising of itself, not as a work of grace on the part of God who descends.

(c) In the ascent of the soul towards God matter is not transformed, nor is the natural man or the material world itself recreated or raised ; rather these are left behind.

All three points of difference are closely connected with the absence in Hellenistic thought of any cosmic eschatology or doctrine of world-salvation. It is essentially characteristic of Platonism that to it salvation is a matter of saving the individual soul by detaching it from the historical world.

The contrast of Platonic mysticism with Christian biblical theology is obvious. But it is no less obvious that, when the primitive Church's expectation of the near end of the world turned out to be mistaken, and the continued influence of the world and the flesh came to be more and more evident within the redeemed society, Christian thinkers were bound to be attracted by Platonistic spirituality. It was natural and indeed inevitable that attempts should be made both to baptize Platonism into Christ and to accommodate the Christian gospel to Platonism. These attempts begin with the Apologists of the second century, and they find their first systematic exponents in the Christian Platonists of Alexandria of whom the greatest were Clement and Origen. They deeply influenced the subsequent development of Catholic theology, not chiefly through the Alexandrians themselves, but rather through pseudo-Dionysius who was so highly esteemed in the Middle Ages as an authority on the spiritual life. Let us see how the significance of Christ's death and life come to be differently

interpreted when they are regarded from the standpoint of a Christianized neo-Platonism. What changes of emphasis are introduced into the theology of salvation?

(1) The cosmic eschatology of the Bible tends to disappear. Alexandrian methods of allegorical interpretation, in freeing the mind from bondage to the letter, change also the theological meaning of the biblical text. The earthly life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are no longer regarded as the great redemptive act of God in history, heralding the transformation of the created universe and producing its immediate fruit in the Christian community which through the *agape* shed abroad within it lives already by anticipation in the world to come. Rather, the gospel-story is the great pattern story or paradigm of God's eternal love for men and of the way in which the human soul is enabled to return out of a fallen material world to its home with God. Origen's doctrine inevitably confounds the creation of this present world with the fall into sin and corruption—he even plays on the double sense of the word *καταβολή*. Thus the soul's way of salvation is primarily the renunciation of the world and of the "natural" interests of human life: it is by such renunciation that it is made partaker of Christ's sufferings and crucifixion. Not that the more positive duty of love and service towards fellow-creatures is ever forgotten by this Platonized Christianity; for it remains Christian. But the emphasis is laid on self-training for spiritual salvation rather than on waiting for God's transformation of all things at the last day. And gradually the belief comes to be established that the absolutely critical and decisive moment in the soul's journey towards heaven is the moment of physical death, when the soul leaves mortal flesh for ever and severs its connection with matter. It is then that its final destiny to salvation or perdition is settled once for all. This belief receives the full authority of the Church from the twelfth century onwards.

Thus the destiny of the individual soul and its determination at the hour of death, not the regeneration (*παλιγγενεσία*) and restoration (*ἀποκατάστασις*) of all things at the second Advent comes to hold the central place in eschatological thought. And, as a result, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, though it is still held as a revealed truth, begins to lose its logical relevance to the essential hope which constitutes the gospel. The resurrection of Christ himself is thought of less as the first-fruits of the new world, the transfigured heaven and earth, than as the assurance that the faithful soul, like its Lord, will rise into heavenly glory after death.

(2) A consequential change takes place in the conception of spiritual life. Under neo-Platonic influence spiritual life tends to be identified with the inward experiences of those who follow the path of ascetic renunciation. This conception of spirituality has deeply influenced the science of the spiritual life which has been elaborated by the ascetic theology of the Catholic Church. The fruits of this science show that it is indeed of incalculable value and importance for the theory and practice of the Christian religion. But our recognition of its profound value ought not to blind us to the fact that the science in question has tended to restrict the term "spiritual life" to a meaning narrower than, and in some ways different from, the meaning which the New Testament would suggest for it. Recent developments in the Roman Catholic Church, such as the so called "liturgical movement", show that its theologians are themselves not unaware of this limitation and its dangers.

(3) It was already obvious to Clement of Alexandria, and it became increasingly obvious as whole nations and peoples flocked into the Church, that it was impossible to expect all Christians to follow the truly spiritual way, as that was understood by a Platonized Christianity. Thus the Church was gradually obliged to recognize and allow for the existence of two classes of Christians within its

membership. The recognition of a double standard of Christian living was definitely established by the Middle Ages. Those who led the religious life as priests, monks or nuns, formed as it were a Church within the Church. These followed the stricter rule of renunciation, poverty, chastity and obedience, and were called to exhibit the Christian life in its purity. The other class was formed of Christians living in the world, marrying, owning property and following secular avocations. These could not to the same extent escape the contaminations of worldly life or exhibit Christian perfection. But, if they were faithful in observing the less arduous rules of religious and moral duty which the Church laid down for them, they were assured of salvation at the hour of death. At the hour of death their salvation was made certain; yet their souls, like those of the religious who departed in a state of grace without having attained positive saintliness, must undergo a period of purgation, longer or shorter, before they could enter the blessedness of heaven. Thus the doctrine of purgatory became an essential part of Catholic teaching about the Last Things.

If then we make a broad comparison between the theology of the Middle Ages and that of the New Testament and the apostolic age, we find that two great changes have taken place which, as I hope to show, vitally affect the doctrine of the atonement, and that these changes were due in great measure to the influence of Platonism.

(1) A mainly individualistic eschatology has replaced the mainly cosmic eschatology of the Bible. The metaphysical importance of time is found less in connection with world history than in the life story of the individual soul. Time is thought of less as the process of events whereby God is bringing this world to an end in order to establish the gloribus and perfect universe of the world to come; it is thought of more as the process by which each individual soul reaches its eternal destiny in heaven or hell. The

saints go straight to heaven at death, those who die in mortal sin go straight to hell ; the rest follow the saints to heaven, as soon as each has fulfilled his allotted period of purgatory, which of necessity is regarded as temporal though it is beyond the grave. The great transformation of the universe at the last day, for which the first Christians had so eagerly looked and waited, seems almost to become an irrelevance ; it is hard to fit it in logically to the medieval cosmology.

The individualism in the eschatology of the Middle Ages is increased by a zeal for legal justice which is perhaps of Latin origin rather than Greek or Hebrew. It was this sense of justice which made intolerable the rigorous Augustinian doctrine of hell, which consigned to everlasting torment all who died without being baptized into the true faith of Christianity. Accordingly, scholastic theologians, medieval and post-medieval, have formulated a doctrine of limbo, a state of being intermediate, as it were, between heaven and hell, into which pass after death those souls which were not saved by Christ's grace but yet had not been guilty of any such mortal sin or positive wickedness as could merit the pain of everlasting punishment. In limbo, it is held, they may enjoy for ever happiness of a natural sort, though they are excluded from salvation and the vision of God. The same carefulness for justice led to belief in the manifold grades of blessedness and of torment, such as we find depicted for us by the imagination of Dante, who, it is worth while to remember, was about eight years old when St. Thomas Aquinas died.

Indeed it is difficult to resist the conclusion that in their glosses upon the traditional faith medieval theologians were inclined to consider individual justice more than cosmic redemption. The *Divina Commedia* is indeed magnificent beyond compare, but it is not quite Christianity, though apart from Christianity not a line of it could have been written. A universe which includes what is pictured in the *Inferno* is not quite the ἀποκατάστασις πάντων or

the fully spiritual world to come wherein God is all in all. Justice is vindicated, but the full implications of universal redemption are missed. To this difficulty we shall return.

(2) The second change is that the Christian's spiritual life tends to be identified with the cultivation in the individual soul of an inward devotional experience by means of prayer, meditation and ascetic self-discipline. The notion of a corporate spirituality which permeates every activity of a society comprising members with every variety of function has almost disappeared. Such corporate spirituality is found only in the life of religious orders among those who in a special sense have renounced the world. The tension between the outward and the inward and between the secular and the religious has been emphasized. The reason for this tension is rightly found in the Cross. But spiritual religion tends to centre in personal devotion to Christ crucified and the sharing of his sufferings through the forsaking of the world. The witness to this fact is in the medieval type of crucifix and in such a devotional classic as St. Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*. The full implications of Christ's resurrection as St. Paul understood them, that through the risen and triumphant Christ *agape* can permeate and spiritualize every corner of human activity, outward as well as inward, secular as well as religious, and that by this permeation the Church here and now anticipates the life of the world to come, have been obscured. We miss the paean of world-conquest and world-redemption in the whole Body of Christ glorified.

With all this in mind, let us now glance at the main features of that theory of the atonement which is typical of the Middle Ages and has remained the classical theory of Western Catholicism in spite of changes introduced by later theologians from St. Thomas Aquinas to Grotius. I refer of course to St. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*, which substituted *satisfaction* for *ransom* as the main idea in atonement-theory. Its great merit and its great defect are both

characteristically medieval. The one is its zeal for law and justice ; the other is its insufficient appreciation of the redemptive power of Christ's resurrection. In other words St. Anselm fails to realize the intimate connection of the atonement with eschatology.

