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THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION

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TO
OLIVER QUICK

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PREFACE

The present volume is neither a text-book nor a full-page discussion of its great subject. The scholar or theologian will soon realise how much is left unsaid that would necessarily have a place in any less compressed study. I must be content if such an one can acquit me of wrong proportions in my treatment of the theme. More profoundly must I hope that what has been said will help the general reader, who may not have much acquaintance with the literature that has grown up around the doctrine of the Incarnation, to see the issues in their true light and to obtain the right perspective.

How much I am indebted to the writings of others the book itself will make plain. And to Miss Maud Bousfield I owe a particular debt of gratitude both for her proof-reading and for valuable suggestions which have borne fruit in more judicious statements and in the diminution of faults of style from which the reader has a right to be protected.

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CHAPTER I

FAITH AND THEOLOGY

THERE are three passages in the New Testament where the word "Christian" appears. The first of them occurs in the eleventh chapter of the book of Acts: the disciples, it is said, were called Christians first in Antioch. Adherents of Christ—that is what the word suggests, with a use of "Christ" as a proper name, rather than as the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic word which is translated "Messiah" in two places in St. John's Gospel and bears the meaning "anointed".

But the significance of the word "Christian" cannot be discovered simply by attention to points of language; it can be understood only in its religious context. And here there can be no better guide than that great Biblical scholar and interpreter Bishop Westcott, to whom, along with his colleague Dr. Hort, the scientific study of the text of the New Testament owes so much. In his book, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, Westcott writes as follows: "The earliest description of a Christian is 'one who *believes on Christ*,' and not one 'who *believes Christ*.' Or, in other words, a Christian is essentially one who throws himself with absolute trust upon a living Lord, and not simply one who endeavours to obey the commands and follow the example of a dead Teacher." The distinctive religious

character of Christianity from its earliest days could not be put more truly and more strikingly. For whatever doubts anyone may entertain on the historical side as to the story of the life of Jesus Christ as we have it in the Gospels, and as to the course of events whereof the author of the book of Acts speaks, only on the basis of an all-dissolving scepticism can it be doubted that soon after the crucifixion of Jesus there were men and women who believed that He was risen from the dead. Behind all Christian life and thought and religious experience lies this fundamental conviction: without that conviction there could not have arisen and there would not exist any such religion as Christianity. From the first, then, Christianity was a religion in which Christ had a special place as the object of faith. It is a place to which there is no parallel in the other great religions and in the philosophies of mankind at the outset of their historical developments. There was nothing similar in the case of Moses in Judaism, of Gautama in Buddhism, of Mohammed in Islam. The influence of Zoroaster and Confucius and Socrates as teachers of a noble morality had no comparable results. Those who would themselves be content to think of Jesus Christ as a great, perhaps the supreme, moral teacher, and to make no further assertions about Him and to ask no further questions, would be bound to admit that their position was not that of those who were first called Christians.

For the moment, the exact nature of the primitive Christian faith may be left undetermined. A return to

this question must be made later. But it was out of that faith that the doctrine which we call the doctrine of the Incarnation sprang. That doctrine came to formal expression as a result of historical circumstances which, also, may wait for later exposition. But the doctrine itself, to which the Christian Church gave its adherence, proclaiming it at a moment of crisis, that is of inevitable decision, as the truth about Christ, must be stated at the outset of this work. For confusion exists in religious discussions whenever there is no right understanding of what it is that the Christian Church believes and affirms about Christ. And if anyone should say that the word "Church" introduces difficulties, since various controversial issues have gathered around it, it is sufficient to reply that the doctrine of the Incarnation is one to which Christians have committed themselves by corporate action. Something quite other than an agreement of so many individual opinions is involved.

The Nicene Creed, as it is repeated to-day, as it stands, for example, in the Communion Service of the Church of England, is somewhat longer than the original formulary which was drawn up and endorsed at the Council of Nicaea in the year A.D. 325. That formulary was enlarged at some time in the following 125 years, and the Creed as we have it now, with hardly any difference in the versions, goes back to the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. The appended translations give the meaning of the relevant passages in the two Greek documents:

NICAËA:

We believe . . . also in one Lord Jesus Christ,
 the Son of God,
 begotten of the Father as only-begotten,
 that is from the essence of the Father,
 God from God,
 Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten not made,
 of one essence with the Father;
 through whom all things were made, both the things in
 heaven and the things in the earth:
 who for us men and for our salvation
 came down,
 and was incarnate,
 and was made man.

CHALCEDON:

We believe . . . also in one Lord Jesus Christ,
 the only-begotten Son of God,
 who was begotten of the Father before all the ages,
 Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten not made,
 of one essence with the Father;
 through whom all things were made:
 who for us men and for our salvation
 came down from the heavens,
 and was incarnate
 of the Holy Ghost and Mary the Virgin,
 and was made man.

It will be observed that in these translations the phrase "of one essence" is submitted for the familiar "of one substance" which appears in the Communion office. The word "substance" involves, anyhow for some people to-day, two difficulties: on the one hand,

it does not belong to the ordinary currency of thought and expression; on the other, it is apt to suggest a kind of materialistic or quasi-materialistic form of being. So the idea has arisen that the Creed binds Christians to a philosophy which is now antiquated, and which is, in itself, open to powerful objection. But it is, at least, exceedingly doubtful whether the Greek word *ousia* was used in the Creed in any technical sense, in dependence upon a particular philosophy; and it is certain that nothing of a materialistic character was implied. Such a translation as "of one essence" may call attention to this point. A still more general phrase, "of one being with the Father", would be even better. It was the real unity of the Son of God with the Father, eternal and unalterable, which the Council emphasized. Obviously no such unity could be asserted if the Son of God were, as Arius the Alexandrian presbyter asserted, a creature, though the supreme creature; not eternal, though created before time.

The Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed in the Creed to be true God and true man. This may be regarded as an answer to the question, "What is the truth about Jesus Christ?" It does not profess to be an answer to such a question as "How can Jesus Christ be at once true God and true man?" Statements which attempted to give and professed to give an answer to this second question were made during the fourth and fifth centuries and later, and in any age Christian thinkers may endeavour to supply an answer which will throw light on the original affirmation that Christ is true God and true

man. But the interpretations which appeared in the two centuries which followed the Council of Nicaea were unsatisfactory and were repudiated by the Church as a whole, in that they involved the loss of that fullness of truth from which they started, which was, indeed, the very datum of their enquiries. There was no intention on the part of Apollinarius and Nestorius and Eutyches and others of repudiating the faith of Nicaea. But if Christ did not possess what we mean when we speak of the human soul, He was not really human. If in Christ a distinction had to be drawn between a divine Son of God and a human Jesus, then the Lord Jesus Christ was not one but two. If in Christ the human had been swallowed up in the divine or transmuted into it, then He was God who had absorbed human nature into Himself, and was not true God and true man. These brief sentences cover great fields of controversy, and it is open to doubt whether the interpretations which were repudiated by the Church were in every case put forward by those to whom they were attributed. But that does not affect the fact that in so far as the views mentioned above were suggested as explanatory accounts of the truth about Christ which the Church had affirmed as its faith, they did not so much explain the truth as explain it away. And in the light of the history of the years which separated the Council of Nicaea in 325 from the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the wisdom of the abstention from all attempts at explanation at Chalcedon becomes apparent. The statement which was there set forth with the

authority of the Council has been severely criticised as a quite inadequate contribution to the problem of the union of the divine and the human in the Person of Christ. Doubtless it is true that Chalcedon did not advance the solution of the problem; but it was not as a problem to be solved that the Council approached the doctrine. What it did do was to draw out more fully than had been done at Nicaea, and, of course, with the lessons to be learnt from the intervening period in mind, the implications of the Church's faith that Christ was both true God and true man. The views which were ruled out were condemned because, while they professed to interpret the Church's faith, they did, in fact, change it in the course of the interpretation. The consequence of the change was that the Church as a whole could no longer recognise in this or that particular doctrine Christ as true God and true man. But this meant that any such doctrine stood condemned.

The Chalcedonian Definition, to give it the title by which it has come to be known, does not go into technicalities of philosophy or even of theology. It teaches that the one Lord Jesus Christ is complete alike in His Godhead and in His humanity, "truly God and truly man", that He possesses a rational soul and a body, that He is of one substance (or essence or being) with the Father in respect of His Godhead and of one substance with us in respect of His humanity, that He is in or of two natures, "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation"—a

succession of four single Greek words which are inserted to rule out views that were incompatible with the fundamental truth about Christ from which all discussions and interpretations and explanations were bound to start.

Here, then, is the faith of the Church. If words like "Catholic" and "orthodox" are to be used, there is no doctrine of the Person of Christ which can challenge the Nicene and Chalcedonian doctrine for the right to employ them. There is great variety of opinion among Christians as to the authority which is to be ascribed to those Councils and great divergence in the actual use of creeds and formularies. It is also the case that many Christians would prefer to say what the Nicene Creed says in language other than that which stands in the Creed. But it still remains true that no other faith than that of Nicaea would be accepted by representatives of different Christian bodies as the one bond of Christian unity, as the one agreed answer that could be given to the question: "What think ye of Christ?" That was made quite clear at the Lausanne Conference of 1927. Many of those present at that gathering of representatives of all Christian communions except the Church of Rome had no traditional enthusiasm for the Nicene Creed; some, perhaps, were comparatively unfamiliar with it. But the doctrine which gained assent as the true Christian doctrine of Christ was that which is contained in the Nicene Creed. No other doctrine would have had the remotest possibility of achieving such assent; no doctrine that clashed

with the Creed would have been accepted as a tolerable alternative.

To pass from this steady faith of the Church into the atmosphere of modern religious questioning and speculation is to experience a very great change of mental climate. For whereas within the Church the accepted doctrine of the Person of Christ has appeared as the inevitable outcome of what Christ shows Himself to be, both in the New Testament and in the life of the Christian Church and the individual Christian, it is precisely in this doctrine that many seem to find barriers and obstacles. Doctrine is distrusted in itself. There may be a very real appeal of Christ, but it does not suggest the necessity of a Christology. This aversion from doctrine goes along with the kind of contrast not infrequently made between Christ and the Church. At the back of a great deal of the criticism of the Church is the feeling that it has not been loyal to Christ, that it has obscured rather than illuminated His significance. That significance is constantly assumed to consist in His value for the better ordering of the life of this present world. And this, it is truly realised, is not the central point in the Church's witness to Christ. Wherever there is a concentration upon the here and now, and what is called "other-worldliness" is regarded with suspicion, attention is sure to be withdrawn from teaching which is centred in the conviction that "other-worldliness", rightly understood, is inherent in the Christian good-news. Such right understanding has often been lacking: a gap has been left

open between the religious and the secular, between the life of the world to come and the life of this present world which it should have been the concern of the Church to close. Such divisions do finally make nonsense of the Christian doctrine both of God and of man, for they imply that God is not concerned with the whole of man's life, but only with parts of it, and that man may conceive of parts of human life as having no relation to the purposes of God. This attitude may in practice lead to different results, on the one hand to an asceticism which only just escapes from the Manichaean view that the world is not really God's world at all, on the other to the abandonment of spheres of human life to the operation of forces which seem to be regarded as in some sense morally uncontrollable.

This was, of course, never the formal theory of the Christian Church. On the contrary, the idea of the law of God as extending over the entire fullness of life would have been asserted and emphasised both in the medieval Church and on both sides after the Reformation. But it would be true to say that this was not for great numbers of Christians a predominant religious concern. The character of the individual life was of the first importance, but not the ordering of the communal life: whence it is but a short step to the assumption that the individual has no urgent responsibilities in respect of the ordering of the communal life. That life was inevitably to pass away—as the individual life was not to pass. It belonged to time and not to eternity. Thus, whatever Christ meant for the earthly life and

for the social order was quite subordinate to His meaning for the individual who from point to point of his earthly life was moving towards an eternal destiny. It was the stress upon individual salvation and upon Christ's relation to it that threw into high relief the doctrines of the divine Sonship and of the unique mediatorial work of the Son who had become incarnate.

There has been a great change in the proportions of thought. For those within the Christian tradition it has meant an increasing dissatisfaction with whatever suggests a division between the religious and the secular territories of life. Life as a whole needs to be raised to the spiritual level and dedicated to the service of God. There is a Christian philosophy of the good life which leaves nothing unaffected. Some would express this through the notion of the Kingdom of God progressively penetrating human life and revealing itself as the one true end of man's earthly adventure. Others would refrain from the use of language which might seem to suggest that the Kingdom for whose coming Jesus bade His disciples to pray was to be an immanent earthly kingdom of moral value; yet they would not hesitate to say that in the Gospel there was a message which, if received and acted upon, must mean the transformation of the character of the present world-order. Accordingly Christian thought about Christ has taken a new direction, and fresh significance has been found in the familiar description of Jesus as the Lord. The Lordship of Jesus had either a particular relation to the

individual soul or a universal relation to life, which could come to its full manifestation only when life reached its final term in the passing away of this world. Not equally was there an apprehension of what the Lordship of Jesus should mean and might mean in the common life of man. To many Christians that has become their deepest concern, the most imperative challenge to their Christian loyalty and activity. It does not involve any repudiation of the older ideas. Christ remains the one Saviour of the individual soul; if earthly life is spoken of as redeemed and sanctified through Him, that implies no indifference to the only redemption of that life which is at last more than a shadow—its redemption into eternity. Nor again does this longing for the revelation of the Lordship of Jesus here and now go hand in hand with the kind of belief in natural progress towards the good which has been attributed to nineteenth-century Liberalism. But in this new orientation of thought and hope there has been the vision of Christ as the One who saves, not so much by delivering man from bondage to the present world as by freeing the world itself from all that is evil in its actual condition, from all that points away from the goodness which is characteristic of the Kingdom of God, true though doubtless it is that this goodness cannot be manifested in its perfection within the present order.

In all this the Catholic doctrine of Christ's Person suffers no loss. It is, indeed, the compelling force which that doctrine exercises, wherever eyes are open to see all

things in the light of the Incarnation, that has been responsible for the deep sense of social obligation of which Christians are increasingly conscious. The prophetic witness in the last century of such great Christian leaders as Maurice, Westcott, Scott Holland, Gore, John Brown Paton, Josephine Butler, Studdert-Kennedy and others shows the creed of the Incarnation kindled to a living flame. The spirit of man enlightened by the Light of the world had become the candle of the Lord. To such as these, and to those whom they inspired, it was intolerable that anyone who believed that the Son of God had taken to Himself human nature and had dwelt among men should be indifferent to the conditions of life in the world which He had come to save. It was precisely because they saw in Jesus not one more unit of humanity, though the best and noblest of all, but the very God who had condescended to share human life, to submit Himself to its limitations and to experience its bitterness, that they refused to restrict the Gospel to an other-worldly message. It was, indeed, in this conscious dependence upon the implications of the Incarnation that they went beyond beyond their noble predecessors among the Evangelicals. These had brought the Gospel to bear upon men's bodies and the conditions of human life as well as upon men's souls. But doctrine and practice had been less clearly conceived of as a unity, and there had been far less of a constructive philosophy of human life than was afterwards built up by the Christian thinkers of the middle and later nineteenth century.

No intelligent and fair-minded observer outside the Church could deny that the Church has been aroused to a sense of responsibility for the better ordering of social life and for the temporal well-being of all men, which comes near to being a new fact in respect of the relation of religion to life. He might go further and admit that this deepening of the social conscience within the Church was the result of a heightened appreciation by the Church of the moral consequences of its doctrine. But unless he were able to put away the prejudice against that doctrine which arises from the suspicion that it is concerned either with what man can never know or with what it is unimportant that man should know, he might still be content with affirmations about Christ which are at the best temporary resting places for thought and leave the final questions unanswered. I have not in mind such a position as that to which Mr. Middleton Murry comes in his book, *The Life of Jesus*. One may be in the sharpest opposition to Mr. Murry as to his conception of life no less than as to his conception of Jesus. But given his repudiation of the ideas of God and the supernatural order as Christians have understood them, the picture which he draws of Jesus is one that is intelligible and is composed without inattention to the questions which the Christian Church answers in a very different way. It is when Jesus is accepted as the great religious hero who has both taught and Himself walked the true way to God, as the One who becomes within the soul the vital spark of true religion, so that it is right to speak of the

Christ within, while at the same time the Catholic doctrine of His Person is either rejected or passed by, that everything is seen out of focus because there has been no facing of the real issues. For when Jesus is accepted as the supreme Teacher who has penetrated to the meaning of human life, to an appreciation of its true values and of its destiny, with a sureness to which there is no parallel elsewhere in history; when, further, He is acclaimed as the revealer of the truth not only as to man but also as to God; then, of necessity, an immense question-mark appears over against His figure which it is merely frivolous to ignore. How is it that the relation of Jesus to all men can be what so many who refuse to affirm the Christian creed would assert that it is? It would be easier to understand if Jesus were regarded as personally unimportant but as the vehicle of the highest kind of idealism that could be admired and followed without any special attention to the Man who has become the symbol of its appeal to reason and conscience. An attitude similar to this is not unknown, but it is not characteristic of the present age. Those who appeal to Jesus against the Christian Church and protest that the Church by its doctrine has obscured Jesus are not thinking of abstract ideals which have become associated with a historical name; they are, in their intention and judgment, going back to the real Jesus, to the Man whose influence upon history has already been pre-eminent, yet is small as compared with that to which it will attain.

If there is no faith in the living God who works upon

and in history Christian faith in Christ does necessarily disappear. For that faith has always been held in association with, and even in dependence upon, faith in God. But where such faith in God is real, there it will be necessary to take account of the fact that for a great society, that is the Christian Church, faith in Christ is not less real. The account may take the form of refusal and rejection, as in Judaism and Islam. That is a serious facing of the religious problem. The relation of Christ to God is thereby declared to be in no true sense unique. That is, of course, the exact opposite of the Christian belief. But where an unwillingness to affirm about Christ what the Church affirms goes along with an attitude to Him which does in point of fact set Him by Himself, not only in a picture gallery of religious leaders of the past, but in the kind of relevance which a picture belonging to the past has for the life of the present, the problem has been, however unconsciously, evaded. The kind of formula which one comes across at times, that "God is like Christ", settles nothing. It is, indeed, as thoroughly unsatisfying as the reverse formula, "Christ is like God", which people who were looking round for a compromise in the fourth century suggested as a way out of the embarrassments of the Arian controversy. But in such formulæ there is no way out, nor is there an abiding resting place for the mind. The questions which matter still remain.

It is not only in the interests of clear thinking, but also of vital religion, that the question, "What think ye of Christ?" must be pressed. Whatever we may

mean by the phrase "religious experience", it is certain that its Christian character has been bound up with judgments about Christ which in their turn receive their vindication from the experience itself. Perhaps it would be better to use the word "life", since it suggests something less predominantly emotional than is conveyed to many by the word "experience". But in any case the substance of the matter is that Christian devotion and Christian practice, both in their individual and in their communal aspects, have had their characteristic patterns determined by the nature of Christian faith in Christ. This does not prove that the Catholic doctrine is true; but it calls attention to the greatness of the change that would follow, were that doctrine displaced either through direct denial or through its relegation to the status of pious opinion. The idea that doctrine represents just the findings of the intellect at a particular time and under the influence of particular habits of thought, and that it can be sharply distinguished from the living religion which transcends all such dry codifications and expresses of itself indifferently in very various forms, shows very little insight into the concrete nature of religion and into the close relation within religion of the institutional, the intellectual, and the experimental elements. Such a mistake would be peculiarly wrong-headed in respect of the doctrine of the Person of Christ. If the Christology of the Church represented nothing more than the decisions of theologians who had approached the question as though it were first and last an intellectual problem, it

would be possible and right to regard it with a detachment suggesting that nothing which concerned the inner life of the Church was at stake. Such decisions could be ratified or reversed without any sense of crisis.

That is far from being the truth of the matter. Wherever one looks within the Christian tradition, one finds that the doctrine of Christ has been involved in all points of the movement of thought and devotion. The history of the Church, in all its aspects, claims, and inspirations, is unintelligible apart from it. This is not to say for a moment that everything in the development has necessarily been healthy, since the justification of various aspects of belief and practice would have been sought and found in the meaning and implications of the Person of Christ. It is obvious that the legitimacy of such references was the point of religious contention in the Reformation controversies. But it is the notion that Christology is just one of a number of dogmas which exist within Christianity and that, whatever might happen to it, the Christian religion would go on without much change or loss, which gains no sanction from history.

A study of the doctrine of the Incarnation which presented that doctrine as adequately as possible would be nothing less than a history and interpretation of Christianity. It is in this sense that I would understand a remark, challengeable at first sight, which Dr. Vacher Burch made in the course of his review of Dr. Prestige's *Life of Charles Gore*. Dr. Burch, referring to Gore's own theological work, spoke of the theology of

the Incarnation as a theme which Gore had left to others and which still awaited constructive treatment. This might appear a cryptic utterance in view of the number of works with regard to the Person of Christ which have been published between Gore's Bampton Lectures, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* in 1891 and *Mysterium Christi* in 1930. But it would be true to say that all of those books were of the nature of particular studies, dealing professedly with the exposition of the doctrine as a theology of Christ. What has not been done, and is so vast an undertaking that it is difficult to conceive of its ever being done, is a description of life which would relate it in its whole character and in detail to the fact of the incarnation of God in Christ. Any such work would be a new kind of *summa theologica*.

Nothing so ambitious as that is attempted in the present volume. The beaten tracks must be followed in order to make plain the background, the historical roots, and the nature of the doctrine itself. But the wider issue will not be forgotten. It may be, as some think, that the world is entering on a new era in its history. If so, it will need yet more a key that can open all the doors to true thinking and right living. To supply that need the Church is entrusted with a Gospel of no limited scope, but one that proclaims Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life.