From one point of view indeed St. Anselm's great work penetrates much deeper than any zeal for justice could take it. But in this respect it is, strictly speaking, concerned with the theology of the incarnation rather than of the atonement. In commenting on St. Athanasius's *De Incarnatione* I remarked that it was more satisfactory as an exposition of the atonement than of the incarnation. Of the *Cur Deus Homo* the converse is equally true. For St. Anselm's very legalism leads him to argue that only man can offer the satisfaction required by man's sin ; yet only God can provide the infinite satisfaction which alone can suffice. Therefore it follows that in Jesus Christ God must have descended actually to become man. The apparent legalism of the argument thinly veils an intense realization of God's self-humiliating love, and its implications lead to a profounder conception of the incarnation than any which is suggested by teaching a formal assumption of manhood by the deity according to the distinctions so carefully drawn and maintained by St. Thomas Aquinas.

But now consider the inherent defect of all satisfaction theories as an account of the atonement. They are weak, just where the ransom theories were strong. For the ransom theories, in spite of their crude mythology about the devil, echoed from the New Testament the note of cosmic redemption and of the life of the world to come already present in the Church. In St. Anselm this note is no longer heard. Christ, by offering satisfaction for man's sin, has, as it were, cleared man's account with God, and set man free to start afresh with his past sins forgiven. That is the work of the Cross, which, as St. Anselm might have gone on to say, is ever represented and renewed in the sacrifice

of the Mass. But what of the new life and power, given by membership in the Body of the risen Christ, whereby the believing Christian may be assured that, because he belongs to God's new creation and is already God's child, his fresh start will not lead to the same old disaster as Adam's? Of all that the *Cur Deus Homo* says nothing at all. St. Anselm is occupied with showing that the satisfaction offered on the Cross has cleared man's account; and for the rest he contents himself with suggesting, almost like a modern Abelardian, that the Christian has the wonderful example of the man Jesus to help him to follow the true road to heaven. In effect the doctrine of the atonement has become a doctrine about the Cross of Christ only and the forgiveness of past sin only; it is no longer, as it was to St. Paul, a doctrine about Christ's cross and resurrection, about justification and new creation, about forgiveness for the past and fresh power for the future—all regarded as inseparably one.

It will be seen that the central defect of St. Anselm's theory is closely connected with the medieval legalism which insisted on conceiving the problem of sin and atonement in terms of merit. Merit is a conception which of necessity refers to the past only. For there can be no merit in respect of what has not yet been done. The notion of the transference of merit, even if we grant its possible validity, can only serve to assure men that the shortcomings and offences of which in the future they will have been guilty, may be forgiven and not laid to their charge. It cannot by itself assure them of any new power which will enable them not again to fall short or offend.

St. Thomas's teaching on the atonement is certainly less open than St. Anselm's to the foregoing criticisms—he seems indeed to be partially aware of their force. He brings together many more different lines of thought than does St. Anselm, and makes a great effort both to do justice to Scripture and to sum up the whole tradition of Christian

thought on the atonement. In spite, or rather perhaps because, of all this, however, the general impression which St. Thomas's characteristically careful and discriminating statements leave on the mind is rather that of a patchwork than of any single and coherent theory such as that which the *Cur Deus Homo* undoubtedly does provide.

St. Thomas begins by laying it down¹ that the passion of Christ (he does not at this point mention the resurrection) causes our salvation in four ways ; by the modes of merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, and redemption. Under the first he brings in the idea of Christ as head of the Church in order to explain the transference of merit, and under the last he is careful to insist that the passion of Christ delivers us from the power as well as from the guilt of sin. He then expands the latter idea,² declaring that by Christ's passion we are reconciled to God, and that the gate of heaven is opened to us.

Thus St. Thomas speaks more clearly than St. Anselm of the positive effects of the atonement, though he still refers them exclusively to the passion of Christ. However in answering an objection,³ he proceeds to make the important assertion : *Christus sua passione meruit nobis introitum regni coelestis et impedimentum removit ; sed per suam ascensionem nos quasi in possessionem regni coelestis introduxit.* And later on, in dealing with the resurrection, he says⁴ that in the justification of souls two things concur, the remission of guilt and newness of life through grace ; and that, while as regards the efficacy which works through the divine power both the passion and the resurrection of Christ are the cause of our justification in both respects, yet, if we regard Christ as example, the death causes remission of guilt, the resurrection newness of life. The passion remains the meritorious cause.

¹ *Summa Theologica*, Pt. III, Q. 48.

² *Ibid.*, Q. 49.

³ *Ibid.*, Q. 49, art. 5, ad. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Q. 56, art. 2, ad. 4.

It will thus be seen that St. Thomas brings in to his doctrine of the atonement two great principles which St. Anselm had neglected, Christ as living head of the Church, and his resurrection as necessary to complete the reconciling work of his passion. Nevertheless these ideas do not really fit into the Anselmian scheme based on the notions of merit and satisfaction, which St. Thomas still retains. Satisfaction can refer only to sins already committed, and has nothing to do with the new life of victory over sin. And transference of merit is but a poor and inadequate notion for helping us to conceive the way in which Christ's atoning work is made effective in the members of his body. St. Thomas's discussion of the atonement contains all the materials for a theory of the atonement, but no theory at all ; and in both respects it differs from the *Cur Deus Homo*.

Speaking generally we may say that what medieval theology lacked was the notion of the Church with all its members as a whole community living in the world yet not of it, carrying on all the secular activities necessary to a temporal society, yet transforming all by the new relation to God attained through Christ—that glorious picture of which we get glimpses in the New Testament and the primitive Church, and which rises before our minds once more, as soon as we take seriously that the Church here and now is meant to be not only the society which suffers with the Crucified but also the society which in its own life anticipates the new heaven and the new earth of the world to come. As an organization the Church of the middle ages rules the world ; yet its Christianity has not conquered, but rather compromised with, the spirit of the world. The Church is aware of that fact ; and, just for that reason, it lays upon its truly religious members a rule of world-renunciation which in many of its features is Platonistic rather than biblical. Hence in medieval thought the supernatural and the religious stand above and outside of the natural and the secular. The former do not really descend into or

incarnate themselves in the latter, so as to enable them here and now to anticipate and reach out towards their resurrection in glory. It is only the mystic who by separating his spirit from the world of this natural creation may catch a glimpse of the glory that shall be ; and that glory, as contemplated by the mystic, seems to have but little connection with the process of history or the resurrection of the flesh. The eschatology of world-redemption becomes an eschatology of other-worldliness. Inevitably therefore to medieval thought and theory the atonement is a means of purgation rather than an instrument of redemption and a pledge of resurrection.

VI. FROM THE REFORMERS TO THE LIBERAL PROTESTANTS

IN general the theories of Lutheran and Reformed theologians followed the main lines of the juridical or Latin type of theory sketched by Anselm, and introduced no radical change into the theology of the atonement. There were of course many not unimportant variations from the Anselmian theory itself. Most Protestant theologians have preferred analogies drawn from criminal law to those drawn from civil law. They have thought of sin as a crime rather than as a tort. That is to say, they have represented the crucified Saviour as vicariously bearing the penalty of sin rather than as offering satisfaction to the injured majesty of God. This change of emphasis springs from a certain difference in conceiving the manner of God's sovereignty. Medieval theologians were so deeply impressed with the universal majesty of law that they were sometimes inclined to think and speak as though God himself were somehow subject to it and had his rights as creator and sovereign under it. Theoretically at least under feudalism all sovereignty was constitutional sovereignty, and all wrong-doing an offence against law which somehow contravened the rights which another party enjoyed under the law. This political conception inevitably influenced the theology of the time. On the other hand the Reformers, especially Calvin, found the origin and basis of all law simply in the will or fiat of God, and to them the essence of sin was not injury to another's rights but the crime of personal disobedience. In the final judgement then God appears not as injured party but solely as righteous and avenging judge.

Grotius indeed restated the whole theory of the atonement in terms of sovereignty and government. He thinks of God as occupying the position neither of judge nor of injured

party but of sovereign ruler. A governor, he says, cannot fitly proclaim an amnesty for past offences, unless he first secures the majesty of the law against contempt. Christ therefore voluntarily underwent the death of the cross in order that men might be deprived of all excuse for treating law lightly on the ground of the divine forgiveness. This is another modification of the Anselmian theory which does not touch its essential basis or limitations.

A more radical divergence from the Anselmian type of theory is noted by Aulén¹ in the teaching of Luther. Luther differed both from the scholastics and from Calvin in his much more drastic anti-legalism. According to him the victory of redemption was won not only over the powers of evil, sin, death, and the devil, but also over the law itself, God's own righteous law which condemned the sinner. By this teaching Luther gave a certain paradoxical exaggeration to a thought which is undoubtedly St. Paul's, and he did much to restore the conception of Christ's atonement as the victorious act of God's power accomplished through a miracle of condescending and self-humiliating love. But he did not, like St. Paul, emphasize the close connection between the new life imparted through the atonement and the resurrection life of the world to come. And just for that reason Luther's own teaching and career represent on the whole the emancipation of the Christian emotions from scholastic rationalism and the rigid rules of ascetic discipline rather than any fresh descent of heaven to earth or even any full restoration of apostolic Christianity. In order to understand Luther in his true spiritual greatness as well as in his occasional coarseness and lack of moral perception it must be remembered that he had the temperament of a musician which had been inhibited in his early manhood by the unsympathetic discipline of a monastery.