CHAPTER II

THE PERSON OF CHRIST AND THE WITNESS OF THE GOSPELS

“As a mere matter of history, by any standard of objective significance, a greater than Solomon, a greater than Socrates is here.” So does Professor H. G. Wood end the first of his Hulsean Lectures on *Christianity and the Nature of History*. The whole book is one that might well be studied by anyone who desires a better understanding both of Christianity and of history and of the relations between them. It is the lack of this understanding which has been and is responsible for many of the misconceptions of Christianity. These are apt to fall somewhere between the two extremes of cutting the connexion entirely, so that Christianity appears to be a system of moral or religious values to which everything historical is irrelevant, and identifying Christianity with the outlook and even the programme of a proletarian group which came into existence and developed its views as a result of the economic conditions existing in the cities of the Roman Empire. Neither of these views is at all a true interpretation of primitive Christianity. Unless the Christ-myth position is adopted, with its complete denial of the historical existence of Jesus (and it may fairly be said that New Testament scholars of all kinds and

students of Christian origins show not the smallest tendency to move towards it), nothing may be asserted more confidently than that Christianity developed around one Jesus who had been crucified, whom a group of people, which continually expanded, believed to have been raised from the dead and to be the Christ and the Son of God.

The phrase "the Jesus of history" is not an altogether happy one, because it has been used in such a way as to suggest a contrast with Jesus as He is described in the creeds of the Church—a contrast which ought not to be assumed as true. But it has the value of emphasising the relation of Christianity to history. This relation becomes clearer when it is realised that the whole background of the New Testament writings is Jewish. If Christianity had been a variant of a common type of mystery-religion, such as existed in various forms in the Graeco-Roman world of that age, it is incredible that the New Testament should bear the impress that it does of the Jewish, and not of the Greek or Oriental, attitude to history. The Church made one of the most important and most profoundly right decisions of its history when, in the second century, it refused to cut itself adrift from the Old Testament and to transform Christianity into a philosophy or theosophy. Had it done so it would have saved itself a great deal of trouble; it might well have secured for itself the toleration which the Empire was not slow to give to different cults; but it would have taken the way not of life but of death. The significance of Christ as a

real historical figure would have vanished; it would have been necessary, as Marcion, the best-known champion of a Christianity sundered from Hebraism, knew full well, not only to banish the Old Testament but to cut the New Testament to a preconceived pattern; and the doctrine which he preached of a redeeming Son of God who suddenly appeared upon earth would in the course of time have faded away as an incredible abstraction, which had no greater claim on men's attention than the worships bound up with the names of mythical divinities such as Adonis, Isis, and Mithras.

It is in its attitude to history, and to the divine purpose within history, that the Hebrew tradition, as we can see it in the Old Testament and as it was continued in primitive Christianity, differs both from the mystery-religions and from the philosophy of Greece. There are pages in Dr. Edwyn Bevan's most valuable contribution to the Home University Library series, entitled *Christianity*, which give a very clear and satisfactory account of this difference. The following quotation shows the character of his exposition at its central point:

The Hebraic conception of the world-process as a unique one, marked by unique events of supreme religious importance, remained fundamental both for the Christian and for the Jewish view of human life. . . . When we remember that the Graeco-Roman world, as has been said, viewed the time-process as an eternal repetition leading nowhere, we can understand how a Gospel which told men that it was a process leading to a great goal came as something liberating and new.¹

¹ I would refer also to the more directly philosophical discussion of "Hebraism and Hellenism" in Dr. O. C. Quick's book, *The Gospel of Divine Action*.

Where the Christian Church dissociated itself sharply from Jewish belief was in its conviction that the decisive event which revealed God's action upon history had taken place in the coming of Jesus the Messiah. There was to be an end of the process which lay in the future; but the meaning of the process, wherein the nature of God's purpose was manifested by a fact uniquely expressive of God's activity, was already present in the fact of Christ. The kind of teaching which theologians of the Barthian school are giving, to the effect that history reaches its end with Christ, however obscure and even paradoxical it may seem to be, is true to the main lines of the philosophy of history as we can trace it in the New Testament, in the Synoptic Gospels as well as in the writings of St. Paul and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. For though the old Liberal interpretation of the meaning of the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven, as the phrases are used in the Gospels, has broken down, and we can no longer define it as a spiritual fellowship of men who seek to do God's will in the present world, yet it is also clear that the Kingdom is not *simply* future, but is working within and upon the world in the Person of Jesus.¹

Now what we may observe in the New Testament is

¹ If this seems to the reader to be too shortly and confidently stated, I would ask him to remember that when it is not possible to discuss at length a subject which has continually exercised the minds of New Testament scholars, a writer must be content to express what seems to him to be the meaning of the Gospels, and to be in harmony with the results which emerge in the course of the modern study of the Gospels.

a double movement of thought: On the one hand, the historical significance of Jesus is to be found in something which does not in itself belong to the historical order at all. To say that He is Messiah is to say what He is to God; history has nothing to do with such a conception; only when history is understood and valued in relation to God and His purpose does such a notion gain any real meaning. Moreover, the idea of Messiah does not admit of interpretation through the categories with which, in history, we are quite familiar. The Messiah is not the great man, hero, or bearer of moral values. He might appear as any one of these three or as all of them, but it would not be in virtue thereof that he could be named Messiah. And it is interesting to note that certain Jewish notions of the Messiah, which did present him as a conquering hero in the fulfilment of the divine purpose, are precisely those which leave a mark upon the Gospels only because they are so plainly repudiated. The effect of this cleavage between the Gospels and such a picture of the destructive work of the Messiah, spoken of as God's Son, as we have in the thirteenth chapter of II Esdras, one of the books of our Apocrypha, is heightened when we remember that at an early date in the history of the primitive Church Jesus the Messiah was identified with the suffering Servant of Isaiah liii.; it is more than a possibility that this identification was first made by Jesus Himself. For the very pith of that prophetic passage is that one who fulfils through suffering and death God's plan of redemption appears neither as great man nor as hero nor

as an example of moral idealism. He is regarded as a guilty person who bears the consequences of his wrongdoing.

This being so, any interpretation of the Person of Jesus which assumes that His place is with the great men of whom history tells is missing the significance which from the first was attached to Him, as a historical person, by the Christian community. Moreover, only a drastic treatment of the Gospels, which can neither justify itself on literary grounds nor can successfully reconstruct the historical facts to which the Gospels witness, will be equal to the task of showing that Jesus did not believe Himself to be the Messiah. And if He did believe it, then at once the question of His relation to God becomes of dominant importance. It is a question which does not need to be raised in connexion with the great men of history. No special answer must be given in order to explain their historical position and the nature of their work. But it is quite otherwise with one who held the belief that the Messiah had come and that He was the Messiah. For here, under the terms and with the particular background of Jewish thought, the whole problem of God's concern with human history, and, beyond that, of what we mean when we use the word "God", comes into the foreground. Of course, it is possible to hold that the Messianic idea is simply false, that Jesus, whatever He thought, was not the Messiah because there is not nor ever will be such a person. But it is mere lack of sense to treat the question of the Messiahship of Jesus as one that really does

not matter, since these Jewish forms of thought and speech are not ours. That would be a pedantic modernism as far out of touch with the real issue as any antiquarianism could be. We must treat seriously a notion which holds the key to the historical significance of Jesus in His words and in His works, in His life and in His death. We must not try to appreciate the universal relevance to all life and all history of Jesus by depreciating the particular, even national, relevance of His Messiahship. It is through the particular, conditioned, historical fact that the approach is to be made to that in Him which is transcendent and in the fullest sense divine. It is in the union of fact and interpretation that the special character of the New Testament writings consists. It would not be untrue to say that the whole of the New Testament was composed under the influence of the conviction and purpose so clearly expressed by the writer of the fourth Gospel at the end of the main body of his work: "these things were written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life through his name." The books were written primarily for those who were already members of the Christian community; their chief motive was not to inform or convert the outsider. The writers were facing particular needs and problems, they did not set out to write a life of Christ or to give systematic instruction in the Christian religion or to elaborate a religious philosophy. Different types of literature are represented in the New Testament, but not one of them is

so dominant as to be in possession of the field. When such facts as these are overlooked, the nature of the writings in question is certain to be misrepresented, and conclusions are likely to be drawn which the material, as we have it, does not justify.

The historical view of the New Testament is of modern growth. When the doctrine of the verbal inerrancy of Scripture was taken as a presupposition of all work upon the text, difficulties of which we are conscious as we read the books, and especially the Gospels, were dissolved by methods which seem to us unnatural: they were methods imposed by the doctrine in question. St. Augustine, dealing with the story of our Lord's healing of blind Bartimæus at Jericho, explains the fact that Mark mentions only this one blind man, while Matthew refers to two, by saying that of the two blind men one was well known in the city, so that special fame attached to the miracle in his case. But the further difficulty confronted him that Luke mentions a restoration of sight at Jericho, but at the entrance into the city, not, as with Mark and Matthew, at the departure from it. Therefore he interprets the Lucan account as being of another, though similar, miracle. But apart from the doctrine of verbal inerrancy it would hardly have occurred to anyone to doubt that in the accounts given by the evangelists there is a discrepancy as to number and place. On the other hand, it would be the result not of sound literary criticism but of an a priori rejection of the possibility of such a case of healing, if the conclusion drawn from

the above discrepancies were that no blind man was healed at Jericho.

Problems as to the origin of the Gospels, as to the inter-relations between them, as to the sources of the material which the writers used and the different ways in which they respectively used it, have their own importance. That importance is intensified when the further question is asked as to the historical reliability of the accounts which are given of the words and works of Jesus. But there is a danger of exaggerating the connection between the doctrine of the Incarnation and its truth on the one hand and the Gospel narratives and their historical accuracy on the other. The doctrine, substantially in its present form, was taught and believed in the Christian community, for a number of years which cannot be exactly determined, before the Gospels as we have them were in existence. There is no such dependence of the doctrine upon the Gospels as would suggest that the doctrine was derived from the Gospels. To realise that is not to fall into the error of making a clean cut between fact and doctrine. The apologetic which was once put forward by M. Loisy came very near to doing so. The distinction between the Jesus of history, as Loisy delineated Him, and the Christ of the Church's faith seemed to involve the presence to the mind of "deux Christs". The condemnation of this modernism was inevitable, if Christianity were not to be exhibited as, on the one hand, a mystery cult in which the historical significance of Jesus was fundamentally irrelevant (the really impor-

tant history being that not of Jesus but of the Church); on the other, as a type of religious pragmatism which abandons the attempt to bring together faith and knowledge, value and fact, and ends in a dualism which depreciates, if it does not destroy, the notion of objective truth. It was in relation to this tendency, and in the course of criticism of it, that Dr. Inge, nearly thirty years ago, wrote in his book *Personal Idealism and Mysticism* words which are significant not only for the problems of philosophy but also for the problems of Christian origins, that "the rational is real, not assuredly because our thought determines reality, but because reality determines thought."

Of course, if the Gospels could be shown to be no more than myths constructed for purposes of edification, with Jesus either the entirely legendary symbol of a divine redeemer or one of whom we could know hardly anything for certain except that He existed, probably taught that the end of the world-order was at hand, and was crucified when Pontius Pilate was procurator, it would mean the end of Christianity or its retention as a creed, worship, and ethic, which possessed little real connection with the historical Person of Jesus. But it is unnecessary to spend time in considering the results that might follow upon the establishment of such a view of the Gospels. There is not the smallest reason to expect that scholarship will turn in that direction. The history of New Testament and Gospel criticism holds much reassurance for those who are nervous as to the relation

of fact and faith in Christianity. The central Figure of the Gospel story has not been dissolved into a "fable, myth, or personification", and the interpretation of Him which fills the New Testament is still seen to be rooted in Him as He was in the days of His flesh.

There can be no true appreciation of the Gospels as historical documents if there is an attitude of complete detachment towards the theology of the Gospels. The central difficulty of the Gospels is that they depict one who does not belong to the category of human heroes. But if Jesus both thought of Himself and, in fact, must be regarded, as one of that noble line and as nothing more, the Gospels are open to the gravest suspicion on every page. For, in that case, they are utterly misleading, not here and there and in passages of a particular kind, as, for instance, in the records of miraculous activity, but in their whole tenor. It has not been uncommon in the past for the teaching of Jesus to be isolated in such a way as to suggest that it largely consists of universally valid moral maxims which need raise no theological questions. The most recent study of the Gospels indicates a very different point of view. For, on the one hand, the method of research into the early stages of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels, known as "Form-Criticism", tends to show that the interest of the primitive Christian communities was not directed to the teaching given through parables and aphorisms, without reference to the relation of the teaching to the Teacher and the meaning of His life. But, secondly,

this interest of the Christian communities cannot reasonably be regarded as having transformed the character of the teaching of Jesus and imported into it an essentially alien element. The continual interweaving of the theological with the moral in the tradition of the words of our Lord is altogether too subtle for any such explanation to be plausible. In particular, the constant, though often half-concealed, allusion to the fulfilment of Old Testament hopes and to the arrival of the Messianic age is not to be understood as an illegitimate interpretation of words (and deeds) of Jesus, which, if they were ever uttered, had no such reference. On the contrary, the form of the sayings suggests a particular situation to which the word of Jesus applies. That Christians, concerned to find guidance in the words of Jesus for the Church of the next generation, should so adroitly have invented situation and word to suit one another is not a conclusion which is most naturally to be drawn from the records. I do not wish to overburden these pages with quotations, but on this very important subject of our Lord's teaching the reader may be referred to the work of English scholars who have gone deeply into the question. Sir Edward Hoskyns and Mr. Noel Davey in their book *The Riddle of the New Testament* may be open to the criticism that in certain places their discoveries of relations between passages in the synoptic Gospels and the Old Testament are more ingenious than convincing. But the results at which they arrive are broadly based and are derived from a penetrating

study of the Gospel material. They find in the Parables of our Lord a Christological significance which "renders them everywhere less illustrations of moral or spiritual truths which are easy of understanding than an integral element in the revelation of God which is taking place in Palestine with the advent of the Messiah in His humiliation." The same conclusion follows from an examination of what they call the "aphoristic teaching of Jesus", that is, the sayings which are not in parabolic form but are largely devoted to moral demands. These "cannot be detached from this Messianic background, and they cannot be detached from the particular happening in Palestine. They are not merely ethical aphorisms: they declared the presence of the Kingdom of God, and are rooted in a peculiar Messianic history." With this interpretation of the Gospels may be compared some sentences at the end of Professor C. H. Dodd's article entitled "Jesus as Teacher and Prophet" in *Mysterium Christi*. He sees at various points in the records of the ministry of Jesus the appearance of that which goes beyond the prophetic. The teaching about the Kingdom shows the change that had taken place, for "the Kingdom of God is no longer merely imminent: it has come. . . . Thus, while the content of the prophetic message is present in the teaching of Jesus, it is present in a form which passes from anticipation to realisation. This carries with it a profound change in the religious character and value of the teaching itself, and it has important implications in regard to His Person."

The critical work which has been done on the text of the Gospels from the beginning of the century has been steadily undermining the position so eloquently and confidently maintained by Harnack and others who stood within the tradition of the religious liberalism of the nineteenth century. Its character, in relation to the central theme in the teaching of Jesus, gains clear expression in Harnack's own words, that the Gospel, as Jesus preached it, had to do with the Father only and not with the Son. It was a saying that caused no small stir at the time and now at no long retrospect seems curiously remote from the actual situation which is presented to us in the Gospels in respect both of the teaching and of the history. Both teaching and history are to be understood in relation to the fact that with the coming of Jesus the activity of God has reached a decisive hour: the prophetic witness is fulfilled in that which is more than prophetic. That fulfilment is interpreted in the words of Jesus, as well as by the actual course of events. And the same kind of difficulty waits on any attempt to evacuate the teaching of references to Jesus as the Messiah who has come into the world as besets whatever efforts may be made to evacuate the history of the mighty works: nothing like a consistent picture then becomes possible, and we are thrown back upon the scepticism which is continually oscillating between the two extremes of going too far and not going far enough.

The writers of the Gospels, who may be regarded

in this matter as the spokesmen of the faith of the Christian Church, saw in Jesus—in the words and acts of His ministry—the signs of the Messiah who was to come. For them there was no antithesis such as has been maintained in certain quarters between a Messiah present and a Messiah to come. Jesus was the Messiah in His earthly life, though the condition of His Messiahship was a state of humiliation such as none had associated with the reality of the office. The fact was a paradox, and witness to it is borne in the way in which the doctrine of a “veiled Messiahship” is underlined in St. Mark’s Gospel. But such underlining is not at all equivalent to a re-writing of a tradition which started from a conception of Jesus as, during His ministry, no more than *Messias futurus*. We have no grounds for supposing that there ever was such a tradition or that any investigations of the “Form-criticism” character will ever reveal the existence of it. That in the material which the evangelists handled Jesus appeared as *Messias praesens* is the natural conclusion to be drawn from the Gospels as we have them.

But, it may be asked, may not the earliest traditions have been formed on a dogmatic basis, which compelled the compilers of the traditions to read back into the life and words of Jesus ideas which He would not have accepted? It is not, however, a question of particular pieces of tradition being written up in the interests of a theory: if a fundamental divergence between the mind of Jesus and the earliest interpretations is to be asserted, it will be necessary to regard the story of His

ministry as worked out from beginning to end in dependence upon a dogmatic theory. And how then was it worked out? In such a manner as to give the maximum amount of trouble to later critical students: and that, not out of sheer clumsiness, but because of the subtle interconnections between the words of Jesus, the particular situations, the bearing of Old Testament sayings, and the doctrine of God. The impression which the Gospels make is not that of material worked up in an artificial way so as to buttress a belief which was remote from the thought and life of the central Figure. Rather do they suggest that the belief was the background of His ministry, determining its character in such a way as to make the difference between Jesus and the prophets and, more particularly, between Him and John the Baptist perspicuous.

To those for whom religion is a system of general truths about God and man the place which Jesus has in the Gospels is necessarily a cause of offence, since the relation in which He stands both to God and to man is one that cannot be brought within the limits of universal religious knowledge. This stumbling-block is not lessened when attention is directed to the titles used of Jesus in the Gospels. These titles are "Son of Man", "Son of God", or, simply, "The Son": the first of them is specially remarkable for the fact that it is found only in sayings of Jesus. There are no other words in the Gospels around which so much has been written. As they appear in our documents, the passages in which Jesus is spoken of as Son of

God or the Son are concerned with the question, Who is this historical Person, Jesus? and give the answer which reveals His true nature. The Son of Man passages have to do with the manner of life which Jesus is living and with the future, and very different, manifestation of Him: thus, "the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head"—but "the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father."

Behind the use of the title lie the Old Testament references in the eighth Psalm, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"; in the book of Ezekiel, where the title is used of the prophet himself and suggests the weakness of the creature in the presence of God, and in the seventh chapter of Daniel. In Daniel the context shows that a sharp distinction is being drawn between a kingdom in which human and spiritual qualities will be dominant and the earlier kingdoms which have been represented under the forms of beasts. The whole passage is apocalyptic and may be regarded as preparing the way for the "Son of Man theology" of one section of the Book of Enoch, where the expression bears a definitely supernatural and Messianic sense.

So far, then, as guidance may be obtained from the Old Testament it may be allowed that the phrase "Son of Man" in the Gospels can be understood as referring to man in general, and it has been argued that when our Lord did use the title He was not employing it in any personal sense but was thinking of humanity with-

out any particular allusion to Himself. But this view is extremely difficult to maintain. Not one of the Gospel texts, taken in its context, naturally points in that direction; some are obviously entirely incompatible with it; while the supposition that whenever the phrase is used by Jesus with a clear Messianic reference to Himself, it is really the primitive community or its spokesmen and not Jesus Himself who is the author of the passage, has no secure base. It is, indeed, very significant that "Son of Man" is not a term for which there was great liking in the primitive community. Apart from the Gospels, where, as has been pointed out, it occurs only in words of our Lord, it appears only three times in the New Testament, two of which occasions are in the Book of the Revelation.

With regard to all these titles, the Gospels give us no right to say that any of them is used in such a manner as to imply a particular instance of a common relationship. Neither the documents, nor, so far as we can see, our Lord Himself, sanction the idea that as titles they could be applied to anyone but Him.

The title "Son of Man" is a witness to that *Mysterium Christi* which confronts the reader of the Gospels. The representations which have often been given in modern times of Jesus as supreme Teacher, Leader, and Example are not wrong in themselves. On the contrary, Jesus makes it plain to His disciples that they should learn of Him, follow Him, and find in Him the pattern of their own conduct. The Gospels bear abundant witness to this truth. But in all this

the mystery of His Person is not set on one side: on the contrary, His words, and all that lies behind them, deepen the impression that in Him the limitations which are of the essence of the relation of man to man are transcended. The authority which is the constant note of the words and of the Person of Jesus stands out as something inherent in Him, and carries with it such personal claims as we could never associate with a teacher or leader who was just a few grades higher in the scale of humanity than those who surrounded him. Or, if a leader made such claims we should judge them to be intolerable. But that is not at all the impression which Jesus makes upon us: it does not occur to us, as we read the Gospels, to say, "No man has the right to speak or to put himself forward in this way." Indeed, such an expression as "putting himself forward" is quite inapplicable to Jesus. The kind of personal ostentation which such a phrase suggests is wholly absent from Him. And yet all the time the distinction between Him and all others is luminously clear. He is not one of a series. The twelve do not become thirteen through the addition of Jesus.

This is no question of a few texts which might represent a particular tradition. Right through the Gospels, as evident in that early source of the sayings of our Lord, known as Q, which the first and third evangelists used, as in any other document, this note of incomparable authority sounds. We hear it in the way in which He speaks of sin and the forgiveness of

sin. He is the minister of absolution, not as a prophet might be who declared to men the truth of God's willingness to forgive, not as a priest might be who had received the commission to absolve in God's name. Christ speaks as one who has the inherent power to give men what they need. The healing of the palsied man is, in the context of the offence which His words "Thy sins are forgiven" had caused, offered as a proof that this greater spiritual authority was His. Again, whereas a great religious teacher knows that his work is well done when he has made men look away from himself to God, Jesus, who had so much to say concerning the Father in heaven and pointed the way of life and conduct whereby the true filial relationship of man to God might be attained, was also continually attaching His disciples to Himself in a relation of complete trust and obedience. He never speaks as though an appeal might lie from His words to a higher court. The very letter of the sacred law cannot stand against His revision of it: "It was said unto you of old times, but I say unto you. . . ."

Finally, there is all that tells of the significance of the Person of Jesus in relation to the issues of life and man's destiny. For, first, there is the emphasis, finding various forms of expression, on the fact that nothing is more important than absolute loyalty to Jesus, that here is something more sacred and binding than any earthly tie, and that the consequences of men's attitudes to His will one day be revealed. Secondly, there is the unveiling of the meaning of the

death to which He looks forward. This is not simply a matter of the text in which our Lord speaks of giving His life a ransom for many or of His words and actions at the Last Supper. It is the way in which His ministry develops and the manner in which He who had said so much of the Kingdom of God went to meet the Cross. Of the passage in St. Matthew in which our Lord is shown on the way to Jerusalem, the famous commentator Bengel wrote: "*Jesus jam tum habitabat in passione sua.*" The flow of criticism has not invalidated that remark.

The Gospels set before us the figure of Jesus as one whose face was turned to Calvary, to its necessity and to its meaning. There is no good reason for doubting that this picture is the true one. And, if so, it is the picture of one who is sure that in His sufferings and death there is redemptive value; it is the Suffering Servant of the greatest of all Old Testament prophecies coming forth from prophecy into history. On this there can be no better comment than that of one of the most famous of living British scholars, Sir George Adam Smith. This offering by Jesus of His life to death "implies two equally extraordinary and amazing facts: that He who had a more profound sense than any other of the spiritual issues in the history of Israel, was conscious that all these issues were culminating to their crisis in Himself; and that He who had the keenest moral judgment ever known on earth was sure of His own virtue for such a crisis—was sure of that perfection of His previous service without which His

self-sacrifice would be in vain. . . . It is a very singular confidence."

So great is the *Mysterium Christi* as it faces man-wards. But behind it there lies that deeper mystery in which the Person of Jesus is turned not towards man but towards God. It is the mystery of Him who saw in His presence and power in the world the signs of the Kingdom of God; of Him who thought of all God's messengers to God's people as God's servants, but of Himself as God's Son; of Him who could speak of the knowledge which the Father has of the Son and the Son of the Father as of a mutual and exclusive knowledge.

And, once again, we are not concerned simply with a number of particular sayings, however, impressive, but with a relation in which our Lord believes that He stands to the Father, a relation that expresses the permanent and underlying truth of His Person. Whatever view we may take of the discourses in the fourth Gospel we must reject the antithesis *either synoptic or Johannine* so far as the Person of Jesus is concerned. The note of authority in St. John is not new, nor the stress upon God as His Father, nor the conception of Himself and Himself only as the Son. Nor is the consciousness of supernatural mission, which, in the fourth Gospel, is associated with the fact of pre-existence absent from the synoptic record. The phrase "I came" seems to have that relevance in such sayings as, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners," or "I came not to bring peace but a sword."

Christian faith, the faith of the New Testament and of the Church, has had Christ as its object. Of such faith no teacher or leader among those of whom history has to tell could be the object—except Jesus. And the Gospels make it plain in many ways that the Christian devotion to Christ, such devotion as men offer to God, was of Christ's own making. He evoked it at the first: He has evoked it ever since.

The mystery of the Person of Jesus as it meets us in the Gospels is not exhausted by His words of authority and by the witness that they bear to the special relation in which He stands to both God and man. Another side of the mystery is shown to us in the mighty works which He performed. Our earliest Gospel, St. Mark's, brings us face to face with the question of miracle in the life of Christ.

At the outset of any discussion of the Gospel miracles three observations need to be made. First, the construction of a picture of Jesus in which the element of miracle is absent is exceedingly difficult. Miracles are not interspersed in our records as remarkable events, which can easily be disentangled from their contexts: that is quite clear with regard to St. Mark. Secondly, the miracles do not appear as irrelevant exhibitions of power, as do the miracles in the Apocryphal Gospels. They have their place in connection with the mission of Jesus, and arise out of the situations which develop as a result of that mission. Thirdly, it is very hard to resist the evidence that Jesus Himself was conscious of the power to perform mighty works. The

Temptation narrative points that way; so does the reply to the messengers whom John the Baptist sent to ask the question, "Art thou he that should come?" And the woe which He pronounced over the Lake cities loses its force if He had had no thought of any strange happenings which had come to pass among them. The general truth about the miracles which the Gospels record is that they are works of power which bear witness to the new era which has broken in with the coming of Jesus. They are not feats of magic, but moral acts of power in which Christ draws on inner resources in order that He may help men. They are, with two exceptions—the end of the narrative of the cured demoniac and the Gadarene swine, and the barren fig-tree—works of pure benevolence; and whatever difficulties some may feel as to these two particular cases, they certainly cannot be pressed into an argument that the miracle-narratives as a whole have no basis in fact.

It is true that to-day it is less natural for us than it was for former generations to rest our faith in Christ as the divine Son of God in part upon His power to work miracles. We should be inclined to say that faith in Christ carries with it the belief that He worked miracles rather than to think of miracles as guaranteeing the validity of faith. We view the mighty works as expressions of the fact that Christ came to be the Saviour from evil. We view His personality as a new creative and redemptive "cause" which produces new effects. Thus we do not approach the question of miracles in

the abstract, as though they were miracles worked by anyone. On the contrary, our attitude to them is bound up with their presence in the life of Jesus.

These considerations apply also to the two great events with which the earthly life of Jesus is recorded as opening and closing. To the Resurrection of our Lord witness was borne in the Christian Church from the first. It was in the faith that God had raised from the dead the crucified Jesus that the primitive community found both the strength of its inner life and the inspiration of its evangelism. It was no doctrine of survival of death, of the immortality of the human soul, which the Church proclaimed. And whatever difficulties there may be in making a coherent account from the New Testament narratives of the course of events on the first Easter morning, the agreements as to the central facts of the appearances of the risen Christ and of the sepulchre in which His body had lain being found empty remain very impressive.

The Virgin-Birth had not the place in the primitive testimony to Christ which the Resurrection possessed. The baptismal activity of the Baptist and the Resurrection were the two points between which the testimony of the Apostles and of the Church moved. But it does not therefore follow that the Lucan and Matthaean narratives of our Lord's birth are historically of small value. Told as they are from different points of view, they are in agreement on the central fact, while the attempts to explain the story of the Virgin-Birth as due either to Jewish or to Gentile pre-suppositions influenc-

ing the writers and those whom they represent are open to formidable objections. As to the doctrinal issues involved, there may be difference of outlook. To some it seems inconceivable that the Son of God should be born of that intercourse between man and woman of which the result is the birth of one more human person into the world. Others will be unwilling to commit themselves to the view that by no other way than a Virgin-Birth could the incarnation of the Son of God take place. Yet the fittingness of the Virgin-Birth in connection with the Person of Christ has been widely felt within the Christian Church. It may not be easy to define precisely the nature of the inner connection between the Christology which proclaims Christ to be the divine Son of God who came down from heaven and was incarnate and the fact of His birth from a Virgin Mother. Yet that there is such a connection is the verdict which the consideration both of the results of affirmation and of the results of denial suggest. Of affirmation, because Christian faith and piety have developed naturally and richly in the holding together of the doctrine and the fact. Of denial, because even if Dr. Machen exaggerates when he says near the end of his book, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, that "in the overwhelming majority of cases those who reject the Virgin-Birth reject the whole supernatural view of Christ," and affirms that while such persons may profess belief in the incarnation they mean something radically different by the word from what the New Testament means; a thorough examination, were such

possible, would probably show that it was an exaggeration in which there was a great deal of truth.

The evidence which we have in the synoptic Gospels points to some such conclusion as follows: in these writings there is brought before us the revelation of God, witnessed to, indeed, by the Law and the Prophets, but unprecedented in kind, in the Person of Jesus. Through Him, through His words and His history, a new light is thrown on those great religious ideas which are already, in the Old Testament, presented as the result of divine revelation—ideas as to the true nature of man's moral and spiritual life, wherein his right relation to God and to his fellows is expressed. Light is thrown on the realities of law and judgment and sacrifice and forgiveness by what Jesus says and what He does. He neither speaks nor acts as a prophet, who was no more than a prophet, would have done, or in past time had done. In the claims He makes, in the power He shows, in the place which He takes as His own both God-ward and man-ward, the more than prophetic is continually discernible. It is not a speculative, or what some would call a metaphysical, Christology that is disclosed, but a Christology which shows the historical relation between God and Israel consummated in the coming and, strangest paradox of all, in the death of Jesus the Messiah. In the Gospels Jesus stands alone at the centre of God's dealings with men: the universalism of this statement is justified not only by the fact that the writers were sure that the mission of the Christian Church, to Gentiles as well as

to Jews, was an appeal to men to come to God through Jesus, but also by the wider associations of the notion of the Messiah. The Messianic age had a relevance, in Jewish thought, beyond the results that were to follow for the Jewish people. The coming of the Messiah meant crisis not only in Jewish history but also in world history.

The Christology of the synoptic Gospels is not that to which the name of Adoptionism came to be given, that is, the doctrine that Jesus was a man in whom the Spirit made, in a unique way, His dwelling, a man who could be regarded as chosen to be Son of God. The Adoptionist doctrine lays great stress on the narrative of the baptism, and interprets the baptism as the occasion on which Jesus became the Son of God, whereas, before the baptism, He had possessed no relation to God other than that which belonged to all the members of the People of God. It was, therefore, possible, from this standpoint, that someone else, not Jesus, might have been the Messiah. But in such a theology everything is built up on the supposed implications of a single incident. On the other hand, the Gospels as a whole suggest that the Sonship of Jesus is not only prior to his Messiahship (He is Messiah in virtue of being Son, not *vice versa*), but is the fundamental fact of His Person, for which no particular incident in His history is adequate to account. As to what is meant by this Sonship, how it is to be defined in the terms of a theology or metaphysic which abandons the strictly historical point of view and the

reference to Old Testament prophecy and its fulfilment, the synoptic Gospels have no final word to say. But they secure, as no other documents do, that intimate connection between religion and history which distinguishes the Christian doctrine of the incarnation. They make it impossible to treat that doctrine as merely the most notable instance of a truth which would have been equally true, though not so obviously true, even if Jesus had never lived. It is, indeed, one of the most curious illustrations of religious misunderstandings that documents of so highly dogmatic a character, which sprang from the faith that a particular series of events were the history of the Son and Christ of God, are often assumed to be the stronghold of undogmatic religion.

CHAPTER III

THE PERSON OF CHRIST AND THE NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

ANY kind of sharp discrimination between the Synoptic Gospels and the rest of the New Testament is apt to be misleading if not definitely harmful. It suggests that the Gospels are to be isolated from the rest of the literature as belonging to the sphere of historical and not theological writing, and can convey the impression that the modern Christian who concerns himself with the earthly life of Jesus and asks no questions of a "doctrinal" nature is going back to the most primitive of Christian interests before theological sophistications entered in and complicated a simple Gospel. So it needs to be made plain that there never was a Christian religion which was not also a Christian theology; there never was an attitude to Christ which resembles that which a modern biographer takes up towards the hero of his story; there never was a devotion to Christ which finds its true counterpart in the fervent enthusiasm of a nation for its king, dictator, or leader. And the great difference is this: that whereas it is possible for a writer to have a deep interest in his hero, and a nation to have an enthusiastic interest in its leader, and even for a man to concern himself with religion, without any necessary

association of these interests with faith in God, the reverse of this was true of the Christian attitude to Christ. Whatever Christians thought about Him was bound up with their faith in God. This was true of the Apostles during the earthly life of Jesus. The confession that He was the Christ had behind it that faith in God of which the Old Testament is the abiding witness. And when once that confession had been made, and the faith which spoke through it had been compelled to follow Jesus along the mysterious way of the Cross and the Resurrection, questions could not but be asked to which only a theology that was both a doctrine of God and a doctrine of Jesus the Christ could give the answer.

All the Gospels, St. Mark's no less than St. John's, are written from the standpoint of Christian faith. But in the synoptic Gospels that faith is seen within the limits of the earthly life and ministry. It is when we pass from these writings to the other New Testament documents that faith's theological consequences, as these were understood by the Christian Church and its deepest thinkers, are deliberately expressed and made luminous.

But before we come to those writings in which the various authors declare and expound what they obviously regard as the common Christian belief about Jesus, something must be said of those passages in the book of Acts which take us back to the early days of the Christian community in Jerusalem. Whatever view be taken of the sources used by the author

and of the accuracy of the picture which he gives, the reader must be struck by the resemblance on the doctrinal side between the first part of Acts and the synoptic Gospels. The theology is steeped in history; the Old Testament reference is clear: in Jesus the Messianic hope has been fulfilled. The "Son of Man" phraseology practically disappears, but that does not involve the conclusion that in the first stage of Christian thought Jesus was held to have been a man who during His life was only destined for a Messianic dignity which was not His till after the death and resurrection. If this were so, we should have to assume a sharp distinction in this thought between Jesus in respect of all the events of His life, including the Cross, and Jesus as approved by God in the resurrection and awaiting the revelation of His Messiahship at His coming again. There are verses in Acts which, taken by themselves, point in that direction, such as ii. 22-24 and 36, but it is dangerous to press them against the testimony of the New Testament as a whole that the events in the life of Jesus were events in the history of the Messiah and, in particular, that the sufferings of Jesus were the sufferings of the Messiah. That the Christ should suffer was a primitive conviction of the community—this is a more natural reading of the early chapters of Acts than any interpretation which makes of the death of Jesus one more instance of the fate which so often came upon the prophets. The ministry of Jesus in these chapters of Acts is not the ministry of the greatest of the prophets. Such a description as

“Thy holy child Jesus” probably has the Isaianic passages about the servant of Jahweh behind them, but not in such a way as to imply that the servant was not the Messiah while he was fulfilling the destiny of the servant.

The reconstruction of the exact character of primitive Christian belief about Jesus is a difficult task; but, on the whole, it would be true to say that the emphasis in the first part of Acts (and this is continued in the latter sections of the book) falls on the functions rather than on the nature of Jesus. Whereas in the Pauline and Johannine writings it is obvious that the great questions with which the theology of the Church has been concerned are present and are receiving answers which involve a definite doctrine of incarnation, in Acts it is otherwise. Yet a Christology which allows Jesus to be thought of as the one who has poured forth from heaven the gift of the Spirit, the one with whose name the hope of salvation is wholly bound up, through the forgiveness of sins and baptism, could hardly be confined within the type of thought characteristic of Jewish Messianism, when once it became possible and natural to make use of profounder categories. As the new Bishop of Derby, Dr. A. E. J. Rawlinson, wrote in his Bampton Lectures on *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, the disciples were already “yielding to Him an allegiance of such a kind as is legitimately due only to God, already they were depending upon their relationship to Him for such spiritual gifts as only God can bestow.” And if, as the

evidence not only of the early chapters of Acts but also of the formula, "O Lord, come," at the end of 1 Corinthians suggests, the term "Lord" was being applied to the risen and exalted Jesus before the Gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles, a title of divine import was being used of Him which was freely used in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament Scriptures, of Jahveh, the God of Israel, whom the prophets proclaimed with increasing assurance to be the one and only God. This is both the more remarkable in itself and the more urgently in need of a theology to account for it, in view of the uncompromising character of Hebrew monotheism. In that monotheism the primitive Christian Church was grounded, and there could be no idea of adding Jesus as one further divinity to a pantheon.

This theological need is supplied when we come to the Epistles of St. Paul. Yet his theology will be seen out of perspective unless a number of preliminary facts in respect of it are kept in mind. First, it is important to remember that the earliest epistles of St. Paul are also in all probability the earliest of the writings which we possess in the New Testament. The Thessalonian letters date from 52, Galatians may be as early as 49, and 1 Corinthians was written in 55. Thus the Pauline doctrine of Christ to which these letters bear witness, a doctrine which must not be regarded as dating from no earlier time than that of the letters, is separated by comparatively few years from the life of Jesus. Whatever may be said of it, it cannot be set aside as a late

development. And as to St. Paul's theology, three relevant points must be observed. First, there is no sign of any divergence in this matter between St. Paul and other apostles. If he had been teaching something which differed radically from their beliefs we should have expected to find some traces of a clash, or at least of tension, within the New Testament. But nothing of the kind emerges. Even with regard to those who were his bitter and pertinacious opponents, who were so hot against him because of his refusal to countenance any imposition of Jewish ceremonies upon Gentile Christians, he never suggests that they and he were at variance on the doctrine of Christ's Person. Rather should we conclude from his way of arguing that he held the "Judaizers" to be inconsistently trying to combine a true doctrine of Christ with a set of beliefs and practices which fatally impaired the significance of the doctrine. Thus he tells the Galatians that if they receive circumcision Christ is of no avail to them. It is true that we have evidence from the second century and later which shows that the Pauline doctrine of Christ was not universally accepted by those who claimed the Christian name. There were those who did not rise beyond the thought of Jesus as the Messiah or as a man in whom the Holy Spirit dwelt after a manner to which there was no parallel. But these facts do not lead on to the conclusion that St. Paul's teaching about Jesus was judged by the original apostles and other Christian leaders in the first century as a dangerous innovation.

Secondly, any notion that St. Paul was so intent upon

his doctrine of a pre-existent Son of God as to be indifferent to a historic Jesus is to be entirely rejected. The phrase "the Christ" is sometimes used to-day in such a way as to show that the speaker or writer attaches no overwhelming importance to the Person who is the centre of the Gospels. "Christ" has then become a spiritual presence or influence, hardly if at all distinguishable from an inner principle of human personality. With such a Christology St. Paul has no affinities. It is certainly not to be found in his famous expression of the vanishing of a knowledge of Christ which is "after the flesh". People have sometimes supposed that the fewness of the references in the epistles to events in the life of Jesus implies that St. Paul laid little stress upon the historical fact of the life. But the historical fact was of supreme importance to him. The Messiah had come—and was Jesus; and the Messiah had died and risen from the dead. St. Paul had no Gospel independent of these basal convictions.

Thirdly, and in close association with what has just been said, St. Paul insisted upon the fulfilment which, through the Gospel of Jesus the crucified and risen Messiah and Son of God, the promises made to the Fathers and recorded in the Scriptures of the Jewish people had received. Whatever St. Paul may have taken from Greek culture and philosophy, his outlook upon religion was the outlook of a Hebrew, faithful to that great tradition of the dealings of God with Israel which is the theme of the Old Testament. For the Hebrew, God was the living God whose will and nature were

declared in His actions. No Hebrew could be indifferent to history: no Hebrew could fail to conceive of the salvation which only God could give except through the medium of history. The majestic exordium to the epistle to the Romans is proof enough that St. Paul stood on ground which almost all the Old Testament writers, and conspicuously the prophets, had made their own.

These considerations show how misleading is any attempt to isolate St. Paul, as though in his fundamental religious conceptions he stood apart from those apostles into whose company he was called, as he so firmly believed, by the act and word of the risen Lord Jesus. But along with this we may assign to him a fuller interpretation of the Christian good news than had till then become clear to the mind of the primitive Church. Where the evidence is restricted to the New Testament documents, and because the tracing of developments within early Christian thought is necessarily a matter of obscurity and conjecture, it is dangerous to try to speak with great precision as to the course of events: but it is reasonable to hold that St. Paul made the implications of the name "Christian" as applied to "disciples" and "believers" clearer than had been formerly the case. This he did through his own discernment of the theological consequences of a religious attitude. Efforts to distinguish in St. Paul between religion and theology cannot be successful, least of all in connection with the Person and work of Christ. His letters are a continual witness to the centring of his

religious life in Christ: all the chief religious feelings such as gratitude, and dependence, and fellowship are shown to spring from all that he knows himself to owe to Christ. On whatever subject he is giving instruction or advice, he finds the illumination and the appeal that he needs by recalling to himself and to his readers some aspect of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is, for instance, characteristic of St. Paul that in the middle of a chapter full of practical and tactful advice to the Corinthians on their contributions to the fund that was being raised in support of the poor Christians at Jerusalem, he should almost parenthetically remind them of the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who "though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that by His poverty you might be made rich." And the great passage in the second chapter of Philippians has as its immediate origin the desire of the apostle to foster in the members of the Church a spirit of harmony and humility and mutual consideration.