On the whole then it cannot be said that the effect of the Reformation was to restore the gospel of the atonement as it

¹ In *Christus Victor*.

appears in the New Testament. Indeed the circumstances of the time made such a restoration very difficult and perhaps well-nigh impossible. In order to appreciate the difficulty, we must try to set the situation of the reforming theologians of the sixteenth century in its historical perspective.

In the apostolic and sub-apostolic ages the Christian Church had been a tiny community existing within the framework of a pagan empire and having no responsibility for the general organization of society. It was expecting the end of the world at no very distant date. Meanwhile it accepted in general the institutions and the outward order of the society in which it found itself, while within its own body it permeated and transformed them all with the spirit of its own new-worldly life, the gift of Christ's risen manhood. Thus it accepted the institution of slavery, the conditions of trade and commerce, the order of secular government and the law courts, as these existed in the pagan world. It made no attack on these institutions, it did not even agitate for their reform; but within its own community it transfigured their operation with the love which bound all Christians in an equal fellowship. If slave owner and slave were both Christians, forthwith slavery ceased to be an offence against God or man. Onesimus might be Philemon's slave, and still the Church at Colossae might be a true "colony of heaven". Even the later Fathers surprise us by their hesitancy in condemning slavery as a relation between men which is wrong in itself and contrary to natural law. They acknowledge indeed that it could not exist either in a wholly innocent or in a perfect society, but, as far as this present world is concerned, they seemed inclined to content themselves with Pauline teaching about the Christian remedy.

But meanwhile the great entry of the world into the Church under Constantine had altered the whole situation with which the Church was confronted, and had made it much more difficult to apply the gospel of the atonement

in practice. The world was still the sinful old world; and it seemed likely to last indefinitely in time. But now it was becoming Christendom. In other words, the world with which the Church was concerned was a world of professing Christians. It certainly was not ready to be ruled by the spirit of love. Yet the Church could not disclaim the responsibility for teaching its own members how to rule it.

The Middle Ages made honest, and not wholly ineffectual efforts to solve the problem. The principle of the solution was to admit a double standard in the Christian life, and to create a Church within the Church. Those who had been the elect out of the world became an élite in the Church. Those who were not of the élite, i.e. ordinary Christians living "in the world", were in return for obedience to a not too exacting rule of life promised forgiveness now and heavenly life hereafter. The élite alone, who renounced the world, were called and enabled to realize something of the heavenly life now. It is against this kind of background that St. Anselm's atonement theory has to be viewed in order to be understood. The atonement achieved by the Cross and mediated through the Mass must be effective for *all* Christians. Therefore its present fruit is confined to what is open to all—forgiveness, a fresh start, a cleaning of the sheet. The positive gift of new and heavenly life is confined in the present to the inner circle of those who follow Christ according to the way of perfection. And since perfection is held to depend on world renunciation, this gift is inevitably conceived as a gift of other-worldly rather than new-worldly life. At the same time an individualistic eschatology, which places the final judgement at the moment of physical death, takes the place of the expectation of the imminent end of the world. This doctrine becomes the sanction of the Church's authority in demanding obedience from those living in the world. Inevitably the biblical doctrine of resurrection, though loyally retained as part of the Christian revelation,

loses its central position and logical relevance in the whole scheme of Christian theology.

Then came the Reformers. They rejected altogether the principle of the double standard and also the medieval distinction between the religious life and life in the world. To them these things savoured of "salvation by works", and were condemned by the great watch-words *sola fide*, *sola gratia*. So far, it may be granted, the teaching of the Reformers was, at least superficially, nearer to that of the apostles. But, unlike the apostles, the Reformers were confronted with the awful phenomenon of Christendom, i.e. of the world obviously unredeemed and unruled by Christ's Spirit and yet within the Church. They could not escape all responsibility for the secular government and ordering of this un-Christian world which nevertheless professed Christianity. And at the time of the Reformation it must indeed have seemed utterly unrealistic to imagine that this Christendom could be treated as a genuine colony of heaven anticipating in its whole social life and order the world to come.

The Reformers therefore, who founded what Troeltsch has called the Church-type, as opposed to the sect-type, of Protestantism, however passionately they proclaimed the Pauline gospel of salvation by faith only, could not give any full force or application to what in St. Paul's mind was the complement of that gospel, the doctrine of the new world already inaugurated through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, before the old world has wholly passed away. Hence the Reformers were almost obliged to retain, or to fall back upon, atonement theories of the Anselmian type, juridical theories which provided for forgiveness of sins in the present and tended to defer the heavenly life to a future beyond the grave. Indeed by rejecting the "religious" life, in the sense in which medieval Catholicism had understood that term, Protestant Churchmen only made the deferment more complete. Again, their rejection of purgatory did

nothing to modify the individualism of medieval eschatology. The moment of physical death remained the absolutely decisive moment for each soul. Protestantism only emphasized its finality.

But the doctrine of salvation by faith only, once it has been shorn of the direct connection which it has in the New Testament with the presence of the world to come, becomes, as the experience of the Reformation shows, highly dangerous. Christian faith could not be to the Reformers, in the same sense as it was to St. John, the victory which overcomes the world. The Reformers were too acutely aware of the unconquered evil of the world continuing within the Church. On the other hand, they had repudiated the way of perfection found, as medieval Catholicism had found it, in the "religious" life of ascetic renunciation. To them the only way of perfection was the way of faith, and this way must be the same for all Christians alike; faith was the sole and sufficient mark which differentiated all those who were in a state of grace and salvation from all who were not. In the result, the Reformers tended to substitute for the medieval distinction between religious and secular Christianity a much more strongly marked division between those who had saving faith and those who lacked it. St. Augustine as well as the New Testament could be appealed to in support of this great division. The Pauline text that "all that is not of faith is sin" was torn from its context and construed to mean that no one who does not consciously rely on faith in Christ can ever perform any act pleasing to God or other than sinful. On the other hand, it was suggested, one who has faith may perform acts which externally regarded are in a degree sinful (though necessary to maintain life and order in a world utterly corrupted by sin), and yet because of his faith he does not by such an act endanger his own salvation, for he receives forgiveness as he does it. The famous phrase *simul justus et peccator* may be taken to mean that a faithful man's sinful acts do not affect

his justification. And, although even when thus construed the phrase contains a truth, the danger of its perversion is obvious ; and it is a danger which Luther at least did not wholly escape. The problem set by the influx of the world into the Church thus finds a solution radically different from that proposed by " the double standard " of medieval Catholicism. And it may well be doubted whether the new solution is an improvement on the old, though of late years it has been to some extent revived by neo-Calvinists such as Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr.

It remains to notice an important difference between the Lutheran and the Calvinist attitudes towards the secular ordering of life in the State.

Lutheranism, while acknowledging the necessity of the state in a sinful world and the duty of the Christian not only to obey but also to take his share in the administration of secular government, nevertheless disallowed the claim of Christian faith to control the State's activity. The result is a division of provinces between State and Church which in effect leaves the State supreme so far as the affairs of this world are concerned and discourages the initiation of political or social reform in the name of Christianity. Lutherans have often appeared to hold that allegiance to Caesar and allegiance to God operate each in a separate sphere of the Christian's life, and that any Christian social movement, such as that championed in England by Maurice, Scott Holland and Gore, fatally confuses the two. Lutheranism, which in the person of its founder originally represented the release of the emotions from the tyranny of law, has remained on the whole radically anti-legalist. It has encouraged other-worldliness but not Pharisaism ; it has bred pietists but not Puritans. On principle it would submit to a Herod rather than stand with a John Baptist.

Far otherwise is it with Calvinism. It has stood for the principle that in a fallen world all true authority belongs to God's elect, and therefore the Church must seek not only

to be independent of the State but even to control it where it has the power. More perhaps than any other form of Christianity it has assimilated the New Testament to the Old and made the gospel itself appear as a more rigid and exacting law. In this island it has produced the astonishingly tough and somewhat grim religion which is characteristic of the Scotch. Like Lutheranism, it repudiated the "religious" life of world-renunciation; but, in striving to avoid the Lutheran compromise with the world, it has frowned on apparently innocent pleasures, while it brought into the pursuit of secular business a zeal such as religion alone can maintain. The great difference between Puritan and Catholic asceticism is this, that, whereas the former represents what it renounces as being in itself wrong and sinful, the latter makes renunciation a voluntary giving up for Christ's sake of what in itself is good. Calvinism is the least humanistic of the great divisions into which Christendom was split at the Reformation. That is the chief reason for its revival to-day. But its bane has always been a Pharisaism which harks back from the gospel to the law, and makes itself twofold more Pharisaic by basing on faith alone the very law which it enforces.