How St. Paul worked out his doctrine of the Person of Christ we cannot exactly say. We cannot ascribe it simply to the ever-deepening wealth of his religious experience, though more than one passage in the epistles, notably perhaps the one in the fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians, with its terminology of light and glory in connection with Christ, looks back to his conversion on the Damascus road. The thought of Christ as the second man or Adam who comes from heaven has affinity with, though not therefore dependence upon, the doctrine of the heavenly Son of Man in the

book of Enoch. The idea of pre-existence is involved in that Enochian conception, and was otherwise not unknown in Jewish thought: it is certainly not probable that St. Paul owed anything to the Platonic doctrine of the ideas existing in the transcendent world, which have their reflections or copies in the lower world of human experience. On the whole, I should be inclined to say that the notion of pre-existence was involved in all that St. Paul believed about the loving and saving purposes of God towards men finding their culmination in the presence within history of Jesus the Messiah; involved also in the "scandal" of the cross, which the resurrection had shown to be the strange act in which those saving purposes had been accomplished.

The Christ-centred religion to which St. Paul's letters bear witness did not owe its origin to him: it began with the confession of the community, not yet called Christian, in its earliest days, that Jesus was the risen and exalted Messiah. How soon direct prayers were offered to the Lord Jesus we do not know, but St. Paul was not the teacher of all those whom he can associate with his Corinthian converts as, in every place, calling on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In all that concerns the religious attitude to Christ we are conscious in the New Testament of two apparently clashing but really harmonious convictions: the first is that Christ is separated from men in a way to which there is no parallel in the case of any other who has been a member of the human race; the second is that men can come into touch with Him, and that He comes into

touch with them, in a closeness of fellowship which it would be impossible to conceive of as existing if for His name some other were substituted. But it would also be impossible to understand if Christ were, at the most, a deified man: had the Christian communities thought of Him in any such manner, the New Testament would never have come to be written in the way in which it is written. The strain on a monotheistic faith would have been too great; the tension between devotion to the one true God and devotion equally ardent and grateful to one separated from that God by the impassable width of the gulf dividing humanity from deity could not have been repressed. As it is, there is the devotion, and complete lack of tension.

This religious attitude to Christ is, on the theological side, the affirmation of His divinity: nothing short of that affirmation can make sense of the facts which confront us in the New Testament—in the Pauline letters and elsewhere. It may very well be that at first not all Christians realised the direction in which Christian thought was irresistibly moving; but whoever was included in that number, St. Paul was not one of them. For him, when once sure that Christ belonged essentially to the sphere of divine reality, wherein He as Son of God had fellowship with His Father, and, with the Father, was the source of grace and peace to men, the belief in the pre-existence of Christ was not so much a deduction as an assurance which had its place as part of the content of faith. We ought not to think of this doctrine of pre-existence as it

is stated in the Philippian passage or in the verse of 2 Corinthians viii., to which reference has been made, as though it were a piece of speculative metaphysic; rather is it the only doctrine which gives full value to the thought that the essence of Christ's love and sacrifice lay in a self-giving which willingly accepted suffering and death for the sake of others. The supreme wonder of Christ's redemptive work is thus to be found in the fact that He *comes* to be the Redeemer. More rightly to be described as speculative is the Christology of the first chapter of Colossians, with its picture of Christ as "the likeness of the invisible unseen God, born first before all the creation—for it was by him that all things were created both in heaven and on earth . . . all things have been created by him and for him; he is prior to all, and all cohere in him." (Moffatt's translation.)

This doctrine of Christ's cosmic and creative work is akin to what is said of Wisdom in the Jewish sapiential literature and of the Logos in the works of the Jewish-Alexandrine Philo and in the fourth Gospel. Yet it is noteworthy that the starting point of this hymn of creation is gratitude for the redemption, assured through the joy of sins forgiven, which Christ has brought.

St. Paul was a thinker and a theologian: though there is real value in the saying that all his dogmas are doxologies, it would show complete misunderstanding of him to treat those dogmas as the mere exuberance of an enthusiastic spirit. The apostle regarded them

not as private theories of his own but as part of the Gospel which he was commissioned to proclaim. A religion becomes a Gospel when it has good news of God to tell. For St. Paul that good news had been written in the events (if the anachronism of speech may be allowed) of Christmas Day and Good Friday. The good news of the incarnation and the cross was good news of God. It was all one to the apostle to say, "the Son of God loved me and gave himself for me" and to say "God proves his love towards us in that while we were sinners Christ died for us." It was the same wonder of love whether it was expressed in the words "God sent forth his Son to redeem," or in these, "He who existed in the form of God—the Greek word translated 'form' refers to the true, fundamental nature of Christ) made himself of no account and took the form of a servant and came to be in the likeness of men and became obedient even to the death of the cross."

In such language as this St. Paul set down the truth of the incarnation, and any doctrine of the Person of Christ which does not conform to the substance of St. Paul's thought is not a doctrine of incarnation. And the substance is this—that One who existed before all creation as the Son or Image of God, One whose nature was divine, took to Himself through birth into this world the true nature of men and experienced death which is the final proof of a real humanity. There is no room in this doctrine for the idea of the birth of Jesus Christ being the birth of anyone except of Him

who was the true and only Son of God: it was He the Son who was born and died and rose again.

The doctrine itself is clear enough and it is not difficult to distinguish it from every other account of the Person of Christ. Of these there have been many, and some of them may seem to be essentially at one with the meaning that St. Paul attaches to that Person. Yet the difference always lies in their refusal to accept the paradox which is the heart of Paulinism, as it is of the theology of the Church's Creed, that One who was divine became human, so that His life and experiences were those of One who made them His own because He willed to do so. This is the truth which the phrase "He descended from heaven", or, simply, "descended" expresses. Doubtless it is a phrase mythological in form, for we know that terms indicating movement in space do not describe the nature of God's redeeming activity. Nevertheless no word could be a truer symbol of activity. It suggests exactly what the two verbs used by St. Paul in the Philippian passage suggest, namely that the incarnation meant a real act of sacrifice: indeed, the pictorial force of "He descended" hardly comes short of the more obviously moral content of the phrases "made himself of no reputation", and "humbled himself".

St. Paul left to the Church a theology rich and many sided: the lines of the subsequent developments in Christian thinking start at point after point from what he has said. At the same time there are questions which came to be asked, questions which anyone who

tries to think coherently on the basis of the Christian Gospel of the revelation of God's redeeming love in Christ must ask, to which an immediate answer is not given by St. Paul: and we are conscious of difficulties in his writings just because he had not welded everything together into a system. In later theology the problem of the relation of the pre-existent Son of God to the Father came to a settlement in the doctrine of the Nicene Creed that the Son of God is of one substance with the Father. Similarly, the problem of the relation between the divine and the human in the historic Christ came to its settlement in the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon that in Christ there is a unity of two natures, divine and human. These are the classic formulations, obviously leaving for Christian thinkers much material for interpretation, since the formulations are not concerned with such questions as "How can these things be?" or "what is involved with regard to our general conceptions of God and man?" But orthodoxy has consisted precisely in this, that the formulations have been recognised as statements of Christian truth with which all interpretations, theorisings, and attempts to construct a philosophy of religion must be in harmony.

Now, with regard to St. Paul's doctrine it is, I think, necessary to affirm that it contains elements, not opposed to one another, but not unified with one another as they came to be unified in the formulated orthodoxy to which reference has been made. It may rightly be said that nothing short of that orthodoxy

does justice to the implications of the apostle's religion and theology: but we must not read back into his thought the conclusions of a later age, as though the problems which were certainly taken as settled then were all settled in the same way for him. Thus, while St. Paul spoke of Christ as existing in the form of God and said that in Him the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, he could also look forward to a time to come when the Son would be subject to the Father and God would be all in all, and could develop his thought of the rich spiritual possession of the Christian in an ascending series, "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's". Such differing forms of speech suggest that the nature of the relation between Christ and His Father still needs to be clarified. The way in which St. Paul associates the Lord Jesus Christ with the Father, and much besides, points away from any idea that St. Paul conceived of Christ in His pre-incarnate state as a supreme creature who had been brought into existence to be the instrument of the Father's will. To suppose that St. Paul used the language of deity of one whom he held to be essentially not divine is to attribute to him a notion not Jewish but pagan: moreover, it throws into confusion all that he says of the relation of Christ to the Holy Spirit, who cannot possibly be regarded as a creaturely instrument of God. But the element of subordinationism, to use the technical term, had a place in his thought not only with regard to the human nature of Christ (as in *Quicumque vult* it is said "inferior to the Father as touching His manhood") but

also in respect of Christ's divinity. Now, in later Christian thought this notion of a subordination of the Son to the Father, which is not to be confined simply to the obvious truth that in respect of His manhood Christ is inferior to the Father, does not entirely disappear: but it does not raise difficulties because room is found for it within the forms of dogmatic thought. But those forms are not present in St. Paul, though in such a description of Christ as occurs in the phrase "image of God" they are implicit. Accordingly we must allow for a certain dualism in his thought when he is thinking of Christ in relation to God. It is doubtful whether St. Paul would have found it natural to speak of Christ simply as "God". He may do it in Romans ix. 5, but it is not certain that he does. In the apostle's thought and even in his terminology Jewish monotheism is expanding into the Christian monotheism which is expressed in the doctrine of the Trinity. But it is a process which we observe and not a completed form. So we may say that the doctrine of an eternal immanent relation of Father and Son within the Godhead is latent, and, indeed, more than latent in the Pauline writings: yet if one were to say that this is St. Paul's doctrine one would go beyond the actual facts. It is improbable that St. Paul's doctrine can be summed up in words that bear the impress of the technique of later thinking.

We must never forget how in St. Paul's teaching that which most deeply moved him was his sense of gratitude to Christ as Redeemer and Saviour. All that

he as a sinful man needed had been brought to him by Christ who had died for him. Yet no Jew could ascribe salvation to any except to God. The Old Testament is one prolonged testimony to that truth. But if Christ was divine with a divinity somehow less real than the divinity of His Father, embarrassingly difficult though such a conception must be, then the work of redemption was not in its actual accomplishment the work of God. God did indeed send forth His Son to be the Redeemer and crowned His work at its victorious close, but the burden of the Cross was borne by one who did not and could not reveal in His acts and sufferings a self-sacrifice properly and in the fullest sense divine. As against such an impoverished theology of redemption, it is worth noting as one of the most constant and significant facts to be met with in the course of Christian thought that where the stress has fallen upon the redeeming work of Christ belief in His true deity has been in no danger of appearing to be an affirmation of merely scholastic interest. And whatever reservations need to be made on the theological side in respect of the completeness of the Pauline doctrine judged by later standards, the heirs to St. Paul's faith are those who have affirmed that He who is the Redeemer is to be adored as truly and personally God.

It would be incorrect to say that St. Paul found difficulty in the assertion that the Son of God had taken to Himself the fullness of human nature. There was nothing of the docetist about him: his theology

would have been shattered by any hesitation at this point. But we may recognise that there was a moral paradox for him when he faced the fact of the "flesh" of Christ. For the flesh meant for St. Paul not that which was actually sinful but that which gave sin its opportunity. One of his great contrasts is that between flesh and spirit, and when he uses it he is not thinking of the body, the physical organism, as though that were not God's creation. Had he so thought he would have been a Manichæan before Manichæus. But in man there is a tyranny of sin which has a corrupting effect on human nature; a law of sin in him fights against that law of God which he is able to recognise as alone having the right to command him. This is the theme of the latter part of the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and its echo is heard in the phrase "the mind of the flesh" in the second chapter of Colossians. So, as St. Paul remembers the corruption which is far more deadly than any merely external enemy could be, that state of fallen humanity to which witness is borne by the universal fact of sin, the Incarnation is for him much more than a wonderful condescension on the part of the Son of God who thus shows His willingness to share in human life. It means a readiness not only to be made man but also to be made sin, as St. Paul says in that astonishing sentence at the end of the fifth chapter of 2 Corinthians which loses something of its force when it is interpreted through words easier to understand. Doubtless, it is the Cross which he has specially in mind; yet the Incarnation itself is a con-

descension to man's sinful state. And it may be that the form of the words in Romans viii., where it is said that God sent His Son in the "likeness" (Moffatt, "guise") of sinful flesh reflects the strain in the apostle's mind. This strain is absent from both the other two theologians of the New Testament, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, and the author of the fourth Gospel and of the first epistle of St. John.

To their doctrine we must now turn. The epistle to the Hebrews opens with what is almost a hymn of praise in honour of the divine Son of God. It is noteworthy that there is no suggestion of any argument being needed at this point. The writer takes it for granted that here his exposition of the superiority of the religion of the new covenant finds its right beginning. God's words of revelation have found their completion in that word, which is really an act, the coming of the pre-existent, divine Son into the world and His redeeming work. To Him, as in figure to the myterious Melchizedek, neither beginning of days nor end of life can be ascribed. He is the world's Sustainer (i. 3), its Creator (i. 10), the Founder of that which in the Old Testament is spoken of as God's house. The words used of Him in the first chapter rule out any notion that He is the supreme creature: He is the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of His being. In such a description we are hardly at one remove from the formulated doctrine of a later age that the Son is of one being with the Father in respect

of His deity, while, as the Son, He is personally distinct from the Father.

Not less confidently and gladly does the writer lay stress upon the reality of the human nature and the human experiences of the Son who had come into the world. Truly has it been said by a German theologian that the author of Hebrews "emphasises the true humanity of Christ more clearly and consciously than any other New Testament writer." The Son of God participated in the nature of flesh and blood which is common to all the children of men, and in all respects He had to be made like to His brethren, that He might fulfil the office of highpriesthood (ii. 14-16). He accepted all the trials and sufferings of man's life (ii. 18; iv. 15), and, Son though He was, He learned obedience through the things which He suffered (v. 9). Thus by His life, and, especially, in its culmination in the Cross, He became, as has been well said, "the perfect and authoritative example of faith for all to follow."

Outside the Gospels there are no words so inspiring in the picture they present of the presence of Christ in human life. He is one with man in all man's needs; not, indeed, with man in his sin, from which it is precisely man's greatest need to be delivered. But the value of the picture vanishes if it be not remembered that it is the picture of One who is truly divine. The glory and the appeal of the picture lies just in this that He who is seen so deeply immersed in the reality, which often, and in His case pre-eminently, becomes

the tragic reality of life, is Jesus—the Son of God (iv. 14). The frequent use of that name is noteworthy in this epistle: whether it was employed with that intention is, perhaps, doubtful, yet certainly it suggests to the reader the completeness of the humanity of Christ. But he will quite misunderstand the mind of the writer if he supposes that at this point there is any less conscious grasp of the completeness of the divinity. Also he will fail to mark the message which this epistle brings, that faith in Jesus as the divine Son does not remove Him from us, does not make the fellowship that we have with Him through the record of His historic life less secure. For our debt to the writer of Hebrews stands not least in this that he has shown how human nature itself, and man's life with its story of trial and suffering, are sanctified since the Son of God once passed this way.

Before we come to the Gospel and the first epistle of St. John, a word must be said about the book of the Revelation, which has been classed with the other writings that we call "Johannine" from towards the end of the second century, though in the third century Dionysius Bishop of Alexandria denied that the Revelation was the work of the apostle, the son of Zebedee, "whose is the Gospel 'according to John' and the catholic epistle." A discussion of the question would be out of place here: but the doctrine of the Apocalypse must not be left unnoticed. The book is not concerned with problems of Christology; its theme is the warfare, viewed in relation to the past, the present, and

the future, to things in heaven and things on earth, in which the enemies of God, both demonic and human, set themselves to thwart the purposes of God and to destroy His people, and are destined to meet with final overthrow. As picture succeeds picture, the seer shows us at the centre of the events which he describes the figure of Jesus Christ. To all that He is, and to all that He has done and will do, the great titles bear their witness. He is the Son of God, the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega: He is the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, above all He is the Lamb, who has been slain and has redeemed men to God by the sacrifice of Himself, who now, with Him who sits upon the throne, receives blessing and glory and honour and dominion for ever and ever. There is no attempt in language of a precise, theological character to expound the relation of Christ to His Father; but the relation suggested is not that of a supreme instrument of God's will to the God who, in that case, was His Creator. In Rev. iii. 14 we have the title "the beginning of the creation of God" used of Christ; but apart from the alternative translation, "the origin of God's creation" (Moffatt), the phrase need not involve the conclusion that Christ Himself is included in the world of created things. There is no question but that in the Apocalypse Christ stands above the world of creation: of that there can be only one of two explanations, either that He has been raised above it, or that it is not the world to which He essentially belongs. The passage under discussion should be estimated in

the light of the whole tendency of the book; and of that tendency Dr. Swete has said in his commentary that it "forbids the interpretation 'the first of creatures'."

With the fourth Gospel and the first epistle of St. John the theology of the New Testament reaches its highest point. In both writings, which are probably the works of one author, whether he be the son of Zebedee or of another, a single motive, though differently expressed, is in control. The evangelist writes in order that his readers may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing they may have life through His name. For the letter-writer that which is above all things necessary is that they should believe that the Son of God has come in the flesh: the sense of moral paradox in respect of "the flesh" which we noted in St. Paul has no place here.

Now, if we pay due attention to this motive we shall not easily fall into either of two misinterpretations of the author, particularly in relation to the Gospel. These are, first, that he was comparatively indifferent to the reality of the human experiences of Christ; secondly, that his real interest lay in a speculative Christology rather than in a life which had its place in history. These erroneous conceptions come together in a view that St. John was a religious philosopher and mystic who developed a doctrine of a divine Son of God, in whom men could find the true light and life; that did, indeed, as it was bound to do, link up his metaphysics and his mysticism with the name of Jesus, but the

historical life was not that with which he was chiefly concerned. As against all such attempts to represent the fourth evangelist as one for whom the historical was of merely symbolic value, it must be said that throughout the Gospel, and not least in the passages where the Jews put forward their arguments and criticisms and Jesus answers them, the controversy centres in the historic Person. It is not abstract questions of religious truth which are debated in the Gospel: the one question to which everything returns, by whatever route, is whether this historic Person is truly the Christ, the Son of God, or whether the Jews are right in treating that as an intolerable and blasphemous idea. Of speculation there is hardly anything—I would go further and say outright that there is nothing—in this Gospel. And if the Johannine Christology is to be called metaphysical it is only in the sense that wherever the claim is made that the final truth about God and the world has been brought within the apprehension of men, there has been made a disclosure of that reality with which metaphysics as a science is concerned. Of special relevance in this connection is the use of the title “Logos” of Christ in the Prologue to the Gospel. That we must not immediately assume that the presence of this word reveals the religious philosopher approaching his subject by the way of contemporary notions is clear when we remember that the author of the Apocalypse, to whom no one has ascribed interest in the general conceptions of philosophers, employs the same title as a description of Christ (xix. 13). Still, it is not improbable that West-

cott went too far in excluding all Hellenistic influence in the evangelist's choice of the term, and that, as the author of the last full commentary in English on the Gospel, the late Archbishop Bernard, says, St. John was conversant with the speculations of the philosophers and intended to show the true significance of that title Logos, to which some of them, among them the Jewish-Alexandrian writer Philo, attached great importance. But, however that may be, there is no indication of any influence being exercised on the body of the Gospel by a Logos-theology. It is on the divine Sonship of Jesus, not on the fact that He is the Logos, that the emphasis falls. And though the Prologue may be regarded as the dogmatic statement in which the New Testament doctrine of Christ comes to its final and supreme expression, its absence from the Gospel would not mean any obscuring of the Gospel's witness to the divinity of Jesus. That witness is found in the continual exposition of the relation which Jesus, as the Son, has to His Father. In this relation Jesus is seen to be truly divine, while, as Son, He is dependent upon the Father and comes to do His will. Here again there appears that association of different dogmatic elements which often seems to have occasioned much more difficulty, and to have constituted more of a problem to later Christian thinkers than we can recognise in the New Testament writings themselves.

In the fourth Gospel, more than in any other New Testament document, we are shown what Jesus as the incarnate Son of God means to men. In St. Paul's

letters the value of the incarnation is bound up so closely with the death on the Cross that the significance of the Person Himself is not expounded; in Hebrews, with which may be joined the first epistle of St. Peter, it is the example of the earthly life on which the writer dwells, with, in Hebrews, the blessings which flow from the high-priestly work of Jesus. In St. John we are brought to the contemplation of Jesus as the author and giver of true life to men: this life He can give because of what He is. The words in the fourteenth chapter, "I am the way, the truth, the life," express that relation of Jesus to men which is seen in different aspects throughout the Gospel. He is come that men may have abundance of life and that through Him they may come to the Father. As Shepherd, Bread of Life, Light of the World, Door, Resurrection, He brings those who believe into a fellowship which is both with Himself and with the Father. In the first epistle the purpose of the letter is disclosed as a desire of the writer to bring his readers into this fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. In it, as in the Gospel, truth and life are the supreme needs of man, and in Christ these needs are met. To possess the Son is to possess life, and apart from the Son there is no life.

In the Johannine writings the New Testament witness to Christ is completed. If we try to conceive of them as unwritten, we should still say that in the New Testament Christianity was revealed as the absolute religion, owing its absolute character to the fact of Christ, who, as the incarnate Son of God, can never be

superseded. But the Church would have lacked that illumination, which is so especially St. John's gift to her. It was possible for him to offer this gift because of his profound contemplation of the Person of Christ and of the love which was of one piece with the contemplation.