It seems that for those, Catholic and Protestant alike, who content themselves with a juridical theory of the atonement, the work of the atonement stops short, as it were, at the beginning of the Christian life: it accords the believer the forgiveness which cleans the sheet and gives him a fresh start, but it does not enable him here and now to anticipate the *end*, it does not place him through union with his risen Lord already within the world to come, so that he may make the life of that world progressively manifest in all his earthly living. This restriction becomes only the more evident and serious when the medieval way of perfection through the "religious" life is rejected. For then, once the presumptuous dream of sinless perfection is excluded, the Christian's life in this world is reduced to a series of

fresh starts in which the original forgiveness is renewed but there seems to be hardly room for positive progress at all, since the truly heavenly life is deferred altogether beyond the grave. Such in fact has been one result of the Protestant emphasis on the continuing power and presence of sin. Consider the words of the invitation in the Anglican Communion Service, the work of that greatest of Protestant liturgy-makers, Archbishop Cranmer. "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins and intend to lead a new life . . ." The suggestion is that the communicant is "to turn over a new leaf" and begin again every time he communicates. Cranmer does not dare to write, as St. Paul or St. John would surely have written, "intend to lead *the* new life", the life of God's new world inaugurated by Christ's resurrection. The full authentic note of victory is lacking, because the conception of the atonement is too narrowly juridical. Is it too much to say that orthodox Protestants, dismayed by the world's invasion of the Church, have too often substituted for the escapism of the Middle Ages a defeatism which more effectually prevents us from realizing the fullness of our Christian heritage? The strongest influence in contemporary Protestantism is the melancholy and self-tormented genius of Kierkegaard. Too many of his followers seem to think that *sola fides* means faith without hope for this world, and they praise the saving virtue of despair.

The next great transformation in Christian thought about the atonement comes with the Liberal Protestantism of the nineteenth century which had felt the full effects of the new humanism and of the biological doctrine of evolution.

Liberal Protestantism produced a group of theories about the atonement which are usually known as "subjective" or "exemplarist", though their exponents often resent these descriptions as misleading. These theories revive arguments used by Abelard against St. Anselm, and they are sometimes called, with doubtful justification,

“Abelardian”. But from our point of view their most significant feature is that they abandon entirely the direct connection, which in St. Paul’s mind is so clear, between the atonement and the inauguration of the new world by God’s act in the resurrection of Jesus. This connection, as we have seen, had been seriously weakened by the juridical theories of the Middle Ages and of the Reformation ; but “liberal” theories would destroy it altogether. For their common characteristic is this, that they represent Christ’s atoning work as nothing more than a clear declaration of God’s love to man, which has of course always been the same. This conclusion they regard as the only alternative to supposing that the effect of the atonement is to change God’s attitude towards man from wrath to love, as some of the more unbalanced juridical theories had indeed seemed to suggest. In reaction against such a monstrous doctrine liberalism maintained that the atonement in itself only alters the situation between God and man, in so far as it gives to man new and convincing evidence (convincing *de jure* if not *de facto*) of what has always been true, viz., that God loves him. Thus there is no directly *cosmic* importance at all in the death and resurrection of Christ : the order and constitution of God’s universe remain exactly the same after as before, no radically new relation of men to God has come into existence, and it may well be argued that Christian theologians have no longer any interest in insisting that the body of Jesus was raised from the tomb. Viewed in this way the liberal theories of the atonement take us one step further away from the New Testament than the juridical theories. They are called “subjective” because according to them the effects of Christ’s atonement begin only when the human soul accepts and believes in God’s love declared in Jesus Christ. It seems seldom even to occur to liberal theologians that a mere declaration of God’s unchanging love, however convincing, is something less than the mighty act of victory, deliverance, and new

creation, which the apostolic writers believed the cross and resurrection of Jesus to be.

The effects of liberal theories of the atonement on the Christian hope for this world have been both interesting and ambiguous. On the one hand the weakening of the sense of any cosmic change or new creation inaugurated by Christ's victory over sin and death has encouraged political conservatism and the doctrine that the Church ought to support the established order in this world by "not interfering in politics". On the other hand many liberals in theology have been moved by new gospels of evolutionary or revolutionary progress to substitute for the supernatural eschatology of the Bible the hope of a sort of golden age to be attained in the future history of this world by the operation of natural law and human endeavour. Thus theological liberalism has been, and still is, found in alliance with every school of political and economic thought from high Toryism and Cobdenism on the one hand to Communism on the other.

In any case, however, such liberalism, just in proportion as it takes seriously the belief that a mere declaration of God's love is sufficient to take away the sin of the world, cannot but betray a weakened sense of the *vitium* of sin and a failure to recognize that sin is a power and influence partially at least corrupting and perverting the whole created order in this world. "Subjective" theories of the atonement and optimism about future history naturally go together in the Christian mind, when the *vitium* of sin is underrated. For if sin were merely a matter of personal *reatus*, and still more if it were due merely to survival of animal instincts not yet fully controlled by reason, then indeed why should not a clear manifestation of God's love be sufficient to produce the full fruits of repentance and to remove even in this world the consequences of the fall? This association of ideas is the basis of the well known epigram that "the Nestorian Christ is a fitting Saviour

for the Pelagian man ". And it is in effect to the Nestorian Christ and the Pelagian man that liberal theology has been seeking to recall us. It rejects or ignores the beliefs, so clearly present in the New Testament, that in this world the powers of evil are permanently dominant, and that, in order to conquer them and enable men to share his victory, Christ had to open a new world, the kingdom of heaven, to all believers. It is true that in minds influenced by Christianity the disappearance of these beliefs has often been associated with a noble zeal for political and economic reform and with systematic efforts to grapple with the evils of society which have put to shame the hesitations and inhibitions of the traditionally orthodox. But to-day the apparent bankruptcy of belief in human nature and its ideals is producing among Christian theologians of all schools an even stronger and more widespread reaction towards theocentric supernaturalism. The power as well as the guilt of sin are once more recognized ; " idealism " has become almost a term of abuse ; and stern facts seem to teach that in this aeon the kingdoms of the cosmos can never become the kingdom of God and his Christ.¹ Only a

¹ See Rev. xi. 15.

Confusion is caused in the discussion of Biblical eschatology by the fact that three different Greek words are rendered " world " in our versions :—

(1) *Αἰών* (Lat. *aevum*) means either an age, cycle, or enormously long period of time, or else unlimited or everlasting time. This is generally the word which stands in the Greek text, when this " world " is contrasted with the " world " to come, and also when the end of the " world " is mentioned. According to Jewish tradition the coming of the Messiah would inaugurate a new *αἰών*. And with this new *αἰών* Jewish-Christian eschatology speaks of a new heaven and a new earth as coming into existence. (See Rev. xxi. 1.)

(2) *Κόσμος* (Lat. *mundus*) means the God-created universe and its order, which in this present *αἰών* are marred by sin and largely dominated by evil powers. *Κόσμος* is the word in the Greek text when the " world " is spoken of either as hostile to God or as the object of God's love and saving action.

(3) *Οἰκουμένη* (to which the nearest Lat. equivalent is *orbis terrarum*) means the inhabited earth. But in one passage (Heb. ii. 5) where the expression " world to come " is used in our versions, the word " world " represents *οἰκουμένη* in the Greek ; and what the author most probably intends to denote is " the inhabited earth as it will exist in the *αἰών* to come," though some scholars cite Wisd. i. 7 in order to show that *ἡ οἰκουμένη* can be used as the equivalent of *τὰ πάντα*, all things.

pale ghost of the old optimistic humanitarian liberalism survives. The general attitude of Protestant theologians to this world is coming more and more to resemble that of the original Reformers, although their desire to re-emphasize the uniqueness of God's redemptive act in Christ makes them peculiarly suspicious of any human analogy as a basis for atonement theory.

VII. THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF "SACRIFICE"

OUR brief survey of the transformations which Christian thought about the atonement has undergone has suggested that from the time of Constantine onwards something vital was lost which was never afterwards recovered. It is the great value of Aulén's *Christus Victor* to have recalled our minds to that truth. If I were asked to say more precisely *what* has been lost, I should try to express in rather different language what Aulén means when he protests against the separation of the doctrine of the atonement from the doctrine of salvation. What has been lost is the directly eschatological reference of the atonement which is conspicuous in primitive Christianity. In other words, what we need to recover is the perception that the atonement has not really been effected at all apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ which is itself the inauguration of the new world, and by which the beginning of the life of the world to come is already communicated to faithful Christians. A most significant illustration of this need is the fact that in the Apostles' Creed the clause about the forgiveness of sins is not placed in immediate connection with the clauses about his sufferings and death nor even with those about his resurrection and second coming ; it comes immediately after the clauses about the Church and the Communion of Saints, and immediately before the final clause about the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. The second paragraph of the Creed recites the saving effects of Christ's earthly and heavenly life, beginning with the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is in that context and in closest connection with the new fellowship of Christians consummated in their final resurrection, that "the forgiveness of sins" has its place. The forgiveness which is mediated by the atonement is inseparable from the new heavenly

and eternal and spiritual life in which the atonement issues.