Whatever else is true about the fourth evangelist, it is certain that he was a man who had long devoted himself to the task of making plain, first to himself and then to all whom his words could reach, the inmost meaning of the Person of Jesus Christ. And in his pages that meaning is given, not through a doctrine of the Person pressed upon the reader, but through the Person Himself manifested as the divine Son whose words are spirit and life and His works signs of His glory. The Johannine picture is the interpretation of the synoptic picture: scholars will continue to differ as to whether the interpretation is also to be regarded as a historical record. But however the mind of the evangelist be read on this matter (and the question is finally one of his intentions and of the way in which he desired that his Gospel should be understood), there can be no doubt that he did not wish to relieve religion of an embarrassing connection with history, but was intent on showing that within history God had made the final revelation of Himself in Christ. "The Word dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." It is in Jesus, and, as the evangelistic phrase goes, in "Jesus only" that the Word and the Christ are made known to men.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERSON OF CHRIST AND THE PROGRESS OF DOCTRINE

THE study of the processes of thought in the Church of the first five centuries fascinating as it is to the scholar or student who approaches it with the enthusiasm which the prospect of close contact with any great field of learning can inspire, is not one that makes an immediate appeal to the casual reader of religious literature. The history of doctrine probably suggests to the average man something of which the dryness is certain and the value very questionable. The subject might excite more interest if it were realised that the story of these centuries revealed alike the growth and the better understanding of a living religion. The story indeed at its most critical moments becomes a drama just because it was the essential character of Christianity as a religion of real communion between God and man that was at stake. It was not the debating of abstract propositions nor the choosing of the correct formula which moved so deeply an Irænaeus and a Tertullian, an Origen and an Athanasius, a Cyril and a Leo. These were men who, whatever else may be said of them, whatever defects may be found in them and however much we may feel that their religious and theological outlook had its limita-

tions, were passionately in earnest when they laid stress on Christianity as a religion of revelation and redemption, and demanded that those notes should be truly and fully expressed in the formulated theology of the Church.

The history of the doctrine of the Person of Christ is much more than a story of intellectual progress. The controversies to which the student of doctrine must needs attend play a larger part in the textbooks of to-day than they did in the general life of the Church. That the common faith of the Church ruled out decisively certain conceptions and pointed in the direction of others is a conclusion which may rightly be drawn from the evidence, but there was no passion for exact definition. It was not until a crisis came which called for an unambiguous decision as to what was and what was not compatible with the common faith that the Church found it necessary to draw up a statement of orthodox belief which was to be regarded as in the fullest sense authoritative.¹

It is to certain main features of the history that I wish to devote this chapter. The reader who has some acquaintance with the subject will realise that selection is not easy, even when no attempt is being made to cover the ground. But no true perspective for a clear

¹ There is plenty of material for anyone who wishes to trace the course of the history with an attention to detail that would be out of place in the present work. Dr. H. R. Mackintosh's book, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, Dr. Bethune-Baker's *Introduction to the Study of Christian Doctrine*, and the late Dr. R. L. Ottley's work, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, are outstanding contributions to the subject. Perhaps I may mention my own much smaller book, *The Beginnings of Christian Theology*.

sight of the nature of the doctrine and for an adequate appreciation of the Church's attitude towards it can be gained without some knowledge of the history. Nor can the theological situation to-day be truly appraised unless it is studied in the light of the knowledge which acquaintance with the past provides. It is, for example, entirely unsatisfactory, both from the point of view of religion and from that of science to pass directly from the New Testament to the discussions of Christology or of problems intimately connected with Christology without any effort to discover what have been the main lines of Christian thought during the last eighteen hundred years.

First then, comes the period of the second century. The emphasis falls on the common faith, but the exposition of that faith as a theological scheme, with the right observance of doctrinal proportions and an adequate adjustment of doctrine to doctrine was only at its beginning. Already, however, it is clear from the way in which different writers express themselves that they were conscious of a tension between elements in belief, though they did not set themselves to the effort of resolving the tension.

Thus, the common faith was undoubtedly Trinitarian. The doctrine of Christ and of the Holy Spirit belonged to the doctrine of God. It is to the sphere of divine reality that Clement of Rome in his epistle of about the year A.D. 96 refers when he speaks of "One God, one Christ, one spirit of grace", and gives the confirmation, "as God lives, and the Lord Jesus Christ

lives, and the Holy Spirit." Both Clement and Ignatius of Antioch a little later show that they conceive of our Lord's sufferings as the sufferings of one who is divine. An early homily which has gone under the name of Clement begins by telling the hearers that "they must think of Christ as of God, as of the Judge of living and dead." No less convinced are they of the truth of Christ's humanity. Clement both sees in Christ the Isaianic prophecy of the suffering servant fulfilled, and repeats the teaching of the epistle to the Hebrews with regard to Christ's high priesthood. Ignatius is as outspoken as St. John in condemnation of those who would make of the incarnation a mere "seeming". There is "one physician both flesh and spirit . . . God in man, of Mary and of God".

The writings on which I have drawn are included in the collection which goes by the name of "The Apostolic Fathers". Students of Church history are familiar with the contrast that has often been made between these writers and those of the New Testament. Certainly there is a great difference both on the spiritual and on the intellectual side. But the value of the witness which the later authors give to the nature of the common faith may be the more notable on that very account. In the light of what they say we can see that neither the definite denial of the divine nature of Christ for which the Ebionites were responsible, nor the refusal to take the reality of our Lord's human nature seriously, which was characteristic of the Gnostics, had any chance of being accepted by the Church.

The Ebionites were of mainly Palestinian origin, and they upheld to a greater or less degree the binding obligation of the Jewish law. Considerable obscurity surrounds these people and their views, but one may judge that they thought of Christianity as no more than a perfected Judaism, with Jesus as the Messiah who had been crucified and raised from the dead. The Gnostics are one of the most striking instances of the intermingling of various religious and philosophical ideas which was a distinguishing mark of eastern Asia and of the Levant at that time. Had those Gnostic leaders who attached themselves to Christianity and were for a period members of the Church been successful in gaining assent to their doctrines, the common faith of the Church would have vanished and a bizarre theosophy, possessing no hope of survival, would have taken its place.

To this first period belong most of the writers who are known as The Apologists. They were probably regarded in their own day as of much greater consequence for the defence of Christian monotheism than for the elucidation of the doctrine of the incarnation. For us their special significance lies in the use which they made of the idea of the Logos. If we disregard certain divergencies among the writers we may say of the group as a whole that it taught that the Logos, who is both the divine Reason and the divine Word, existed eternally in God. Through Him God created the world and revealed Himself to man; first of all in relation to creation, the Logos became personally distinct

from God. Finally, in Christ the Logos was incarnate; it was no "seed of the Logos" that was present in Christ, as had been the case, so Justin Martyr tells us, with eminent Greek teachers such as Heraclitus and Socrates. With the Apologists Christianity enters the field of philosophy with a directness that has not met us before, and a lasting debt is due to them for their readiness to show the reasonableness of Christian truth, and, especially for the manner in which, through the doctrine of the Logos, they associate Christianity as the true philosophy with the Person of Christ. In this they foreran notable teachers of later ages who have sought to show how the revelation of God in Christ supplies the key to all the great questions which have exercised the human mind.

It must always be remembered that in the writings of theirs which have survived the Apologists are engaged in controversial, though, in part, conciliatory expositions of Christian truth addressed to those who stand outside the Christian Church. The faith to which the members of the Christian communities knew themselves to be pledged is not to be found stated in these writings in the clear and positive way that is characteristic of the last great Christian teacher who rounds off the second century. Irenaeus as unmistakably closes this period as his younger contemporary Tertullian who was writing before the century ended opens out the next period.

It is of Irenaeus' conception of the incarnation that we must briefly take note. As a theologian expounding

the common faith and careful to keep it free from those sophistications which the Gnostics had introduced, Irenaeus advanced the understanding of the doctrine of the Person of Christ in three directions. First, he emphasised the revelation of the Father by the Son as true not only in time but in eternity. The language which he employs in this connection is worthy of attention: "The Son is the measure of the Father; the Father is the invisibility of the Son; the Son is the visibility of the Father"—such is the literal meaning of the Latin sentence. The Logos is the hand of God, an expression which is also used of the Holy Spirit. Speculative as this may seem to us to be, it is to be appreciated as the background of the manifestation of God in the historic Person of Jesus Christ. Secondly, with Irenaeus we come back to that unveiling of love as the motive of the incarnation which had received prominence in the Pauline and Johannine writings. So he says of Jesus Christ the Son of God that "because of His profound love for His creation He submitted Himself to the birth from the Virgin, Himself through Himself uniting man to God." The same sense of the vastness of the love which was the motive inspires the famous saying of Irenaeus that the Word of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, became what we are to make us to be that which He Himself is. Thirdly, Irenaeus lays stress upon the result of the union of God and man in Christ. In the incarnation the breach caused by the Fall is repaired. Christ is seen to be the true Representative of the race, who restores

humanity so that in Him the image and likeness of God which had been lost in Adam is recovered.

The absence of philosophical interests in Irenaeus, and the obvious fact that he works well within the limits of Christian truth as he had received it, not speculating about it but expounding its true nature, in close dependence on what he calls the rule of faith, has led to a view of him as a "traditionalist", which does less than justice to his ability as a Christian theologian.

With the second period we find ourselves in a new situation. There appears a consciousness of the dogmatic problem involved in the Church's faith: it is realised that the doctrines of God and of Christ need to be brought into a harmony which goes beyond the leaving of truths side by side. It was a time of theological building; but the work did not, and, I think, could not have gone on without much discussion, and sharply differing views as to the character of the material which was to be used and as to the way in which the fabric should be consolidated.

The technicalities of the controversies and of the work of the great Church theologians, Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus, Dionysius of Alexandria and others are not for these pages. But it is worth while to try to make clear the difference between the teaching of these thinkers, who certainly stand within the tradition of the common faith, whatever may be thought of some of their interpretations and speculations, and those who, like Artemon and Sabellius and Paul of Samosata were condemned for false doctrine and ceased

to be in communion with the Church. This seems to me to be the great point of division: the common faith of the Church, expressed anyhow in the west, in a baptismal creed, appealing to the testimony of scripture and to the witness of a tradition of which the Bishops were specially the guardians, demanded a recognition of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as real existences if the doctrine of God was to be truly stated: further, there could be no acceptable doctrine of the Person of Christ which did not recognise in Him the reality both of deity and of humanity. From the implications of this common faith Sabelius and Paul and others did, in their different ways, diverge.

It was not really difficult to show that their doctrinal schemes, whatever their merits, were representations of a faith other than that by which the Church lived and which it had received. But it was not therefore easy to do rightly the work which had been done wrongly by those whom the Church had repudiated. There is not the smallest reason for surprise in the fact that sometimes the profoundest Christian thinkers of the third century appear very unsatisfactory if not definitely unorthodox, when judged by the standards of the fourth and fifth centuries.

If we regard one side of Tertullian's Christology it is, indeed, extraordinarily mature. Several times he anticipates almost exactly the central Nicene word *ὁμοούσιος* "of one substance with". The Son, he says is of the same substance as the Father; Christ and the Father are one in respect of unity of substance; it

is from the substance of the Father that the Son's being is derived. And if he anticipates Nicaea in his references to the doctrine of Christ as one in substance with the Father, he anticipates the Chalcedonian Council of 451 and that "Definition" to which the Council gave its authority, by his teaching on the two "substances", or, as we generally say, "natures", divine and human, which were present in the incarnate Christ. Nor, if we were to pass to a consideration of his doctrine of the Trinity should we find it less rich in expressions which intend to safeguard, and, as far as they go, do safeguard, the truth that God is one, and the truth that God is the Trinity. "Trinity of one divinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit" is his way of expressing the Christian doctrine of God in one of his works.

And yet there is another side; and in it Tertullian falls below the later standard of orthodoxy. He can speak of the Trinity in such a way as to imply that the Trinity is not eternal but has come into existence through a process of emergence or evolution within the Godhead; how far he recognised the Logos as personal when the Logos was still immanent within God, and the divine Sonship was not yet a reality, is open to question. But he said in so many words, indeed even more unhappy ones, what Arius was to say a century later, that there was a time when God had no Son. Arius at least confessed that the divine Sonship existed before time, though it had no place in the eternal uncreated life of God. Where Tertullian went wrong, and not

he alone, was in his failure to do justice to the affirmations and the implications of the common faith in the sphere of eternity as well as of time. Irenaeus kept himself almost entirely free from this error; he was not interested in a scientific expression of the faith. Tertullian was; and he was well equipped by his legal training and his logical acumen for the work of lucid exposition and happy choice of words. But the Stoic philosophy, the metaphysic that he knew best, was not the fittest instrument for the construction of a Christian philosophy of religion or for the interpretation of the doctrines which formed the substance of the common faith. Yet much that belongs to the precious and indispensable material out of which a Christology must be built if it is to rest on sure foundations is set down with excellent firmness and clarity by Tertullian.

But it was not from the Africa of Carthage and its Roman civilisation, but from the Africa of Alexandria, where the waters of Hebrew and Greek thought had long before flowed into one another and had not ceased to do so, that the great step forward was to be taken. Origen is not one of those whose names have, ever since the days of their earthly pilgrimage, been recognised as denoting something of outstanding achievement within the Christian tradition. Those who are acquainted with Origen's wonderful and tragic history, which ended not with his seventy years of this world's life, will know why that has been so. Yet in the high paths of the greatest Christian theology Origen is the peer of whomsoever anyone would choose as master

and hero. Let Ulysses be Augustine or Thomas Aquinas or Hooker or Calvin—Origen is able to bend his bow. There is no single Christian thinker of whom I would so gladly cherish the design to make his vast bounty of theological riches the subject of a book. Here it is little enough, when one thinks of the unhurried pages that his contributions to theology and especially to the theology of the incarnation deserve, that I can say about him. Origen, like his teacher, Clement of Alexandria, followed in the steps of the Greek Apologists of the second century in the attention which he gave to the idea of the Logos. But his exposition of that idea is far more satisfactory. He never allows that the Logos is at first "impersonal" and attains to personality only in connection with the creation of the world. The Logos is to be thought of as no less personal than the Father, with whom he is one essence or being. And whereas the doctrine of the Sonship of the Logos is not to the fore in the theology of the Apologists, with Origen it is of the greatest importance. The Logos is eternally the Son of God. The Sonship was not a later emergence: never was there a time (though Origen as a philosopher naturally avoids the word "time") when the Son did not exist. Here Origen states the direct opposite of what Arius was to state a century later.

Thus strongly does Origen affirm the truth of the real unity of the Son of God with the Father. His doctrine, known technically as that of the eternal generation of the Son, rules out all notions of the Son being

brought into existence through an act of will on the part of God which conceivably might never have taken place. At the same time, Origen held strongly to the thought that in the eternal order the Father is the fountain of Godhead, and that in relation to the Father, who is the uncaused cause, the Son is caused, and is thus continually dependent upon the Father. As a result of this strain of thought he expressed himself in terms which profoundly shocked men of a later date, who approached all these questions from the point of view of a fully formulated orthodoxy. It is not at all easy to be sure what Origen was, from the standpoint of causality, prepared to say about the Son. It is possible that, as the Emperor Justinian affirmed in the sixth century, Origen spoke of the Son as a creature. But what is beyond dispute is that two centuries before Justinian, Athanasius, with the burden of the Arian controversy upon him, did not hesitate to claim Origen as one of those who bore witness to the true divinity of the Son of God. He knew that there were hard sayings in Origen, but of them he remarks, and, as it seems to me, with real wisdom, that these were of a tentative and exploratory character. Modern scholars have differed considerably in their judgment of Origen's theology. But I have little doubt that however much weight is assigned to those elements in his teaching which suggest an absolute subordination as of creature to Creator in respect of the relation of the Son of God to the Father, Origen's place is in the main line of the orthodox tradition.

When one comes to Origen's notion of the Incarnation itself, it is of great interest that he availed himself of an idea which the Church has never viewed with any favour, in order to make the reality of our Lord's human nature clear. He taught that all human souls have pre-existed in the super-sensual world, and in that world all souls have sinned except one: and that was the soul which the Logos chose as His soul in the incarnation. Thus he made any idea of the incarnation as the assumption of no more than a body possessing the principles of life, but lacking the rational characteristics of human nature, impossible. It cannot be said too emphatically that any doctrine of the Person of Christ which denies that He had those psychic, rational, and moral qualities which are proper to the nature of man, is contrary to the Catholic faith which insists upon the reality of our Lord's manhood no less than on that of His Godhead.

The third century saw many other Christian thinkers of note, but it is not necessary to devote time to their labours. It ended amid the gathering storms of the last great persecution, which will always be associated, though perhaps not quite fairly, with the name of Diocletian. With different degrees of violence, the storm, once it had broken, raged for a decade: then came peace and toleration and finally the beginnings of a new era, with Constantine as sole ruler of the Empire and his open adhesion to the Christian faith. Into the questions of personal sincerity and political motives we need not enter here. Suffice it to say that

from now onwards for many a century Emperors and Kings might take a hand in the settlement of religious and theological issues by enabling the ecclesiastical authorities to make effective the decisions at which they might arrive.

The third distinctive period in the history of doctrine begins with what its most brilliant modern recorder, the late Professor Gwatkin of Cambridge, has called the "Epic of Arianism". The word is justified both by the crisis in Christian thinking which was immediately and inevitably involved and by the nature of the events which fill up the half-century between the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 and the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. Few stories in the history of the Christian Church are more dramatic than that of Athanasius during all but the closing years of this epoch, dauntless, unconquerable, utterly single-minded in the service of the heart of the Gospel; Archbishop, theologian, true pastor of his people and confessor of the faith; resolute against any compromises which left unsettled the very thing that most needed to be settled, yet no pedant mistaking words for realities and unable to conceive of others as meaning what he meant unless they said it in just his way.

This is not the place for a detailed account of the doctrine either of Arius or of Athanasius. And, indeed, when once the radical difference between these two men and the theologies for which they stood is made plain, the points of detail are in the main simply consequential. That radical difference may be stated

in several ways. I would put it like this: For Arius the true doctrine of God is entirely independent of the fact of Christ. That fact is irrelevant. Christ, and the interpretation of Christ as Logos and Son of God, react in no way on the truth about the being and nature of God. The Son of God is no more than the supreme creature through whom God created all else that belongs to the order of created things. What is distinctive of the Son is that He and He alone is directly created by God. The Incarnation, which meant for Arius the taking by the Logos of a human body but not of a human soul, since the Logos possessed all that creaturely nature which is proper to a human soul, was no revelation of God. The Son of God, whether as pre-existent or as incarnate, could bear witness to God only *ab extra*. The Son was neither of one being with the Father nor like in nature to the Father: no divine attributes were His. When about the middle of the century the representatives of the extreme wing of the Arians taught that the Son was unlike the Father, they did no more than draw out the inner logic of the whole Arian position. Over against this position it is of the very core of the argument unfalteringly pursued by Athanasius that the true doctrine of God is bound up with the true doctrine of the Logos or Son of God. There is for him no Christian doctrine of God which is not at the same time the doctrine of the Son who is of one being with the Father and who for us men and our salvation became incarnate.

Hence the theology of Athanasius, while in agree-

ment with that of Arius in its conviction that the distinction between the divine and the human, the Creator and the creature, must be preserved, counters it at point after point in its Christology. The Son of God, said Arius, is a creature and, therefore, cannot be of one substance with God. The Son of God, said Athanasius, is no creature, but is truly divine: and that divinity is expressed beyond any possibility of doubt when the Son is affirmed to be of one substance with God. With the Father He is one, but not in such a way as to make of the terms "Father" and "Son" mere names. There is a true individualisation within the unity of the Godhead: Athanasius was no Sabellian. And the causal priority on which Origen laid stress is present in the thought of Athanasius. In the Godhead there is one underived principle, or ἀρχή. But that does not imperil the true divinity of the Son or His co-eternity with the Father. In the Godhead the relation of Father and Son is eternal: if the Father is the archetype the Son as type is no less eternal, uncreated.

When the two standpoints are thus compared, it may well seem surprising that there could be any doubtfulness on the part of any excepting the definite adherents to Arius' doctrine as to where the truth lay. But whereas we can eliminate everything but the plain issue as to the true Godhead of Christ, that was far less possible under the conditions of Church life and thought in the fourth century. It would be necessary to take the history in detail in order to make the

nature of the hesitations clear. Complications entered in from many sides, theological, ecclesiastical, political. For more reasons than one the Nicene Creed was disliked and distrusted by many Bishops who certainly were not Arians. But if Christianity, both as a Gospel and as an intellectually defensible creed, was to survive, the future could not be with Arianism. If Christianity was indeed a Gospel of redemption, it was impossible to rest content with a theology which denied any real contact between God and the world. If Christ was what the Arians affirmed him to be, it was impossible to confer titles of divinity upon him and to make him an object of worship, without falling back into the polytheism from which it had been the glory of Christianity to deliver great numbers of people in the non-Jewish world. Rightly does Athanasius say in one of his letters, "We do not worship a creature . . . to the heathens and the Arians does such an error belong." Gradually in the latter part of the fourth century the air cleared. Differences resulting from doubt as to the meaning of particular words and phrases began to be resolved and to disappear. The Council of Constantinople of 381 marked the end of the long controversy. There was no idea at the time that it would take rank as the second of the Councils described as oecumenical. That selection of some Councils as possessing special authority was still to come. Only 150 Bishops assembled at Constantinople and there was not a western Bishop among them. Nevertheless, the Council does give a point from which we may date the perishing of Arian-

ism. It did indeed live on among the barbarians who were to invade the western Empire, and it has one great name in Ulphilas, "the apostle of the Goths": but Arianism had no hope of serious revival either as simple piety or as theological science.