The primitive Church, with its recent memory of the Lord's resurrection, its expectation of the imminent end of the world and with the obvious opposition of its fellowship to the society of this world, found that connection easy to maintain. We do not find it easy. Times have changed, and seem likely to go on changing indefinitely. The Lord's resurrection is now in the distant past, the end of the world in a future which is for practical purposes almost infinitely distant. As the Church has extended over the world, so the world has pressed into the Church, and the opposition between the two societies is no longer so clear and definite. And yet, if we forget the immediate connection of the atonement with the life of the world to come, we are missing something essential to the Christian faith, we are losing an essential part of the significance of the Church's being, and our doctrine of the relation of the Church to the State and to the world is inevitably plunged in confusion. As Aulén says, every atonement-theory must be conceived as but one aspect of the whole doctrine of salvation.

And what sort of atonement-theory will restore the connection that has been lost? It is precisely at this point that Latin juridical theories are defective. And liberal, subjective, Abelardian theories seek to correct them only by loosening still further the links between atonement and resurrection. What are we to say to our own bewildered generation, on which with terrible reality the end of another age has come? I venture to suggest that what theology needs is a careful rethinking and restatement of a theory of the atonement which is fundamentally sacrificial rather than juridical—a theory which finds its starting point in the only theory of the atonement which the New Testament presents, viz. that of Hebrews.

Let us first of all try to set down a preliminary and inclusive definition of the meaning of the word sacrifice.

For our purpose we need a definition which takes account both of the notions of primitive religion and of the non-religious uses of the word in modern speech, and which especially regards its use in the Bible. We may, I think, take leave to assume that in primitive religion the notion of making a gift is fundamental in sacrifice and that this notion has never entirely disappeared in modern speech, though there is often no definite idea of any particular person or persons to whom the gift is offered. We can then say that *sacrifice is essentially the voluntary giving up of something of value to someone for some purpose.*

This definition requires some explanatory remarks :

(1) In the religious meaning of the term the someone to whom the gift is offered is God, although in the moral meaning it may be one's neighbour or one's fellow men, or else the emphasis may be entirely on the renunciation of the giver, so that there is no thought of any actual receiver of the gift. Christianity has of course greatly extended the purely moral use of the words "sacrifice" and "self-sacrifice" so that nowadays they are often used without any religious significance at all. Nevertheless it would be a mistake to say that the moral meaning is entirely of Christian origin. The story of Metius Curtius¹ and even perhaps that of Iphigenia, tells of a religious sacrifice which is also a self-sacrifice in the moral sense.

(2) The thing given up must be something of value, something in itself good. The greater its value, the greater the sacrifice. It follows that, even when we moralize the meaning of sacrifice, we cannot describe the giving up of sin, nor even of the self in so far as it is sinful, as properly a sacrificial act at all. A merely Puritan asceticism, however drastic, has no really sacrificial significance, since self-denial is not sacrifice, if it means only the renunciation of selfish and sinful desires. In this connection it is important to remember the insistence of the Old Testament that the

¹ *Livy* VII, 6.

victim sacrificed must be without blemish, not a scape-goat to which the offerers' sin has been transferred. Moreover, when our Lord spoke of renouncing family, possessions, or even life itself for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, he clearly intended the giving up of what was good—and this may properly be called a sacrifice.

(3) The giving up involved in sacrifice must be absolute in so far as the offerer renounces absolutely for himself the further use or enjoyment of the thing offered. It is as a clear declaration of that renunciation that the death or destruction or immolation of what is offered is commonly required. On the other hand the destruction itself is never conceived as absolute; for absolute destruction would annul the gift. You cannot give what you destroy. In primitive times offerings were burned in order that God might be pleased with the smell, and in 2 Corinthians ii. 15 St. Paul shows what a profoundly spiritual use can be made of such an apparently childish fancy. Again, it was quite abhorrent to the primitive mind that any sacrificial offering should be allowed to corrupt or decay; for such manifest destruction of the gift's value would imply that God had not received or accepted it. Indeed in one respect we ought perhaps to qualify the assertion that the offerers themselves renounced all further use of the thing sacrificed. Part of the victim's flesh was in fact eaten by offerers or priests, and the blood which symbolized the life was often used in expiatory rites. But such sacred uses of the thing sacrificed were thought of as God's uses rather than man's; or at any rate their purpose and significance was the restoration of good relations between God and men, a restoration made possible because God had accepted the sacrifice. A true rationale of sacrifice must make the notion of the gift primary, that of communion with God secondary.

(4) The giving of whatever is sacrificed must be voluntary on the offerer's part—otherwise there is no sacrifice at all.

Now let us consider from the point of view of sacrifice

what we said earlier in these lectures about the Christian doctrine of man, his creation in God's image, the end of his being, and his fall. Man was created in God's image in order that he might freely offer, surrender, sacrifice himself to God through the divine love which enabled him so to do. And in his sacrifice man was meant to be the priest, as he was the lord, of God's created earth ; he was to offer not himself alone but also all things which God gave him power to control and to fashion, and he was to offer himself also in and through the social fellowship which alone could express his own true nature. As far as we can see—I think—even apart from sin that sacrifice must have involved something analogous to death ; for the temporal cannot pass into the eternal, nor the society of earth into the full fellowship of heaven, by mere growth or continuous evolution ; there must be some total transformation and translation into a quite other and higher mode of being. But apart from sin there would not even have appeared to be destruction, nor would death have had any of that connotation of corruption and decay, which now is its chief horror.

But what the order of the universe might have been apart from sin is a matter of pure speculation. In fact man has sinned ; he has misused his independence and chosen the path of selfishness. Therefore, in trying to "snatch equality with God" he has become the most horribly predatory and contentious of all the animals. His will is largely perverted ; he has lost, and cannot by his own effort recover, the way of salvation by love and self-offering, and the blood-stained history of sacrifice shows, among many other tokens, that he is dimly aware of his own condemnation. Shrinking from death, and yet knowing that *somehow* he must die to live, man is at present desperately trying to escape from himself by the totalitarian cult of the barbarous and the stimulation of herd-emotions—which is the still more sinful reaction against a sinful and acquisitive individualism. Because both in individualism and in

collectivism man has missed the way of true sacrifice, death has become for him simply a hopeless and meaningless destruction. The clear meaning of the parable suggested in Mark ix. 43-50 is that, if sinful man rejects the self-discipline of a voluntary renunciation analogous to the amputation of a limb, his whole being will end in a mass of abominable corruption.

Thus we can see that a crucial point of the Christian doctrine of salvation through self-sacrifice lies in its philosophy of death. And, when we examine the Old Testament with the help of modern scholarship, we can clearly trace in its developing theology the gradual emergence of the concepts of two quite opposite kinds of death, (*a*) the holy death of the victim offered to God, and (*b*) the unholy and penal death of the criminal. Sinful man has become incapable of the first, and therefore he is under the doom of the second. In the earliest religion indeed the two kinds of death are not clearly distinguishable. E.g. in the rite of slaying the heifer enjoined in Deuteronomy xxi. 1-9 in order to free the land from blood-guiltiness, it is impossible to say whether the heifer is slain as a true sacrifice to God or rather as a substitute for the real criminal who cannot be discovered. In the story of Rizpah (2 Samuel xxi. 8-11) the death of her sons is clearly considered to be penal, not sacrificial, since they are hanged and their bodies allowed to decay. In the later ceremonies of the Day of Atonement it is perfectly clear that the scape-goat which bears the sins of the people is not sacrificed and that the goat which is sacrificed is not thought of as a sin-bearer but as an unblemished victim the blood of which is a purifying agent. The body of a sacrificial victim cannot possibly be suffered to decay, since it is dedicated and given to God. On the other hand the death of the criminal or sin-bearer is the death of one cut off from God and naturally ends in corruption. That death has become the universal fate of sinful man. Hence the pessimism of Ecclesiastes who would doubtless have suggested

that in the title of the Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, "postponement" would be theologically a more accurate word than "abolition". Indeed a religious Hebrew might perhaps have attributed the prohibition of human sacrifice less to humanitarian reasons than to the fact that man in his unholiness could not be a pure offering to God, and that an animal unstained by human sin was alone acceptable.

In direct opposition to such a philosophy of death stands the Platonic doctrine of immortality which has formed the hope of the noblest non-Christian idealism. According to this doctrine physical death is a purely material and therefore illusory phenomenon, and what really happens at death is the freeing of the soul from the bodily integument which hampers it. Such is the suggestion made by the Platonic Socrates in the *Phaedo*, and modern Platonists have exhorted us to live as though death were an unreality. But such teaching offers no atonement—it may hold out some hope to the philosopher-saint as an individual; but of the final redemption of God's material creation it speaks not a word. It is very instructive to contrast Socrates' attitude to death with Christ's. Socrates does his best to make light of death, and faces it with a jest on his lips. Christ goes through all the agony of Gethsemane and Calvary. But behind all the apparent weakness of Christ's passion there lies supernatural confidence in God's redemptive victory to be won through the extreme of suffering, whereas Socrates can only seek to comfort his friends with uncertain metaphysics and the very nobility of his humanism seems at times somewhat unsympathetic and inhuman. God incarnate, the Christian cannot but feel, is closer than the Olympian superman to ordinary and common manhood. The whole problem of sin and atonement is beyond Socrates' ken. He does not know the Christian meaning of love, nor does he understand sin; and therefore he has no positive philosophy of death and its significance.