The Nicene formula is not a definition of substance, *ousia*: it is a statement of the unity of the Son with the Father in respect of that *ousia* which may be predicated of one who is divine and of none who is not divine. But the clarification of this question brought with it a renewed attention to the character of the incarnate life of the Son of God. The Word had been made flesh: He who had been in the form of God had taken upon Himself the form of a servant. That Christ was divine and human was the common faith of the Church. But there had been no concentration on the relation of the divine to the human in His Person. It was after the middle of the fourth century that the problem of this relation came to the front and remained at the centre of theological discussion for about a century. The first name of importance is that of Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea. He was a convinced supporter of the Nicene faith in the true Godhead of Christ. Whatever clashed with that must be abandoned. And Apollinarius held that the doctrine of the human soul in Christ did clash with that faith. It was not that he wished to deny that Christ was true man: no Christian teacher could deny that. But a human soul in Christ seemed to him to imperil both the unity of Christ's being and also the truth of

His redeeming work, since where there is a human soul there is a nature capable of change and of sin. Apollinarius could not allow that there was a union in Christ of the completeness both of deity and of humanity. So he found no place in Christ for those rational and volitional characteristics of human nature, without which we have not the truth of human nature. It has been suggested that he taught that the Logos was the archetype of human souls, so that where the Logos was, there was the very truth of human nature. Here, again, I must refer any reader who wishes to go further into the matter to those fuller treatments which a history of doctrine will give. But the Church could not have accepted the reconstruction of thought involved in the Apollinarian theology without endangering the apprehension of our Lord's true human nature.

It is in part as a reaction against the teaching of Apollinarius that the doctrine concerning Christ put forward by Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, and Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, is to be understood. These two thinkers are representative in their general tendency of the theological tradition which is associated with the Christian scholarship of Antioch, and is describable as, from one point of view the contrast, and from another as the complement of the tradition especially typical of Alexandria. In these two great cities the two chief theological schools of Eastern Christianity had their homes. In both there was great devotion to Bible study, but whereas the mystic and speculative attitude was prevalent in Alexandria, the

emphasis at Antioch fell rather on the textual and historical aspects of the Scriptures. It may have been this approach to the New Testament which led the school of Antioch to lay such stress upon the humanity of Christ, and to regard with special aversion whatever seemed to endanger the reality of His human nature and to eliminate from it that freedom which ensured that in His life there was a true trial and probation.

In opposition to the views of Apollinarius Antiochene theologians maintained that Christ was completely man as well as truly God, and that any idea of a mingling of Godhead and manhood must be rejected, since Godhead is one reality (technically *ousia* or substance) and manhood another. And it is important that any judgment of the worth of the doctrine should take account of the fact that there was not the smallest intention of challenging the Nicene doctrine that the Son of God was of one substance with the Father or of reducing the notion of the incarnation of the Logos to one of the inspiration of a selected individual.

The second of the Christological controversies is bound up on the personal side with two of the most eminent Bishops of the day, Cyril of Alexandria and the afore-mentioned Nestorius. For Cyril the truth of the incarnation was found in the thought that the Logos had taken human nature up into Himself; it was entirely unnatural to him to speak in any way that might suggest that there was any other subject of the experiences recorded in the Gospels as experiences of Christ than the divine Logos who had been made flesh.

Thus, Cyril was always anxious to insist on the unity of the Person of Christ, and to bring the human and divine realities which had come together in Christ into the closest union. A phrase which he often used was "one incarnate nature", which, though defensible, was certainly open to misunderstanding and objection. And the emphasis he laid on the description of the Blessed Virgin Mary as *Theotokos*, a word not quite happily translated as "Mother of God", is in line with Cyril's determination to make it plain that He who was born and died was personally and without reservation the divine Logos: no idea of an individual with whom the Logos associated Himself was tolerable.

It is now much more difficult, in view of the evidence derivable from a work of Nestorius himself which has come to light only during this century, to adopt, in the simple manner that was customary, the view that Nestorius and other Antiochene theologians taught a doctrine of "two Persons" in Christ. At least it should be said that they did all that they could to deny that this was their teaching. One may be sceptical as to how far this denial holds good, not from any doubt as to their good faith, but because of the difficulty of reconciling with this denial statements which make a sharp distinction between the Son of God and the Son who is the man born of Mary. It was his keen sense of the distinction between the divine and the human, which often appears to be a distinction drawn not between natures in the abstract, but between persons in the concrete, which made it difficult for Nestorius to

use the word *Theotokos*. It was natural for him to speak of the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of Christ, that is, of the Person in whom there was the union of the divine and the human natures. What he feared was the attribution of human experiences to God in His own divine nature, as though the divine nature in itself were capable of being born or dying. On the other hand, in fairness to Cyril, one must say that again and again in a famous letter to Nestorius which was solemnly approved by the Council of Ephesus in 431, he guarded against any such interpretation of his teaching. The Logos could be said to have been born and to have suffered and to have died because He had taken that human nature to which such experiences belong.

The Council of Ephesus ended as a victory for Cyril and the Alexandrine Christology. Nestorius was condemned for what was held to be the teaching of two persons between whom there was no real union (it is, of course, obvious that if in Christ two centres of personal life and consciousness, one divine and one human, were to be asserted it would be impossible to maintain any real unity). Finally, in the year 433, agreement was reached between Cyril and those who stood with him and a number of Bishops who had refused to acknowledge the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus. They represented the Antiochene tradition in Christology and were suspicious of what they regarded as the Apollinarian elements in Cyril's teaching. In what is known as the Creed of Union, to which assent was given from both sides, Christ was confessed

to be of one substance with the Father in respect of the Godhead and of one substance with us in respect of the manhood, "for there was a union of two natures, whereby we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord". The word *Theotokos* was affirmed of the Blessed Virgin, because God the Word from the very conception united to Himself the temple which He took of her.

The equilibrium thus reached was not thoroughly secure. What we may now call the doctrine of the two natures in Christ was not the way in which Eastern Christians, except those who started from the Antiochene point of view, approached the truth of the unity in Christ of Godhead and manhood. To many of them it appeared to keep the divine and the human in Christ too much apart. This feeling was expressed in an extreme manner by a certain Eutyches, an archimandrite of Constantinople, when he confessed that the Lord had two natures before the union of the Logos and the flesh, but only one after the union. The first part of this, as it must seem to us, curiously perverse formula, was intended to maintain that there has been a bringing together of true Godhead and true manhood in Christ: but when the union was accomplished the human was swallowed up in the divine. It was this teaching which resulted, after vicissitudes into which we cannot go, in the summoning of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, at which the Eutychian doctrine was condemned. Various dogmatic statements were approved, including the letter which Cyril had sent to

Nestorius, the later letter to John of Antioch, which incorporated the Creed of Union, and the dogmatic treatise on the incarnation written by Pope Leo I, in which he had insisted with the greatest clearness on the unity of Christ's Person and the distinction of the natures. "The Catholic Church," he says at the end of one of the sections of the letter, "lives and advances by this faith, that in Christ Jesus there is neither humanity without true divinity nor divinity without true humanity."

But the work for which the Council of Chalcedon is especially remembered was the framing of the theological exposition of the Incarnation, to which the phrase, "the Chalcedonian Definition", has been attached. Both at the time and afterwards it has been of such importance that the relevant portion of its text ought to be reproduced:

Following therefore the holy fathers we all with one accord confess and teach one and the same Son our Lord Jesus Christ, the self-same Person perfect in Godhead, the self-same Person perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the self-same of a reasonable soul and body, of one essence with the Father in respect of the Godhead, and the self-same of one essence with us in respect of the manhood, in all things like unto us, sin excepted: begotten of the Father before the ages in respect of the Godhead, and in the last days, the self-same born for us men and our salvation of Mary the Virgin, the *Theotokos*, in respect of the manhood, one and the self-same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation: the difference of the natures being in no way abolished by reason of the union, but rather the characteristics of either nature being

preserved and concurring in one person and one hypostasis, not as though he were parted or divided into two persons, but one and the self-same Son and only-begotten God the Logos, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a statement which cannot rightly be judged except against the background of the controversies of a century's duration: and they in their turn arise out of different traditions, pushed in this case and that to an extreme. Chalcedon has been subjected to severe criticism, and not simply by those who are in fundamental disagreement with what it is saying. To some it has seemed to rivet an antiquated metaphysic on to Christian thought about the Person of Christ; to some it has appeared as a failure since it has not solved or even attempted to solve the problem of the union of the divine and human in Christ, but has merely stated the two sides as being of equal importance and left them side by side. This second criticism is a much more pertinent one than the first. Chalcedon binds us to no system of metaphysics, and the Definition is free from anything that could, in the technical sense, be called metaphysical. On the other hand, it must be allowed that the Council brought no solution of a problem. Yet, after all, it did not profess to do so. Its business was protective, and rather negative than positive. Whatever was the true way of expressing Christian faith in the incarnation, neither Apollinarius nor Nestorius nor Eutyches had found it. The Council could not have acted otherwise without lasting injury to the Catholic faith: and it is not to be easily assumed that

what was then necessary in the interests of the Gospel has ceased to be necessary now.

With Chalcedon, the third period in the history of Christian thought about the Person of Christ comes to an end. This does not mean that Chalcedon was an end of controversy; it was, indeed, nothing of the sort. But Chalcedon had set a standard, such as had not previously existed in a like dogmatic form, and it was now necessary either to accept and agree with the Definition or to revolt against it. That may seem an undue simplification of the actual state of things in view of the importance of the question: How is the Definition to be interpreted? But, though it raises points of real concern for the historian of dogma, it is not one which need here detain us. The broad fact remains that deliberate rejection of Chalcedon meant the formation of communities out of communion with the Great Church and finding homes outside the Christian Empire. Moreover, the subsequent controversies, described as Monophysite and Monothelite, add nothing really new to what was either actually or by implication involved in the issues which the Chalcedonian Council had to face. Few controversies are likely to produce more sense of irritation among those who attend simply to names and formulas than that which arose around the question of whether in Christ there were two wills or one only. Yet, as stated, the problem was not merely scholastic. As Dr. Ottley says in his work on *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, in summing up the arguments used against Monothelitism: "To

deny Christ a human will would not only lower His humanity to the level of an irrational creature, it would virtually make true human virtue impossible for Him; it would empty His example of value, and render impossible that true human obedience which was the declared purpose of His coming."

During the thousand years and more up to the beginning of the Reformation there is nothing of the nature of a new development in connection with the doctrine of the Person of Christ. There are expositions, deductions, and, within limits, controversies. But they all take place on the ground of the settled dogma of Chalcedon. Thus, the Christology of John of Damascus in the East, and centuries later of Thomas Aquinas in the West, is a deductive exposition of the consequences that are held to follow from the dogmatic positions which are in themselves unalterable. And the general effect is that in the union of the divine and human in Christ the human alone is affected, and the effect of its union with the divine is to endow it with powers that do not properly belong to that which is human. According to John, Christ as man is omniscient as being endowed by the Logos with the fullness of divine knowledge. No real advance in wisdom or knowledge was possible in His case, but "only a progressive manifestation of omniscience." St. Thomas is more guarded in his treatment of this subject. Neither through His infused knowledge nor through His acquired knowledge was Christ as man omniscient. It was only through that blessed know-

ledge which belongs to God alone that Christ possessed the knowledge of all things, even of the divine essence. It is because of this full knowledge of God, a knowledge which can truly be described as one of sight, that Christ cannot be said to have had either faith or hope. St. Thomas is quite definite on this point. Sight such as Christ possessed excludes the possibility of faith, and conversely the attribution to Him of faith and hope is inconsistent with the recognition of His state of *beatitudo*.

So we come to the fifth period, which is that in which we are now living. It begins with the Reformation, or, more exactly, with recovery of that feeling for the importance of the picture of Christ in the Gospels which we owe to the scholars of the Renaissance. At this point Luther comes near to the great humanist Erasmus from whom he was in many ways so widely separated. For Luther laid immense stress upon the Person of Christ as He is revealed in the Gospels. Harnack, in his *History of Dogma*, declares the far-reaching effect of Luther's attitude when he says that "the great reform which Luther effected, both for faith and theology, was that he made the historical Christ *the sole principle of the knowledge of God*". This position was closely linked with Luther's distrust of a formal theology which made use of the methods of arguments derived from philosophy, and with his insistence upon the value of Christ in His redeeming work to the individual. "What is Christ to me?" is the question to which Luther found the answer in the Scriptures. And the

answer was one in which the human and divine natures of Christ were no longer kept apart as in the classical dogmatic which went back to Chalcedon, but were brought into the closest connection with one another. "These two sides, the deity and the humanity, were held or rather fused together by Luther with a kind of passion," writes Dr. Mackintosh. The problems to which such an intensity of religious feeling was bound to give rise are obvious enough: they bear upon the doctrine of God as well as more specifically on the doctrine of Christ. Clearly, if divine and human natures can interpenetrate, such a notion as that of divine impassibility can no longer be retained in its old form. It is no wonder that the charge of Monophysitism was brought against the Lutheran theology.

The Christology of Zwingli and of Calvin was much more in accordance with traditional statements. Neither shared the desire of Luther for a doctrine in which the personal unity of Christ could be shown to involve an inter-communication of the qualities and attributes of deity and humanity. Whereas the Lutherans were prepared to affirm that the finite could contain the infinite, this was entirely denied by the theologians who represent what, in contrast with the Lutheran, is known as the Reformed theology. To them the human nature of Christ was to be distinguished from His divine nature by the width of that gulf which separates the human from the divine. The taking of human nature was itself that act of humiliation, of *kenosis*, to which St. Paul refers in the second chapter of Philippians,

whereas in the Lutheran Christology the humiliation consisted in the fact that the incarnate Christ abstained, except rarely, from the use of those divine attributes and qualities which had been imparted to His manhood through its union with the divine Logos. In the arguments on this point we may see the beginnings of those theories as to the meaning of the *kenosis* which played so large a part in the discussions of the nineteenth century, both in Germany and in England. Luther, Calvin, and the Reformers as a whole had no wish to break with the Christology of the ancient Church, whatever differences they may have expressed with regard to terminology, and although they were not bound to it by any acknowledgment of a formal authority belonging to Church Councils and to a consensus of the Fathers. The case stands otherwise with Socinus: he repudiated the old dogma at every point where it seemed to him to come short of rational demonstration, while he also claimed that the view of the Person of Christ which he taught was the one that was set forth in Scripture. "The Christ . . . of Socinus," says Dr. Ottley, "is a man supernaturally begotten, and endowed with special powers by God with a view to an authoritative revelation of the divine will." It is interesting to note that one of the points of departure for Socinus in his theology was the conviction of such a fundamental contrast between the divine and the human that any notion of incarnation was impossible for him. This belief was at the root of the older Unitarianism, but it would be most uncongenial to

many of those who on the question of Christology would find their affinity to be with Socinus rather than with the Fathers or the Lutheran and Calvinistic Reformers.

One further point in connection with the Reformation and its bearing on Christology needs to be noted. The alliance between theology and philosophy was, so far as concerned the reforming communions, definitely broken. There had been a time when Platonism had appeared to be, if not essential, yet at least the best philosophical instrument which a Christian theologian could employ. Then had come the discovery of the metaphysical works of Aristotle, and, through the genius of St. Thomas, Aristotle had been raised to the elevation of *the* philosopher. Argumentations among the schoolmen with reference to the claims of realism or nominalism had not involved any dethronement of Aristotle as the thinker whose metaphysic was the proper background to the statement of doctrine. Now, for those who followed the Reformers, Aristotle ceased to be the master. Luther would have none of him, and the notion of a rational theology which appealed to a philosophy that maintained itself in complete independence of divine revelation was one with which the Reforming theologians would have nothing to do. Consequently, in respect of Protestantism, no sort of unity between philosophy and theology continued to exist, and when the new philosophical age came to the dawn in Europe with Descartes, metaphysicians began to go on their way without any sense of a close relation

between the work that they were doing and an interpretation of reality implied in the Christian doctrine.

In bringing this chapter to a close, I will call attention to certain lines along which thought and interest have freely flowed in the history of Christology since the sixteenth century.

First, then, in logical though not in chronological order, comes the approach to the doctrine of the Person of Christ along the line of historical research with special reference to the Gospels. Of this little need be said, since an earlier chapter has been concerned with its appreciation. In much that has been written about the Gospels and the central Figure in their story there has been, if not a repudiation of the possibility of such supernatural events as are therein recorded, at least a tendency to regard these elements in the Gospels as unhistorical. So in that treatment of the Gospels which is characteristic of the Liberalism of the last century the conclusion is not one that results from historical inquiry alone, but from inquiry powerfully affected by considerations which are in themselves hostile to the Catholic doctrine. At the same time, the course of this study of the Gospels has often made it plainer that the presence of the mysterious and the supernatural in the Gospels cannot be attributed simply to the way in which the evangelists wrote up the story, but that its source is to be found in the historical Person Himself. The Liberal critics and historians of the last century worked under a real difficulty. On the one hand, they felt themselves unable to bring within the

sphere of history anything of which history by its own canons and methods could not take account: that which was presented to them as history, while clearly its witness was to a super-historical order, they rejected. On the other hand, many found themselves unable to probe deeply into the life of the historical Jesus without recognising that history could not give an adequate account of Him. Books like Sanday's *Life of Christ in Recent Research* and Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* illustrate the difficulties with which the Liberal scholars were confronted. So does Harnack's *What is Christianity?* one of the finest expositions of the Liberal attitude. But when Harnack asserts with regard to the Sonship of Jesus that it is His secret, which we cannot penetrate, the limitations of the historical method are exposed. By this method the doctrinal question cannot be settled.

Secondly, I place the importance of that line of approach which is of a psychological rather than of a historical character. It starts from what are held to be facts of experience, first in Christ and then in the Christian believer. In Him the fact is the consciousness of mission and of that which lies behind the mission, namely, a unique relation to God.

Of this way of approaching the fact of Christ the inaugurator was Friedrich Schleiermacher, and not least because of his attitude to the problem of Christology he is to be reckoned as one of the most influential theologians of the modern era. Dr. Selbie, in the book he devoted to the study of him, quotes the

American divine, G. B. Foster, as saying that "it is the imperishable merit of Schleiermacher to have made for our century the Christological problem a specifically religious problem". Very different judgments have been formed as to the value of Schleiermacher's Christology. Emil Brunner has written a book of solid argument against the idea that at any decisive point either the Christology or any other of the positions which Schleiermacher adopted can be reconciled with historic Christian theology, whether of the patristic or of the Reformation type. Into the questions which Brunner raises we need not go: what is important is to appreciate the new orientation which makes its most obvious appearance with Schleiermacher. It might be called a change from dogma to experience, or, rather, an interpretation of the substance of dogma by reference to what the dogma means in experience, first of all Christ's experience and then that of Christians. The method itself does not necessarily lead to any one dogmatic conclusion. It can be employed by those who would regard the Christology of the Church as far superior from a theological standpoint to any other way of interpretation. For instance, Dr. Grensted's study of the Person of Christ in the volume he contributed to the Library of Constructive Theology makes much of Christian experience, and while he writes with restraint on the subject of our Lord's own experience, it is clear that he cannot make a sheer separation between the experience and faith of the Church which inspired it to declare that "Jesus has the nature of

God" and the experience which was Christ's own in His self-dedication to His Father's will. "In Jesus alone we see manhood wholly itself because it has fulfilled man's upreaching to God, the response of the creature to its Creator. . . . That man makes perfect response to God means that God Himself is perfectly known in that response, so far as He can be known to man at all."

The third line of approach has been definitely from the side of theology, and of this something must now be said. It is the faith of the Christian Church that Jesus Christ is both God and man. From no other standpoint than this can the theologian who claims to be a theologian of the Church start. It is in the exposition of this faith and of the consequences which result from it that his work consists. And when he meets with difficulties it is his business to try to show how they may be met without damage to the fundamental convictions.

But why did difficulties arise in the last century of Christian thought, which, at least in the developed form which they then displayed, were not felt as difficulties in earlier times? For three reasons: first, the doctrine as it had been expounded by theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, seemed to conflict with facts to which the New Testament bore witness. Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas had explained the text in which our Lord spoke of the Son not knowing the day or hour of the Day of Judgment as meaning that He would not tell His disciples, an explanation which went back into the

patristic age. It came to be felt by a number of theologians who had not the smallest desire to challenge the faith of Nicaea and Chalcedon that this was an unnatural account to be given of the words; they further were dissatisfied with traditional explanations of the fact that in the Gospels our Lord is spoken of as asking questions, and showing wonder at something said to Him. These passages they desired to interpret in accordance with the meaning which they seemed naturally to bear. Moreover, what were regarded as the probable results of the literary and historical criticism of the Old Testament had a bearing on the Christological problem. Were the Lord's references to the Old Testament to be taken as decisive in the field of literary and historical inquiry? Must the story of Jonah be held as literal history in view of Christ's use of it, and was it necessary to affirm that David had written the one hundred and tenth Psalm? Thus, through the texts as they stood, the question of the nature of our Lord's knowledge during His life on earth came to the front.

Secondly, and in close connection, came the difficulty from the side of psychology. The Chalcedonian doctrine asserted the duality of natures in the unity of the Person. But was not this to make the notion either of the real unity or of the real humanity very obscure? Was it possible to conceive of the human nature as real when brought into association with a divine nature, and having as its subject the divine Word of God? Or, if the reality of the human nature were strongly affirmed, was there not a return to duality, with no

true unity secured? Something of this kind of outlook came to be Dr. Sanday's and partly accounts for his theory of the subliminal consciousness as the proper seat of the divine in Christ.