Next, let us consider the language of the New Testament about the death of Christ. The paradox of it leaps to the eye, when we read it again in the light of the foregoing considerations. There are passages which clearly speak of Christ as a sin-bearer in his death, and suggest that he, the sinless one, endured the penalty of sin (e.g. Galatians iii. 13 ; 2 Corinthians v. 21). There are also passages which speak equally clearly of Christ's death as sacrificial, and assert that the blood of his sinless life avails to expiate and cleanse away our sin (e.g. Romans iii. 25 ; Ephesians ii. 13 ; Hebrews ix. ; 1 John i. 7 ; Revelation vii. 14). But there is only one passage where the two ideas are clearly joined, and that is an allusion to Isaiah liii. 12 in Hebrews ix. 28, an epistle which nowhere else speaks of Christ as sin-bearer but confines itself to sacrificial language. (1 Peter ii. 24 is similarly a reference to Isaiah liii.)

The paradox lies in this, that, according to the developed theology of the Old Testament, which is implied in the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement, the two notions, that of the sacrificial victim and that of sin-bearing, are *mutually exclusive*. The high priest (see Exodus xxviii. 38), but never the victim, is spoken of as *bearing* iniquity. Isaiah liii. is the only passage in the later Old Testament which seems to connect the notion of a sacrificial victim with that of sin-bearing, and here the connection is obscure, and it is impossible to say how far the author's mind intended to carry it. It is clear that the sheep mentioned in the simile of verse 7 is a sheep before the shearers and not a sacrificial victim and it is reasonable to infer that the "lamb led to the slaughter" has no connection with the lamb of the Pass-over but is simply one to be butchered. There is no sacrificial allusion until verse 10.

On the other hand it was natural enough that a Church which had long ceased to be familiar with the sacrifice of animals should misunderstand the real rationale of the later Jewish sacrifices for sin. It became easy to imagine

that the offerers' guilt was thought to be transferred to the victim, which then in being killed underwent, as a substitute, the punishment for the offerers' sins, so that God might be thus propitiated : whereas the truth was that the victim could only be sacrificed or offered to God because it was thought *not* to be contaminated with the offerers' sins, and that in the ceremonies of atonement the use of the blood signified the expiation or washing away or "covering" of sin by a sinless life which in dying had been offered to and accepted by God. This, quite clearly, is the thought of Hebrews. Once this thought was forgotten or misunderstood, there ceased to be any difficulty or paradox in reconciling juridical and sacrificial theories of the atonement. The medieval and later upholders of juridical theories are aware of no such difficulty at all.

But how does it happen that in the New Testament the notions both of sacrifice and of sin-bearing are applied to Christ's death? No doubt Isaiah liii. had an important influence, even perhaps on the mind of Jesus himself; but it cannot be the sole, nor even the chief, explanation. For not only was this chapter never messianically interpreted by the Jews, but also the connection between the two ideas there is so obscure, that, although the chapter was inevitably used *ex post facto* as prophetic confirmation of a new revelation, it could hardly have been the original or principal medium of the new revelation itself. The new revelation in Jesus Christ is this. The perfect sacrifice must be a perfectly sinless priest-victim self-offered in a voluntary death, as Hebrews so carefully argues. But—here is the new thing—this perfect sacrifice can only be achieved by the divine love which in Jesus has shown itself willing to share the utterly unholy death of the criminal which is the penalty for sin. Thus the utterly unholy and common death, which is the due fate of all men, is itself by Christ's love transformed in his own case into the entirely holy death of perfect sacrifice. It appears that in and through that

love the extreme opposites of sacrificial and penal death, which the Old Testament had tended more and more clearly to separate, have been brought together again. The one human life which in God's sight was wholly separate from sinners was born in an inn and died on a gibbet. Christianity can give a quite fresh and different meaning to Omar Khayyám's lines :

“ And this I know : whether the one true light
Kindle to love, or wrath consume me quite,
One glimpse of it within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.”

According to Christian tradition, those are words which the Magi and the shepherds might have used after their journey to Bethlehem. Perhaps the Christmas story was in Fitzgerald's mind as he wrote them. And the paradox of the penetration of the utterly unholy by perfect holiness reaches its climax on Golgotha. There are seen at once the extreme scandal and the rational principle of God's atoning action and redeeming righteousness. There and nowhere else, in spite and even because of sin, manhood achieves at last the end for which it was originally created : it sacrifices itself perfectly to God.

And, being so sacrificed, manhood at once receives its new life, whole, glorious, and eternal, in God and from God. That is the meaning of the resurrection ; and bodily resurrection was necessary, if only because the death could not have been thought of as an accepted sacrifice at all, if the body had “ seen corruption ” in the tomb. And with the resurrection begins the new creation. The new risen manhood of Jesus, which has passed through death to God, is henceforth imparted to his followers, so that they in faith partaking of it, may partake at once of the life of the world to come and of the power to complete their own sacrifice of themselves in following their Lord. This is the mystery of the blood of Jesus, giving both expiation and new

life. Yet its essential meaning has been missed, unless it is understood that the new life involves willingness, in Christ's love, to share the common lot of all sinners even up to a common death.¹ Ecclesiastes thought it a sore evil in all that is done under the sun that the righteous should die like the wicked.² But in the light of Christ the "evil" is seen to be the means of universal redemption.

What is the general bearing of this line of thought upon theories of the atonement?

Abelardian theories are seen to be true to the utmost, as far as they go. The cross and resurrection are indeed the unique demonstration of God's eternal love for man. But they are that demonstration, just because they are something infinitely more than a mere demonstration. They bring into being the manhood of the world to come, the first-fruits of the new creation, the sacrificed and living manhood of Christ, who through that manhood has become the head of his Church. They are therefore not only witnesses to God's forgiveness of sin and gift of eternal life; they are also the very means and power by which men may themselves triumph over sin and death as Christ did.

Juridical theories again are entirely true as far as they go—provided they avoid the false suggestion that Christ's death propitiated God so as to change his attitude towards man from wrath to love. Christ in his perfect holiness did indeed voluntarily undergo the shameful death which was the penalty of sin. But the avail of that death is due less to any supposed "transference of merit" than to the very fact that by thus dying Christ changed penalty into sacrifice and shame into glory, and by his risen life enables his faithful followers to do the same. Thus it is that the fundamentally sacrificial theory of the atonement can include the others and supply what by themselves they lack.

¹ See L. S. Thornton's comments on 2 Cor. v. 14 ff. in *The Common Life in the Body of Christ*, pp. 45 f.

² ix. 2 f.

It is true that the author of Hebrews, who states the sacrificial theory so carefully, could not quite rise to the heights, or descend to the depths, of the Christian paradox. Where exactly does the limitation of his theory lie? It is often said (e.g. by Moffatt) that he offers no reason why a sacrificial death should be necessary in order to reconcile man to God, that he simply takes the necessity of sacrifice for granted. This does not seem to me to be true. The author in effect does explain that the blood of bulls and goats is impotent really to take away sin, because their sinlessness is simply an innocence which exists below the level at which sin is possible. What is needed to take away sin is the blood of a life which itself has conquered sin by undergoing and overcoming temptation. This life can only be the life of perfect obedience, and perfect obedience can only be manifested and proved in a life which suffers up to death. Thus, according to Hebrews, it is the supreme obedience "up to death on a cross" which is necessary to make the blood or sacrificed life of Christ into the power which can take away sin when it is communicated to sinners. All this the author of Hebrews argues persuasively. What he does not do is to use the language of love which is characteristic of St. Paul and St. John. And, just for that reason, what he fails to explain is not why a sacrificial death was needed, but why the victim could and must, in dying, bear the penalty of sin. That is why the theory of Hebrews remains a *narrowly* sacrificial theory unable to extend itself to include juridical and Abelardian theories, because it does not explain why Christ should be the sin-bearer, a necessity which love alone can explain. Sin indeed, being evil, cannot be offered to God; but the penalty for sin, when voluntarily accepted by the sinless out of love for the sinner, may be; for this acceptance changes the very act of undergoing the penalty into the holy self-sacrifice which God's love accepts as such. Following out this line of thought about the atonement, we can fuse the sacrificial and

juridical and Abelardian interpretations of it into a single theory, and we can include and reconcile together the language of all three.

Finally, we must briefly examine the general bearing of what we have just said about the atonement upon the life of the Christian community in its relation to the world. In this world the Christian Church has a twofold or two-sided task, and, though the task is essentially one, it is often very difficult in practice to hold a true balance between its two sides.

On the one hand the Church lives in the power of Christ's risen and new-created manhood to make the whole life of this world fit to be offered and sacrificed to God. It has to do this by penetrating and transforming the world, and especially every human activity within it, with the spirit of *agape*, so that in everything may be found the very expression of the Creator's mind and will. In proportion as it succeeds in this aspect of its task, the Church shows itself to be in this world the true herald and harbinger of the world to come. To illustrate what this means, we may point to St. Paul's descriptions of the Church on earth as it may be and ought to be, and his moral exhortations based on these descriptions (e.g. 1 Corinthians xii. ; Ephesians iv. ; Colossians iii. and iv.), to St. John's more monotonous emphasis on love as the divine life manifested in the Church, and to the Epistle to Philemon, which gives us such a vivid little glimpse of how St. Paul conceived that the heavenly life of the Church should express itself practically within a pagan society.

On the other hand, in so far as the Church, while still remaining true to its Lord, fails, because of the obstinacy of human sin, in penetrating and leavening the earthly life of man, it cannot make the world an offering to God ; and then it is driven, as its Lord was driven, to offer itself vicariously in the world's behalf. In this second aspect of its task, the Church appears, not so much as the harbinger of

the world to come, not so much as "the colony of heaven",¹ but rather as the follower of the Crucified, of the Suffering Servant and the Son of Man; it is the martyr-witness which awaits its glory, while it exhibits in itself the process rather than the fruit or end of Christ's atoning work.

Such is the twofold expression of *agape* in Christ's Body as it exists, and always will exist, in time and history. St. John surely hints at both aspects of the Church's task, when he reminds his readers that "even as he is, so are we in this world". St. Luke tells us that even Jesus had his great moment of rejoicing upon earth, when the power of love was victorious in the mission of the seventy, and he beheld "like a flash Satan fall from heaven". But this moment did not endure; it passed into the sad conviction that "even the things concerning me have an end", when the Saviour is numbered with the transgressors.² In this world the Cross is the last word, as we may suppose it always will be. But that is because in this world there is no finality. Where everything *passes*, nothing really *ends*.

The remarkable thing is that the Church can more readily fulfil the first aspect of its task (to be "a colony of heaven") when it is a tiny minority in a pagan world than when it has to assume some responsibility for the government and order of Christendom. St. Paul and St. John could afford to emphasize the power of love to transform all human relationships and activities. In the Middle Ages, as Christendom became more obviously corrupt, that emphasis became more and more impossible. And then in a noble effort to fulfil the second aspect of its task (the following of the Crucified) the Church was inclined to teach withdrawal from the world as the only true road to heavenly life. It worshipped the Cross; but perhaps it failed adequately to recognize that it is only by attempting

¹ Phil. iii. 20, Moffatt's translation.

² See Luke xxii. 35-38 and compare it with x. 1-24. For the meaning of *τέλος ἐχει* in xxii. 37, cf. Mark iii. 26, where it is unmistakable.

to penetrate the life of this world with that of the next that the Church can authentically follow even the way of the Cross itself. The Church, like its Lord, must descend into this world and seek to raise it, even if it only suffer shame itself in the effort to transform the world gloriously. It is only the shame incurred through such a descent that God turns to resurrection-glory. To despair of the world is not Christlikeness but defeatism—a truth which the contemporary disciples of Kierkegaard often seem to forget.

What the future holds for the Church on earth we do not know. Perhaps it will be rid of the burdens and responsibilities of a so-called Christian civilization, and start its career all over again as a colony of heaven in a Christ-denying world. Perhaps it will be called upon to undertake those responsibilities afresh in a world which is dimly aware of its mortal sickness. At least the Church must always be ready and willing to do so, if it loves men as Christ loves them, and understands the present power of his atonement which is its gospel. The greatest danger is that the Church should be conformed to the fashion of this world, whether that fashion be a complacent, optimistic humanism, or an anxious, demon-ridden gloom. We may thank God that the one is as much a passing fashion as the other.

VIII. CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY

OUR final task must be to consider the ultimate issue of the atonement, the Christian doctrine of the final end. The key-word of Christian eschatology is resurrection, and it is above all the meaning of that term that we have to examine.

In the first place it has to be remarked that the origin of the notion of resurrection in Christian theology is quite different from its origin in pagan mythology. In the latter, stories of a god who dies and rises again are not uncommon ; they belong to a recognized type of nature-myth in which the cycle of the seasons or the setting and the rising of the sun is symbolized. In this context dying and rising again represent a constant rhythm in nature which myth associates with a religious mystery. The rhythm appears to go on endlessly and to lead nowhere. Thus in the highest and most spiritual thought of paganism the universal law of death and change and fresh beginning is simply a sign of the inherent imperfection of all the material world when it is contrasted with pure eternal spirituality. Pure spirit is above all change ; and there is, so Platonists and others have taught, a spiritual element in man which can free itself from the everlasting rhythm of becoming, dying, and living again, and finally attain to a pure and heavenly immortality. According to this doctrine death is either an illusion caused by matter or else, in so far as it is real, it represents the dropping off of a mortal integument which obscured and hampered the operation of the soul's true spirituality. Thus modern Platonists have exhorted us to behave as though death were an unreality : or, as Aristotle put it, the philosopher's highest aim is *ἐφ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται ἀθανατίζεσθαι*.

On the other hand, the origins of the Christian doctrine of resurrection are in Jewish apocalyptic. And this

apocalyptic represents a conception of the world radically opposed to the pagan notion of an unending rhythm of change. Here the cycles of the seasons and the setting and rising of the sun are not connected with any myth of a dying and rising god who undergoes analogous transformations. They are due to an immutable law fixed by the sovereign will of the one Creator-God, who "hath given them a law which shall not be broken". To God himself "the night is as clear as the day : the darkness and light to him are both alike". Moreover the creation as God's work must be wholly good. Faced with the unescapable fact of evil, the Jew maintained that it was due, not to any inherent imperfection of matter, but to man's sin. Nevertheless, since evil was not to be escaped, the apocalyptists concluded that God would bring this world to an end in order to establish a new and wholly glorious world-order in its place. It is with the end of the old world and the beginning of the new that the idea of resurrection was connected in Jewish thought. And two main motives led to the affirmation of resurrection :

(1) The first was the conviction of God's justice. There had been saints of God in this evil world, heroes, prophets, and martyrs, who had died. It could not be that God would allow them to flit for ever as wraiths in some shadowy Sheol cut away from his hand and sharing the lot of common sinners. If God were really just and faithful, they must rise again to see and partake in the promised glories of the world to come. At the same time many of the apocalyptists also believed that those who had rebelled against God and persecuted and tortured his elect must rise again, too, to receive a corresponding punishment. There was to be a final judgement, pictured as a great assize, associated with the end of the world, when God's sovereign righteousness would be finally vindicated.

(2) The second and more important motive was the conviction of God's power. This world, whatever its

corruptions, was God's : he made it good, and meant it to be good. If he were compelled, as it were, to scrap it altogether and make another, that would be a confession of failure ; the first creation would have been made in vain. Therefore there must be some continuity, even in the utter discontinuity, between the old world and the new. The old order would be brought utterly to an end, the new established. Yet the new must bring the old to fulfilment ; there must be continuity in God's work, a single purpose completed from beginning to end. It was precisely this continuity through discontinuity that the doctrine of resurrection ensured. The old must rise again into the new—otherwise God would have failed. The world to come must be *καινή*, but not *νέα, κτίσις*.¹ The notion of resurrection enabled the Jew to apply to the destruction of this world the thought which Browning applied to the destruction of the soul. "God unmakes but to remake the world *he else made first in vain, which must not be.*"

The philosophy of Ecclesiastes is particularly instructive at this point. The author had been convinced by the Gentile conception of an unending rhythm in the world of nature. And the result to his Jewish mind is sheer pessimism. "Vanity of vanities", he cries. To him the world has become meaningless, when it is deprived of end and purpose. To the Platonist this consequence did not follow ; for the Platonist did not seek to interpret the world in terms of teleology but of symbolism ; and therefore, though it had no end, the world might still have meaning. According to Platonism the task of the philosopher was to penetrate to this meaning, to the thing symbolized behind the deceptive phenomena ; and he might thus attain to immortality in the contemplation of what is changeless and eternal. To the Jew this whole solution of the problem was impossible.

¹ The New Testament everywhere preserves the distinction between *καινός* and *νέος* except in Col. iii. 10, where *νέος* (of the new man) is immediately corrected by the participle *ἀνακαινούμενον* which follows.

He thought in terms of God's will and work, not of his changeless eternal perfection. "Vain" to him meant primarily not "meaningless" but "ineffective", "unfruitful of result"; and what was such was to him utterly valueless. "Not in vain in the Lord" are the words with which St. Paul concludes his great discourse on the resurrection (1 Corinthians xv.). It was because the Jew thought in terms of God's creative and redemptive work, which cannot fail, that he found the solution of the cosmic problem in resurrection. Salvation must be through God's redeeming work in the ἀποκατάστασις πάντων. No *mere* revelation, nor any *mere* theophany, could suffice. Even in St. John, the eternal Logos or Son, who reveals the Father, works as the Father works continuously to the appointed end.

The New Testament finds the beginning of the new world, the pledge of the final end, in the resurrection of Christ. But in the minds of the earliest Christians that belief was inevitably associated with a Jewish cosmology which time has proved to have been partly mistaken and which no one to-day can altogether accept. How then can the New Testament help us towards a really Christian eschatology which retains the essential value of Jewish thought while discarding its crudities and errors? That perhaps is the most profound and difficult and urgent question which faces Christian theology to-day.

I believe the answer is to be found in a spiritualized doctrine of resurrection founded upon a spiritualized doctrine of sacrifice; and this course of lectures may fittingly conclude with some constructive suggestions upon the subject.