Finally, the form of the old dogmatic, with its language of substance and nature, and with the conclusions which theologians had drawn in their development of the dogmatic, was subjected to much criticism. The concepts were held to be antiquated; and the idea of a divine nature in virtue of which Christ could be acknowledged as divine was regarded as one that involved far too static a conception of reality. In contrast there appeared the notion of Christ's Godhead as a truth which was the expression of His absolute moral worth and redeeming activity. Without doubt it was the sense of real perplexities as involved in the historic doctrine that was largely responsible for the attention given to Christology during the last century, and the end of that epoch is not yet. At the same time some of the most remarkable work was of a constructive rather than of a critical or apologetical character. R. C. Moberly's *Atonement and Personality* which is as noteworthy in its treatment of the Person of Christ as of His work, P. T. Forsyth's *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, the present Archbishop of York's volume, *Christus Veritas*, and Father Lionel Thornton's *The Incarnate Lord*, would all fall within the category of constructive handling of the theme, widely though they differ in their methods. But all are at one in their acceptance of the common faith that Jesus Christ is the

true and eternal Son of God who was made man. All take the reality of His human nature with complete seriousness. Moberly's words that Christ "is, then, not so much God and man, as God in, and through, and as man. . . . In His human life on earth, as Incarnate, He is not sometimes, but consistently, always, in every act and every detail, human," would be applicable to any one of these writers.

It is this emphasis upon the humanity of Christ as the consistent and unvarying medium through which the Son of God expressed Himself in thought and word and act during His life on earth, which is the theological background of the doctrine known as "Kenotic"—that is, that in the incarnation the Son of God limited Himself in respect of His knowledge, and, having taken to Himself a true human nature, took with it those restrictions which are proper to human nature. A passage in von Hugel's essay on "The Apocalyptic Element in the Teaching of Jesus" puts this very clearly. A real Incarnation of God in man "can only mean Incarnation in some particular human nature"; and because the Incarnation took place in Jewish human nature, our Lord "could not but imagine, think, feel, and will the deepest truths and facts of His mission with Jewish categories, images, emotions".¹ The most profoundly theological

¹ While these words of von Hugel admirably express something on which upholders of the kenotic doctrine would lay stress, they ought not to be taken as implying that von Hugel himself adhered to that doctrine. Had he done so it would have meant an abandonment of Roman Catholic teaching in regard to the Person of Christ.

treatment of the problem is to be found in the chapter in Forsyth's book, entitled *The Kenosis or Self-emptying of Christ*". Holding that Christian theology had been unduly affected by abstract notions as to the finite and infinite, and by such supposed impossibilities as that the omniscience of God, which is certainly a fact if viewed in relation to eternity, could not be reduced under temporal conditions to a potentiality, he argued that "if the infinite God was so constituted that he could not live also as a finite man he was not infinite", and that in respect of our Lord's knowledge as man "if he did not know it was because he consented not to know".

Forsyth's position was, of course, made easier by the fact that he felt no obligation to maintain the doctrine of the two natures, as that doctrine had been affirmed at Chalcedon. But it would be a complete misunderstanding of him to suppose that he thought of any transmutation in Christ of deity into humanity or that he conceived of deity and humanity as essentially one, and therefore had no difficulty with the idea of one who was God becoming man. On the contrary, he fully recognised the paradox inherent in the doctrine. "If we ask," he writes, "how *Eternal* Godhead could make the actual condition of human nature His own, we must answer . . . that we do not know." He repudiated the possibility of a psychological account of the Incarnation. It was on its ethical meaning that he laid the stress and on the relation of that act in which the Son took to Himself "the mode

of moral action that marks human nature " to the freedom and holiness and love of God.

The kenotic doctrine is not a speculative Christology. It is a particular reading of the life of Christ, in the light of what, it is maintained, the New Testament implies, with its recognition of the fullness of manhood in the Person of Christ both in the Gospels and in such a writing as Hebrews. Criticisms have been directed against the kenotic doctrine from very different quarters, but it remains true that for many of those who are concerned with Christian doctrine it gives the most satisfactory form of Christology, in relation to our Lord's actual experience, which they can make their own. And they would maintain that the kenotic conception becomes at once nonsensical and unnecessary except on the basis of the common faith of the Church that He who was truly God became truly man. There is no place for a doctrine of kenosis where there is not a doctrine of incarnation.

Other attempts have been made to conserve the faith in Christ's true divinity, without recourse to the old dogmatic. The most noteworthy attempt in Germany was that associated with the name of Ritschl, best known probably to English students of theology through the very remarkable book of Wilhelm Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*. For an understanding of the Ritschlians' position a survey would need to be made of their fundamental conviction that religious judgments are essentially judgments of value. Thus, the affirmation of Christ's

Godhead is a value-judgment, not, anyhow in the ordinary sense of the term, a metaphysical statement. When I wrote a book called *Ritschlianism* not far from thirty years ago I made an effort to defend the Ritschlian doctrine of the Person of Christ as being, despite its defects, a doctrine of Christ's Godhead. Not all of what I wrote then I should now condemn as unsound, but my chief mistake lay in a failure adequately to realise that the Ritschlian doctrine was not, and really could not be, in view of the pre-suppositions with which the School approached the problem of man's knowledge of God, a doctrine of incarnation. That Ritschl and Herrmann were Unitarians, according to the ordinary interpretation of the word, I still do not believe. But I am sure that their method was one that resulted for themselves in an inability to make the meaning of their assertion of the Godhead of Christ clear, and for others in an inevitable movement away from the Catholic doctrine in its substance as well as in its form.

The Ritschlian Christology with its judgment of value concerning the historic Christ as the one who realised perfectly His vocation to bring in the Kingdom of God and to fulfil the office of Redeemer has influenced most of those who have not been satisfied with the conception of the two natures in Christ and have further found difficulties in the idea of the personal pre-existence of the Son of God. I would refer to two British theologians who may exemplify the desire for another way of interpreting the fact of Christ's God-

head than that to which the ancient Church gave its authority. Dr. Rashdall's Christology cannot be adequately set forth apart from his Trinitarian doctrine, in which he consistently claimed that he was only asserting what St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas had implied when he refused to predicate three centres of consciousness in the Godhead (Archbishop Temple would say "of one consciousness"). I have never been at all convinced that Rashdall's way of stating the doctrine of God did in fact preserve the true Trinitarian idea, but in any case there followed from this theology a conception of the Person of Christ of which it is difficult to think that incarnation is a satisfactory expression. Rather did he appear to think of Christ as the supreme revealer of God, as the one who realised in His own person the ethical ideal. So he writes in his work *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, "In Jesus Christ there is the completest, fullest, most central revelation of God that has ever been made, both because of the unique perfection of the moral and religious ideals which disclose themselves in His words, His character, and His life, and because from Him proceeds the fullest stream of further self-revelation which God has bestowed upon the world since that typical life of Sonship was lived."

More recent than anything which Rashdall wrote is the article by Dr. Miall Edwards in the composite volume entitled *The Lord of Life*. He, like Rashdall, but with greater emphasis upon this starting point, holds that too great a stress upon the difference be-

tween God and man was characteristic of the ancient Church. In contrast therewith he asks, "May we not think of the infinite and finite, God and man, as ever moving, as it were, towards mutual interpenetration, and of Jesus Christ as the point at which they fully attain it? In His Person and life stands revealed the Eternal life of God in the temporal world, the Infinite in the finite, God in man." So for him the incarnation was "a growing dynamic thing, the progressive assimilation of God by Christ, a voluntary, ethical process, a spiritual achievement", and such a notion seemed to him truer than that of "something mechanical, static, complete from the first". In this there is not a little likeness to Forsyth's doctrine: but here, as with Rashdall, the picture of the voluntary taking of human nature by one who is personally divine is no longer obvious. The absence of that picture means that only with difficulty if at all can a Christology be recognised as in line with, and expressing the same values as, the Christology of Nicaea and Chalcedon. And despite the very great ability and the theological sensitiveness of Dr. Miall Edward's article I should not be able to put such a construction upon the doctrine which is there presented.

In the story of modern thought on the subject of the Person of Christ from the time of Schleiermacher onwards one of the recurring features is the attempt to find a way of saying what the Church said without saying it in the way in which the Church said it. The differing results have been due in some measure to the

greater or less extent of agreement on the part of the modern theologian with the beliefs about God and man and Christ which preceded the formulation of doctrine in the ancient Church. There is sometimes real continuity and sometimes real discontinuity: it is generally, but not always, possible to say with accuracy which is the verdict to be given on any particular re-statement. And, though not at first, yet in the long run, it will become clear that continuity or discontinuity in Christology will determine the relation of modern Christian faith and practice to that of the New Testament and of the ancient Catholic Church.

CHAPTER V

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION IN RELATION TO PHILOSOPHY

THE close connection between philosophy and theology which was characteristic of the great teachers of the early middle ages has, as we saw, ceased to be one of the features of modern thought. It is not that philosophy has set itself in sharp opposition to theology and has felt bound to repudiate the affirmations which the theologian has made. But it has been unwilling to take into account, as of the first importance for its own findings, the material with which the theologian who is a Christian must be in the closest touch from the very start of his task. Particular philosophers have been Christians and made great contributions to Christian theology, but Gore was right when in a well-known passage he implied that modern philosophy as a whole had not faced the question of divine self-revelation according to the Christian understanding thereof.

The Gospels and the earliest commentaries upon the subject-matter of the Gospels which we possess in the New Testament give a world-view, not in the manner in which a philosopher would naturally present a world-view, but certainly one which the philosopher needs to consider. It is the lack of adequate

consideration which needs more justification than it receives.

What has been said applies in a more special way to the doctrine of the Incarnation. Modern philosophers have dealt with the doctrine, and viewed it in relation to the metaphysical system which they might be expounding: but there has been no searching investigation of the doctrine as of something to which philosophy, and not simply some philosophers, was bound to give its full attention. It is, of course, obvious that belief in the Incarnation involves pre-suppositions and conclusions some of which may be fundamentally inconsistent with a particular metaphysic. I have such beliefs in mind as ethical monotheism, the supreme value of personality, and the radical, all-compassing opposition between God and evil. But where the philosopher stands with the Christian tradition in his position on these subjects, the bearing of the doctrine of the Incarnation upon the world-view which follows from the acceptance of these beliefs ought to be made clear. That does not always happen. It is, for instance, a most curious fact that a philosopher of the rank of the late James Ward, who was in many ways so much in sympathy with the outlook of an orthodox Christian theologian, could write his second series of Gifford Lectures, *The Realm of Ends*, and say nothing whatever about the doctrine of the Incarnation until the last page, when, speaking of love as the sublimest idea, he remarks, "turning to Christianity as exhibiting this truth in the purest form we know, we find it has one

great secret—dying to live, and one great mystery—the incarnation. The love of God in creating the world implies both.” Even allowing for the limitations which the terms of the Gifford Foundation impose upon the lecturer, it must seem unfortunate that the fundamental Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of God in the Person of Christ should be left without anything further being said as to the possible relation of the “mystery” to the cosmic problem with which the philosopher had been concerned. One might wish to know whether the Christian idea could serve indeed as a valuable illustration of a truth reached along another route, but ought not to be regarded as a true account of the meaning of the person known in history as Jesus Christ.

We shall see that within the Christian tradition philosophical theologians have kept the old relation alive. However much they may be criticised by those who stand outside that tradition at least they have been right in maintaining the necessary interaction between philosophy and theology, inasmuch as in both an approach is made and an interpretation is offered not of some cross-section of reality but of the character of reality. In his article on “Metaphysics” in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, J. S. Mackenzie writes: “The subject of metaphysic is the most fundamental problem of knowledge and reality.” Not exactly in that way would one have framed the sentence if “theology” had been substituted for “metaphysics”, for theology never approaches its subject *simply* as a

problem. But justice would have been done to the fact that theology like metaphysic is not a departmental science. And in the end philosophical truth and theological truth must be one, though each of these two great traditions makes its own contribution in its own way to that truth. But lack of contact and lack of interest in the work of the other is bad for both.

Now, whether regarded from the standpoint of the history of doctrine or of its own intrinsic and rational nature the doctrine of the Incarnation carries with it four convictions which make clear the Christian conception of God. The first is the affirmation of the transcendence of God. The second is the affirmation of divine personality. The third is the impossibility of conceiving of the Person of Christ as an evolutionary climax in the history of human personality. The fourth is the ascription to the Person of Christ of what is meant by the power to save. This can never be understood except in relation to the Cross, where the Son of God offers Himself on behalf of men, in His Passion and death. Here, then, arises the notion of the truth, within the sphere of the Incarnation, of the suffering of God. It is to be noted that this is not identical with the conception of "a suffering God", whether that be expressed in terms of popular religion or of metaphysical speculation.

First then as to transcendence: so far as Christian belief is concerned there can be no doubt as to its truth: if we are thinking of the familiar antithesis, the problem was to find a place for the truth of imma-

nence. For a philosophy which is anxious to affirm unity in such a way as to leave no opening for dualism, transcendence involves an obvious difficulty. A transcendent God and the universe are two and not one. Nevertheless, the idea of transcendence is not to be regarded as one which philosophy is bound to reject. Dr. Inge may be too confident in his view of Platonism as the *philosophia perennis*, but there is no other tradition in philosophy which has more claim to be regarded as still alive. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in the symposium arranged by the Aristotelian Society some years ago on the subject, "Is belief in a transcendent God philosophically tenable?" not one of the four contributors rejected the whole idea of transcendence. If it be asked what help to an understanding of the idea and of the correlative idea of immanence is afforded in the theology of the Incarnation, I would suggest that the language of the early verses of the fourth Gospel and of the first chapter of Colossians where Christ is spoken of as the one through whom and unto whom all things were created and in whom they cohere, together with the statement in the opening verses of Hebrews that the Son upholds all things by the word of His power, make a real contribution to the problem. The relation of the Son of God to creation through the Incarnation is not, indeed, the prolongation of His relation as the creative and sustaining Logos. Yet, nevertheless the doctrine of the Incarnation, as it is set forth in the above passages and in early Christian thought, both helps to interpret the idea of

immanence and is strengthened by the fact that its background is not simply one of emphasis upon the divine transcendence.

The problem of personality in God is one that has long been a trouble and even a vexation in philosophy. The doubtfulness of the relation in the Platonic scheme between the supreme idea, that of the good, and God may be taken as an illustration of this fact. The distinction in the philosophy of F. H. Bradley between the finite personal God of religion and the Absolute is another case in point. Bradley had no objection *qua* philosopher to the idea of a personal God, and laid great and striking stress upon the reality of the religious experience: but in any case God was not for him the final reality. God was regarded by him as one of the finite centres in which the Absolute appears. With this distinction it is not possible for Christian theology to come to terms. While it is not bound to any one philosophical interpretation of personality it cannot accept a negative view which would allow of the predication of personality in connection with God only at the price of asserting God's finitude. If God be a finite centre of personality and is as such only an appearance of the Absolute, however high in the scale of degrees of reality God may be, it would seem that the religious consciousness in devoting itself to God were making a second best choice. Why should it not press on beyond God to the Absolute? That indeed is what we find in certain kinds of mysticism, and it would represent the religious interest of such a

philosopher as Plotinus. But that means the abandonment of God as Christians conceive of Him according to what they believe to be His self-revelation. Christian faith and Christian worship lose their significance if they are understood as directed to one who is no more than an element or a particular aspect or manifestation within the absolute reality that transcends Him. Anyone who is interested in this problem, which is certainly a great and difficult problem, might well read the pages devoted to it in Dr. Clement Webb's Gifford Lectures on *God and Personality*. It is, I am sure, open to anyone, without being the victim of an unthinking piety or of the arrogance which sets up unfounded claims to philosophical knowledge, to agree with Dr. Webb when he says that "the statement in which recent philosophers of very different schools in this country have concurred that 'God is not the Absolute' must, I am sure, if seriously taken, make nonsense of Religion."

Philosophy, or, at least, some philosophers, may have taken offence at what has been supposed to be a crudely anthropomorphic view of God as "a Person". That such an offence has often been justified need not be denied. Nevertheless, orthodox theology has never committed itself to any such view. Not only is the doctrine of the Trinity a continual protest against any such mis-reading, but the Johannine theology, which represents the supreme interpretation within the New Testament of God, and of the relation of God to the world involved in the Incarnation of the Logos, is quite

inconsonant with any view of God which would expound His personality as though He were one of a series. God, in the Johannine writings, is not *a* person any more than He is *a* spirit (the AV translation of St. John iv. 24 is deplorably wrong) or *a* lover. God is Light and Spirit and Love. Yet such descriptions of God, which may suggest to some the idea of a kind of mystical, impersonal being, go along with a theology in which, without any question, God is conceived of as personal. And the Johannine doctrine of the Incarnation is not a doctrine of a supreme upwelling of an impersonal divine spirit in Jesus. It is a doctrine of a "*descensus*", "from heaven to earth". And whatever else may rightly be said of the Logos, as the truth of Him is proclaimed in that majestic Prologue, it would be the wrong kind of humble acknowledgment of our own limitations if we were to refuse to speak of Him as possessing the fullness of those rational and purposive powers without which there could have been no creation of the world, as, in fact, personal. In St. John, and those who have followed in the steps of the Johannine tradition, there is not a little which may be of use to those who, while they start from the specifically metaphysical side in their examination of the question of divine personality, are ready to admit that there is other material than that which is to be found in the philosophical workshop of which the philosopher may well take notice.

Thirdly, we may ask how the doctrine of the Incarnation is related to the notion of an ascending scale of

levels in the evolutionary process and to that method of interpretation of the facts of life to which the name of "emergent evolution" has been given. It is obvious that at this point philosophy has been much in the debt of natural science, and it is, I suppose, open to question how far the above interpretation represents a genuinely metaphysical account of reality, or is merely a description of what is supposed to be involved in the different strata of existence. On the other hand, when the character of evolution is discussed by one who is definitely theistic in his belief, it will be very natural to put the question which Dr. Lloyd Morgan asks in the introduction to his Gifford Lectures, *Life, Mind, and Spirit*: "May I not try to show in what way all evolutionary progress may be regarded as a manifestation and revelation (one must use some such words) of Divine Purpose?" This definitely theistic explanation is not to be ascribed to the philosophy which obviously so conceives of the universe as to include the idea of emergent evolution, but has no place for the notion of the purpose of an already existing God, since the evolutionary process itself is moving towards the emergence of deity. This idea is specially connected with the name of Dr. Samuel Alexander. With his theology it is impossible for historic Christianity to come to terms, but as Dr. W. R. Matthews, the Dean of St. Paul's, has pointed out, a basis could be found in the philosophy of Dr. Alexander, as also of Bergson, for a "kind of doctrine of the Person of Christ". Christ could be regarded as the first emergence of a

new level of existence but not as "the final manifestation of Deity".

A philosophy of evolution would not be necessarily hostile to the notion of the appearance of a supreme personality, in whom the fullest possibilities of man in communion with God were realised. But if no more were said about Christ than that He represented the highest point reached by the evolutionary process in human personality, there would be no doctrine of incarnation in the sense which the word bears in Catholic theology. In that theology the Person of Christ is distinctive because the world and the natural order which is the object of scientific observation and analysis cannot account for Him. To this evolution makes no difference, since there is a necessary explanation of His Person in evolution only if it is assumed that there can be no manifestation in the world of a personal existence which is prior to the world. But that is the very assumption which has always been resisted, in whatever form it appeared, by those who have believed and taught the doctrine of the incarnation. At the same time, it is to be noted that some modern theologians who have not the least desire to compromise the doctrine or to reduce incarnation to immanence have tried to do justice to the thought that in the human nature and human experiences of Christ a perfection was reached which revealed the fullest development of humanity, as humanity reached forward in its desire to grasp and incorporate that which is not human but divine. Thus the incarnation has

been conceived of as a process and not only an act. But as process it is not within humanity as a whole, which is the doctrine of a diffused incarnation, expounded by such eminent representatives of the Hegelian tradition as Edward Caird and A. S. Pringle-Pattison, but within the Person of Christ. The idea of diffused incarnation is one that could be affirmed with regard to humanity even if humanity did not include Jesus; but the idea of the incarnation as process in relation to the Person of Jesus is altogether dependent upon belief that Jesus is the Son of God who has taken to Himself a real human nature and has had true human experiences.

I would illustrate this way of regarding the incarnation from the work of the late Dr. Forsyth, the eminent Congregationalist theologian, and of the present Archbishop of York. Dr. Forsyth ends his book, to which reference has already been made, with a chapter on the "Plerosis or the Self-Fulfilment of Christ". He wrote with the appeal of the thought of Christ as "the apex of that spiritual evolution which emerges to a divine height in man" definitely in mind. That conception he could not accept. On the other hand, he saw in the union of God and man in Christ not the bringing together of two natures, one divine and one human, but two movements of a personal character from God to man and from man to God. So he was prepared to speak of Christ's "human person", and to say that as in Christ there is the incarnation of the eternal Son "by his own act and movement", so there

is "the appropriative ascent and the progressive deepening of the man Jesus in this sinless life and holy work; his enlarging sense of the work to be done, his rising sense of the power to do it, and his expanding sanctity in the doing of it. We may speak of a progressive incarnation within his life, if we give it a kenotic basis." The interest and importance of this way of expressing the nature of the union of the divine and the human in Christ through the notion of reciprocal and mutually involved movements is that it does much to meet the objection which is felt to the orthodox doctrine of the "impersonal humanity" of Christ. That doctrine may be misunderstood as though it meant either that the humanity of our Lord was not real or that the human nature was, so to speak, attached to the divine nature and possessed no proper self-conscious subject. This is an entire misreading of the Chalcedonian doctrine which never for a moment was held to imply that in the incarnation the humanity of our Lord lacked a personal subject, a "prosopon" or "hypostasis", to use the technical Greek words. By the impersonal humanity no more is meant than that the incarnate Christ was a unity, and that the union of divine and human in Him did not take place through the bringing together into one of the divine Logos and a human being—Jesus. Yet in so far as the phrase is a stumbling-block, it is very desirable that those who maintain the truth for which it stands should make it plain that they do not reduce the human energies and the human experiences of the incarnate

Christ to appearances void of reality. Dr. Forsyth, though he meant what Chalcedon and the tradition in which the notion of the impersonal humanity has its place meant, was critical of its type of thought and its phraseology as over-emphatic on the static and not making enough of the dynamic element in the relation of the human to the divine in Christ. He thought of the divine and human under the figure of two currents in one personal experience rather than as two states set side by side. The human current was as really *there* and in motion as the divine. By this manner of interpretation he was able to lay the greatest stress on that which was his special interest, the ethical revelation in Christ and His power to be Saviour which He won through the moral experience and crisis of His own life and death.