The cardinal point is this. In the creature made in God's image love can only perfect itself as the creature willingly surrenders itself and all that it has to God. In a sinful world this self-surrender reaches its crisis in the death of self-sacrifice through which it is made complete. Out

of that death the immortal, glorious manhood of the new creation is born.

This line of thought has a bearing both (a) upon the destiny of the individual soul, and (b) upon God's creation as a whole. We will consider each in turn.

(a) For each individual soul final salvation is attained in the moment when its self-surrender is completely made. In the physical world that surrender cannot be complete apart from that great leap into the dark which we call physical death but which love can transform into a willing act of giving up. From the most primitive times onwards to Christ himself the religious value of physical death is simply this, that it may become the outward, visible and sacramental sign of a completed sacrifice to God. But in spiritual or truly sacramental religion the thing signified which alone gives value to the sign is not physical death as such but the self-surrendered will which is content to die—apart from that physical death has religious meaning only as the capital punishment which holiness exacts from sin. Physical death is indeed the deepest and most critical of all ambiguities. It symbolizes and represents the end or termination of a life-process ; and that end may be either the sacrifice which issues in eternal life or the destruction which signifies final condemnation.

Both the New Testament and the teaching of the Church seem to make it clear that what had taken place in the soul before physical death must finally decide its destiny. But whether or not the actual moment of physical death is in any sense decisive, it need not follow that in that temporal moment the soul's eternal end is reached. The process either of self-surrender or of selfishness must have been begun before physical death, and it may be completed in some kind of temporal experience after it. What is important to notice is that death, considered as the termination of a temporal process of life, is as necessary for salvation as for condemnation. Precisely because it is love that saves, life

must be given up and cut off before it can be finally won. And the final giving up, whether realized at the hour of physical death or afterwards, is the final winning. Because our Lord's sacrifice of himself was complete in the moment of his physical death, so that he could say *τετελεσται*, therefore he knew that *from henceforth* he would be "seated at the right hand of power".¹

The final winning of life, which issues from the final giving up, constitutes and reconstitutes in glory the eternal wholeness of the self and personality. This is the essential meaning of resurrection for the individual. It is quite different from any doctrine of the immortality of the soul which may suggest merely a continuance of the soul's life into an endless future and in any case finds no positive value in death itself.² The Christian doctrine of resurrection is inseparably connected with the idea of sacrifice³ which does give death a positive value. And the final issue of death, which resurrection symbolizes, is a supra-temporal reconstitution of the whole self finally surrendered to God—a condition in which the whole temporal history of the self is included as somehow present. It is above all this supra-temporality which makes the final "glory" absolutely unimaginable to us now; and it is this that is hinted at in the New Testament doctrines of resurrection, of the absolutely critical nature of our present choices, and of the imminence of the end. For, while time (*χρόνος*) lasts, there lasts also the opportunity or season (*καιρὸς*) for change. And so long as *χρόνος* and *καιρὸς* endure, God seeks and accepts repentance. The law of death symbolizes the fact

¹ Mark xiv. 62.

² According to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul death may indeed be said to have a positive value, in so far as it frees the soul from the burden of the flesh; but death itself makes no positive contribution to eternal life, inasmuch as that which survives death (the soul) is a different and separate entity from that which dies (the body). According to the doctrine of resurrection that which lives eternally is that which dies and rises glorified through and because of its death.

³ See, e.g., Rom. xii. 1.

that for each soul there must come an end to both. And if to the end the soul uses its freedom to reject salvation, not even God can save it.

(b) But the Christian eschatology of resurrection and sacrifice is not an eschatology only for individuals nor even only for the human race. It is also a gospel of world-redemption and world-salvation, i.e. of the new world which Christ's resurrection has inaugurated. The sufferings, death, and completed sacrifice of Christ issue in something much more than his own resurrection to glory; they are the foundation of God's redeemed and recreated universe which the living Christ, in his deity begotten before all worlds and in his manhood the first-born of the new world, enables men to enter by the following of himself in faith. His sacrifice and the power of his sacrificed life are enough to take away the sin of this world and to make it also a sacrifice to God which rises to glory in him. And the Christian may believe that in and through Christ's sacrifice the self-sacrifice of other men for their fellows has atoning value for the final reconciliation of the world to God. A careful examination of our Lord's sayings about salt (Matthew v. 13; Mark ix. 49 f.) shows, I think, that salt is here used as a symbol because of its connection with sacrifice,¹ and that Christians are called "the salt of the earth" because the sacrificial quality of their lives will enable them not only to have peace among themselves but also to consecrate as an offering to God the earth itself and all that is in it.

Along this line of thought we reach the ultimate mystery and apparent self-contradiction to which all Christian eschatology leads in the end. Let us try to state clearly the dilemma which confronts us.

(1) On the one hand we have as an essential part of the gospel the hope of the redeemed world in which God finally

¹ Moffatt's interesting rendering of Mark ix. 50 suggests a different interpretation. But the general context and in particular the interpolation in the preceding verse (which may be good exegesis) are against it.

is all in all. This hope suggests the doctrine of salvation for all which is known as universalism. In support of it many apparently universalistic texts can be cited from St. John and St. Paul. See, e.g., John i. 29, iii. 17, xii. 32 ; Romans v. 19, viii. 20 f., xi. 32 ; 1 Corinthians xv. 22 ; 1 John ii. 2. The cumulative effect of these and other texts is impressive, and is often far too lightly dismissed by the traditionally-minded "orthodox". As I have already suggested, the hope which they indicate cannot be satisfied by the medieval eschatology which the *Divina Commedia* expresses in pictorial symbols. These are not the symbols of a redeemed creation in which God is all in all.

It is sheer perversity to find the only ground of Christian universalism in the humanitarian sentiment of recent generations. Its true ground is in the theology of the Bible, in the all-sufficiency of Christ's atonement, in God's will that all men should be saved, and in the impossibility that God should fail.

(2) On the other hand the strain of anti-universalistic teaching in the New Testament can hardly be regarded by an impartial mind as other than conclusive ; and it has been taken as conclusive by the main tradition of the Church, although the authority of certain Fathers, e.g. Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, can be quoted on the other side. Christ's own solemn warnings about the narrowness of the gate that leads to life, the difficulty of entering it, and the fewness of those that find the entrance ; are not to be explained away ; and they are re-inforced by the sense of urgency under which St. Paul laboured "by all means to save *some*". Certainly the New Testament will not allow us to suppose for an instant that the moral and religious decisions of a man's present life are not utterly critical in regard to his eternal destiny.

New Testament support for the doctrine of eternal or everlasting punishment is noticeably slighter. On this

subject two texts alone seem to be quite explicit, Matthew xxv. 41 ; Revelation xx. 10. But these texts *are* explicit ; though it may be argued by those who are chary of building too much on isolated texts that pre-Christian Jewish ideas have deeply influenced the Apocalypse and that it is highly precarious to assume that the Matthaean parable of the Sheep and Goats reports the *ipsissima verba* of Christ.

Again, it should be observed that, just as it is misleading to find the ground of Christian universalism in humanitarian sentiment, so it is hardly less misleading to suppose that the Christian doctrine of everlasting punishment is anti-humanistic. Rather, it may well be regarded as the final witness to the inviolable dignity of man revealed in the Bible. The Creator in making man in his own image has left man's eternal destiny for good or evil irrevocably and necessarily in man's own hands. Eternally in God's sight the individual human person is an end in himself, a subject of rights and an object of duties. Absolutely to destroy the soul self-hardened in selfishness and rebellion may seem to us to be the only way of finally perfecting God's kingdom. But that would be to treat the human soul as a mere means to an end, as a thing and not a person, which is not consistent with God's recognition of his own image in man. It is certainly not an accident that the most radically anti-humanistic of all great systems of Christian theology—Karl Barth's—should leave room for the universalist's hope, whereas the doctrine of everlasting punishment was made explicit and definite by medieval theologians who insisted on the sovereign majesty of the law of nature and on man's rights as well as his duties under it.

Probably it is the best wisdom of the Christian theologian, when confronted with the dilemma which has just been stated, to recognize the Christian truth on both sides, and to leave it to God to reconcile the apparent contradictions which baffle him. Two principles have to be firmly held, both alike on the ground, not of any human predilections,

but of the Christian revelation itself: (1) God's creative and redemptive goodness must in all things be finally triumphant. (2) Every soul of man has an eternal destiny which must for good or for evil be decided by its own responsible choice within a limited time.

How both these principles together are to be finally vindicated, we do not, and perhaps cannot in this life, know. The doctrine of everlasting punishment seems to conflict with the first principle, the doctrine of universal salvation with the second. But one thing, surely, the Christian need not, and ought not, to hold; and that is, that the punishment of the lost runs, as it were, parallel in eternity with the blessedness of the saved. That belief is at most a human inference from revelation, not the content of revelation itself. Rather the New Testament and the Christ-illuminated reason together encourage us to believe that the ultimate wages of sin and selfishness persisted in to the end must be death and not life of any kind, not even the life which perpetuates in torment a futile rebellion against the God who gave it. To suppose otherwise is to suppose that the final triumph of God's love is marred. Existent and persistent evil must somehow be absolutely excluded from the universe in which God's whole purpose is wholly fulfilled.

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