The Archbishop of York is a theologian whose approach to the doctrine of the Incarnation is more closely related to a metaphysical conception of the nature of reality and of the position which man occupies within the structure of existence. His view of the nature of man and of the nature of God is such that the incarnation can be viewed as the higher grade of reality in which the nature of humanity is fulfilled. This is not, of course, a full statement of Dr. Temple's philosophy of the incarnation, but the argument in *Christus Veritas* allows of a closer relation between the idea of emergent evolution and the doctrine of the incarnation than Dr. Forsyth either could have or would have desired to affirm. It is the more interesting

to observe how near these two theologians, with their different traditions, starting-points, and methods, come to one another in their interpretation of the unity of God and man in Christ. And with Dr. Temple as with Dr. Forsyth, stress falls upon the energy, the actual willing in our Lord. Both do justice to the orthodox doctrine of the two wills, human and divine in Christ, more, indeed, than it would often be easy to find in the exponents of that doctrine at the time of its formulation. "The Will in Him," writes Dr. Temple, "while always one with, because expressive of the Will of God, is not merely identical with it. . . . Consequently, though there is only one Person, one living and energising Being, I should not hesitate to speak of the human personality of Christ. But that personality does not exist side by side with the divine personality; it is subsumed in it." So far does Dr. Temple go in this emphasis upon this human personal willing in Christ, with its continual approximation to the divine will, of which it is also a continual manifestation (one is quite close at this point to Forsyth's conception of the two currents meeting in the experience of Christ) that he is prepared to say, "If we imagine the divine Word withdrawn from Jesus of Nazareth, as the Gnostics believed to have occurred before the Passion, I think that there would be left, not nothing at all, but a man." Unreal as he affirms the question to be, he leaves the illustration to give forcible expression to his idea of the fullness of humanity that existed in Christ. Even as an unreal problem or possibility I do not find

it easy to adopt any attitude to it, but it seems to me to have the value of showing how far a philosophical theologian, who quite unmistakably is not teaching in his Christology that doctrine of two persons which was, whether rightly or wrongly, ascribed to Nestorius and others who stood within the Antiochene tradition, is able to go through his realisation of the human thinking and willing that there was in Christ.

Since Dr. Temple wrote *Christus Veritas* the relation of the doctrine of the incarnation to organic conceptions of the universe, within which the development of the notion of emergent evolution has its place, has been expounded in Father Lionel Thornton's profound book, *The Incarnate Lord*. It is not easy reading, and it offers a wide field for criticism by those who are suspicious of the close alliance which is effected between the Catholic doctrine and what is, after all, one particular philosophical interpretation of reality; but it would be a grave injustice to pass it by in silence in a chapter which is devoted, however cursorily, to the bearing of the doctrine of the incarnation upon philosophical problems that are concerned with the structure of reality and the consequences which follow from theistic belief. Father Thornton's analysis is worked out in the most conscientious and comprehensive manner. His treatment of his subject has affinities with that to which Dr. Temple gave expression, but hardly any similarity with that which is characteristic of Dr. Forsyth. As to the question of our Lord's humanity, he, from his standpoint, approaches near to that insist-

ence upon the human movement towards human perfection within the one Person of Christ, which we saw to be characteristic, in their different ways, of both Dr. Forsyth and Dr. Temple. Thus Father Thornton writes: "In respect of His manhood He stands in the succession of history in the form of concrete individuality organically united to the human race and so to the whole organism of creation." On the other hand, his interpretation of the principle of individuality and use of the philosophy of organism may appear to compromise the truth asserted at Chalcedon that our Lord was of one essence with us in respect of His humanity by introducing the idea that "the human organism of the Incarnate Lord is taken up on to the level of deity with its own principle of unity." And by what he allows to be a straining of organic language he suggests that "we might say that the human organism of the Incarnate Lord conforms to the rhythm of deity". It would be manifestly unfair to deduce any conclusion from selected sentences drawn from a work which can be judged only as a whole. Let it suffice to say that as Christian theologians of earlier ages have striven to show that theology can come to terms with the prevalent metaphysics, so Father Thornton has sought to demonstrate that the philosophy of organism, as it has been expounded by Professor Whitehead, finds its completion in the doctrine of the incarnation and in the union between the divine and the human which that doctrine affirms. In doing so he has retained the full value of the Christian emphasis upon the transcen-

dence of God with which the interpretation of the incarnation as a coming into history, and not itself a historical process, is bound up.

Finally, the doctrine of the incarnation, because the earthly life of Him who was incarnate came to its climax in the Cross, implies the truth, within the sphere of the incarnation, of the sufferings of God. It is, indeed, noteworthy that one of the earliest of Christian writers outside the New Testament says in one of his letters: "Allow me to be an imitator of the suffering of my God," while in a fragment preserved from the works of Melito, one of the Christian apologists of the second century, we may read: "God suffered at the hand of Israel." Such expressions as these have something in common with the doctrine of "a suffering God", which in comparatively recent years has found a place both in popular religion and in metaphysical speculation, though the resemblance does not imply an identical theology. The doctrine of the incarnation has involved a profound sense of gratitude to God for the unbounded sympathy which He showed when the divine Son took upon Him the reality of man's nature and bore the burden of man's suffering and sin. No Christian teacher could say less than that without surrendering the Gospel of divine love revealed in the incarnation and the Cross. But there has not been, until quite lately, any tendency to read this suffering back into the eternal life of God. The closely allied notions of a finite God, a God who is not self-sufficient, and a God who suffers, apart from

His own volition, in the sufferings of the universe, are not derived from the characteristic idea of God to be found either in the New Testament or in classical Christian theology. They are all derived from what is supposed to be the necessary consequences of the relation between God and the universe. But in this type of thought the Christian conviction of the grace of God suffers severe damage. For it belongs to that conviction to maintain that, both in creation and in redemption, God brings Himself into a relation of active providence towards the world from the sheer goodness and love which is His nature; but that this involves no dependence of God upon the universe and so constraint from without upon the divine life.

For Catholic theology the suffering of God in Christ is a fact by itself, inasmuch as the incarnation is a fact by itself. No deductions may legitimately be drawn from it, nor may it be regarded as the temporal expression of an eternal principle. It is quite proper to press the text in the Revelation as to the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (provided that the interpretation which connects the words "from the foundation of the world" with "the Lamb" is correct, as is probably, but not certainly, the case) as implying that the crucifixion was no afterthought, but was always involved in the redemptive action of God within a sinful world. But it is another, and far less legitimate, conclusion that the notion of an eternal cross in the heart of God is involved in the text. This is not the place for an adequate discussion of the problem of the relation

of suffering to God, but the formula which would have satisfied theologians of a past age that Christ suffered in His human but not in His divine nature ought not to be rejected as though it were a mere piece of unreal scholasticism. It was through His entry into human nature, and not otherwise, that the Son of God entered into the sphere of suffering and underwent the experiences of Gethsemane and Calvary. But the doctrine of a suffering God, as it has often been taught both by philosophers and by Christian theologians in the last half-century, has no necessary connection with the incarnation. The teaching would remain whatever view were taken of the Person of our Lord, with the result that there is at least danger either of the distinction between God and the world disappearing or of God being regarded as an element within reality, and as not, in His intrinsic nature, raised above the process of change and determination from without. Anyone who is dissatisfied with such a conception may consider whether the traditional Christian doctrine does not preserve all the values concerning the divine love and its self-giving for the sake of man which the notion of divine passibility may, but does not essentially, involve, while it is free from the fault of such a concentration upon one aspect of truth that other aspects, which may be not less important, are neglected.

The belief that the incarnation is the indispensable basis of the Christian doctrine of salvation is one with which a philosophical system is concerned only in so far as it finds a place for the idea of a unity of some kind

between the world and God. If this idea leads to the affirmation of God and the world as essentially one, a pantheistic theology results in which there is no room for the doctrines of incarnation and salvation in anything resembling their historic forms. On the other hand, when the notion of divine transcendence is firmly held, and with it the belief that the world is separated from God by the moral evil that is in it, a unity which can never mean a merging of God and the world into one another may be apprehended as coming through the way of reconciliation. Clearly the possibility of an approach towards the Christian position at this point from the side of a particular metaphysic will depend, at the very start, on how far such a metaphysic is an agreement with Christianity as to the nature of evil and the bearing of this upon a theistic world-view. Kant, who took the fact of evil very seriously and taught a doctrine of radical evil which has close associations with the doctrine of original sin, was prevented by the individualistic character of his thought, and by his conception of the ideal humanity "in its complete moral perfection" as the only-begotten Son of God. Deep as Kant's reverence was for the Person of Jesus, he did not think of Him as the Son of God made man. In our Lord's historical personality Kant saw the ethical ideal manifested in a manner without parallel. But the finality which Christian theology assigns to His Person because in Him the divine Son of God is incarnate was transferred by Kant to "humanity (the rational being as such) *in its complete moral*

perfection". The approximation to this perfection is a continuous ethical process: there is no room for the doctrine of objective mediation or atonement.

It is, indeed, just here that philosophical systems are likely to find it specially hard to come to terms with Christian doctrine. For Christianity cannot abandon its emphasis upon the particular—the particular Person, Jesus, and the particular fact, His cross. It can never be content to treat either as an illustration, however excellent and supreme an illustration, of a general truth. And when the stress falls upon the idea, upon a truth which needs no particular fact for its establishment, a standpoint is adopted which is not that either of the New Testament or of historic Christian theology. There is a real cleavage between the teaching of so great an exponent of the idealistic tradition in philosophy as the late Dr. Edward Caird and the Christian doctrine of the incarnation. For it was Caird's view that the essential principle of divine-human unity found its greatest historical illustration in the Person of Christ, but that the Church had erred in restricting to that Person a truth which was of universal applicability. A similar attitude was adopted by A. S. Pringle-Pattison in his Gifford Lectures, *The Idea of God*. But the most thorough-going effort to break the connection between the doctrine of the incarnation and a particular historical event is that of the Italian Neo-Idealists, of whom Croce is the most eminent. Their philosophy, with its refusal to admit any divine transcendence, while God is affirmed to be in nature and man, leads to

a conception of the incarnation as the eternal truth of human life and history. This is irreconcilable with the Christian doctrine, and the word "incarnation" means something very different for idealism of this kind from what it does in the theology of the Church. But if the word is to be kept, it involves the thought that God is incarnate in all history and experience. The Person of Christ ceases to be of any real importance.

It appears to me that if we try to appreciate the relation of movements in modern philosophy to the doctrine of the incarnation, we must allow for the fact that, while philosophy has been deeply affected by the modern emphasis upon evolution (though the metaphysical stress upon becoming and development goes back to Hegel), there has been no general agreement as to the significance of evolution: different interpretation might be found in the various philosophical schools. Now Christian theology, rejecting any notion of God as a finite element within the Absolute, affirms that unchangeable perfection of God which in a system of absolute idealism is ascribed to the Absolute. But it also finds real value in the evolutionary process and especially in human history. These two positions taken together are the occasion of tension both for philosophy and for theology. In Christianity this tension is not abolished, but in the Person of Christ, the incarnate Son of God, there is an entry into time on the part of the eternal God whereby He submits Himself to the sphere of process and change.

The Christian idea of history is not that of a pre-

arranged stage play, where the freedom of the players is strictly limited by the scheme of the play, as it has been thought out and arranged independently of them, though the acting of the play, the presentation of the drama, is their business. For Christian thought history is the milieu within which real values appear and remain as a result of what is done within that milieu. The values in history are bound up with the achievements of persons, while personality is the supreme value in history, an end in itself. Depreciation of human personality is fundamentally un-Christian, whether the question be approached from the side of morality or from the side of religion. For, on the one hand, it is only through the ethical value of personality that the idea of moral goodness and its conservation can be intelligibly expounded, and, on the other, the value of personality is manifested in the capacity of persons to enter into communion with God and to receive grace from Him. This is congruous with the conception of God's transcendence and personality and with the Biblical witness to the relation in which man stands to God in virtue of his creation in the divine image. A purely immanent idea of God seems to imply the identity of God with man, though not with each particular man. Accordingly, all that a thorough-going immanentism can make of the incarnation and of the doctrine of Christ's divinity is to treat the incarnation as a representative symbol of something which would have been equally true had Christ never lived. In Catholic theology the unique importance of Christ's

Person is linked with the truth of divine self-revelation; it implies a movement on the part of God which is something other than the evolutionary process, while, at the same time, it is a movement into it. And this self-revelation has as its climax the unifying of God with man through God made man. The characteristic teaching of Irenaeus and Athanasius on this subject has its New Testament foundations in the theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel.

In Dr. Quick's valuable work, *Modern Philosophy and the Incarnation*, from which anyone interested in the modern situation would find clear guidance in short compass, three important points emerge which I should wish to emphasise. First, the doctrine of the incarnation imposes no particular philosophy. Secondly, there are philosophical world-views, into which the doctrine cannot be fitted. Thirdly, there is room within the context of the doctrine for much which different philosophies are seeking to affirm.

On the first two points no more need be said here: but of the third some illustration may be given. Thus, while Christian theology cannot assert that God and man are essentially one, it affirms that the unity, through communion, of man with God is the one adequate goal for man in his historical progress. It maintains that historical fact is one thing and its metaphysical significance another, but agrees with Ruggiero that "if no glimpse of the divine shines through historical fact, there is no hope of our being able to detect

it elsewhere". It finds itself at home with Bergson and William James in their reaction against mechanism and their insistence upon freedom and their attention to the particular. And where philosophy as a philosophy of religion has called attention to the fact of religious experience, Christian theology, whatever reservations it may need to make, can meet it with its claim that the doctrine of the incarnation has mediated a particular kind of religious experience, which both in itself and in its bearings upon life has a richness and a comprehensiveness to which there is no parallel. Modern critics of the doctrine of the incarnation sometimes suggest that the value of religion is impaired when what is said of Jesus as the Son of God is said of Him alone. Yet the wealth of Christian experience has been rooted in that faith and has grown through continual response to it. Very specially would I apply to this doctrine the words which Mr. Spens, in *Belief and Practice*, used of the Catholic tradition as a whole: that it may rightly be regarded as "having been evolved in close dependence on religious experiences; as expressing, with marked and exceptional success, the possibilities of religious experience; as embodying a very wide range of such experiences, and presenting by far the best available synthesis; as issuing in conceptions which have proved able to cover different fields of experience".

It is the combination of experience and reason in respect of Christian doctrine which gives it its special value. And at the centre is that doctrine of the Person of Christ which controls all Christian thinking about

God and the world. If it were to be abandoned, Christianity as a religion would become thinner and weaker, and as a system of thought it would have surrendered the best weapon that it has for dealing with the problems that philosophy raises. But when it is retained Christianity has the door which leads to the understanding of the ultimate mysteries of existence open, if not as yet wide open. It can claim, not detailed knowledge at every point, but the knowledge that unifies. It is because, as that symbol of the faith which we call the Athanasian Creed has it, "God and man are one Christ" that we understand better both God and the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE RELIGION OF THE INCARNATION

“THE Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me”; “Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for it.” In these two sentences St. Paul gives us the truth of the dependence of the Christian person and the Christian society upon the redemptive work of Christ. To this work all Christian life is of the nature of a response, and from it all that we mean by Christian experience takes its beginnings. Not less clearly in this connection than when we are considering the character of Christian theology does it become apparent that “Christianity is Christ”. The idea that the real value of Christianity consists in its theistic outlook which it shares with other religions, or in a lofty moral code, nobly set forth in the words of Jesus, or in the social implications of its doctrine of brotherhood is one that cannot find its justification in the origins and development of Christianity as a religion creative of a new form of spiritual life and consciousness. Of that life the incarnate and redeeming Son of God is the objective, and faith in Him the subjective centre. It is not possible for that life to be maintained if for Him there is substituted some religious principle or set of general ideas.

If we accept the account of religion given by von

Hugel in his most famous book, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, as possessing three elements—institutional, intellectual, and mystical—the mystical or experimental side of Christianity is, from the New Testament onwards, bound up with the Person of Christ. The phrase “Christ-mysticism” which has been coined as descriptive of typical Pauline piety should be adopted with reserve. It should not, in any case, be understood as implying that St. Paul was ultimately concerned only with “the Christ within”, and was inclined to depreciate both the historical and the intellectual element in comparison with it. Had his real consciousness of the nature of religion been of such a character, it is incredible that he should have written the epistle to the Romans. But it is true that in the Pauline writings, and in the Johannine, communion with God and with Christ is presented as the source of peace and joy. The Pauline expression “in Christ” and the various aspects of the life of the believer in relation to Christ and to the Spirit who comes from Christ, which are so abundantly illustrated in the Gospel and the first epistle of St. John, testify to a deep enrichment of personal life. And the passionate attachment to the Person of Christ which is so noteworthy in Ignatius of Antioch in the second decade of the next century is the breaking forth into consciousness of a new personal relation apprehended as one of the blessings inherent in the Gospel. The New Testament is full of the sense of a change that has taken place with regard to human life. The Gospel is one of a redemption which is at the same

time a new creation. The nerve of human life had been restored; fear, and most especially the fear of death, had been overcome, and hope was established as the true attitude and power of the soul as it looked into the future. Faith, hope, and love as realities of the Christian life were more than a match for sin, death, and the devil.

Christian morality was at first inevitably restricted in its range. It showed itself in the behaviour of the brethren to one another and in the outlook of the Church upon the world. But that it might overflow as a mighty stream into the world and change the face of society was hardly possible while the Empire remained pagan. Yet, implicit in the Gospel was the message of the incarnation as relevant to the whole of life. In the days of the Church's unchallenged supremacy as the teacher of true religion, that was to be discerned, and with it the need for a truly Christian civilisation. Yet there was no perfect clarity of vision, and practice too often fell far behind the ideal of a world in which Christ was the source of all true authority, and the well-being of man and nations was to be found in the obedience of faith and life which they offered to Him. It is no story of Christian ethic triumphant over evil which the Christian historian has to tell. And yet again and again revival came in response to some heavenly vision of Christ and His claims and His power. Schisms, weaknesses, and sins are a dark enough feature of the picture; but the golden thread which unites the life of Christ with the life of the people

called by His name, though at times it might appear nigh to vanishing away, has never been snapped. The world has never been quite deprived of the hope stored up for it in the life of Christ within Christ's body the Church.

In these days there is a continually deepening sense among Christians of the relation of Christ to life and all its problems. In England, this is in part at least the outcome of those movements of Christian thought in the last century which arose out of a fresh realisation of the meaning of the doctrine of the incarnation. That came to pass in one way in the Oxford Movement with its stress upon corporate, sacramental Christianity, and in another in the Christian Social Movement, which laid so great an emphasis upon the message of Christianity as it bore upon all the conditions and contexts of human life. In each case there was a feeling for the increased value resulting to all human life from the fact that the Son of God had been incarnate, that He had shared in the common life of man, and that in Him human nature had been exalted to the right hand of God.

Christ, who came into the limited life and history of men from that eternal and divine life in which He was one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is history's Lord and not its greatest son. And when we thus think and speak we must have in mind all the concreteness of history. If Jesus indeed is Lord, then His Lordship is comprehensive: there can be no boundary set to His dominion. We cannot say that at this point or that He

makes no difference. We are bound to ask whether our social relationships, our economic and political conditions, our orderings of the facts of race and class and colour, the character of our culture, express a true relation of Christ to human life. That does not mean an attempt at anything like ecclesiastical domination, or an effort to determine in advance the nature of the Christian impact. Still less does it mean an attitude of pretence, as though Christianity had a blank page before it on which it could write whatever it would. But just as such a man as Lenin took materialism seriously in relation to every department of life and thought, so must the Christian take Christianity seriously. And when we see, without possibility of error, how the world's evil and suffering is the inevitable outcome of that spirit of divisiveness which penetrates our common life at so many points and is the enemy equally of freedom and of order, it is well to remember the great saying of St. Paul that Christ is our peace who broke down the middle wall of partition. He was thinking of the healing of that profound division, a division both of religion in the more particular sense and of life in some of its common aspects, which separated Jew from Gentile. In Christ there was found a new power making for unity, strong enough to bring together into a new corporate life those whom old traditions and habits had so widely separated, not simply as individuals, but as societies. To the fact of that power in its bearing upon the problems of corporate as well as of individual life the Church of to-

day grows more awake and more intent upon the need for its manifestation.

There is a true Christian this-worldliness, the complement of that other-worldliness which means that the Christian Church and the Christian man realise that Christian citizenship is in heaven, and that here we are strangers and pilgrims with no continuing city. The Christian who believes in God the Creator, and that there are purposes of God to be worked out in man's earthly life, is pledged to the conviction that the common things of life are meant to be vehicles for man's fellowship with God. As the incarnate Son made of His earthly life a perfect offering to His Father, as there was what the old theologians called the active obedience of the ministry as well as the passive obedience of the Cross—misleading though the latter adjective is in that context—life can be made such an offering to God that the notion of a Kingdom of God in this world falls into its place within the Christian scheme of thought. The idea of a Kingdom of God, immanent in the world as the moral activity of man, and necessarily moving onwards to perfection, is one which has no justification in the New Testament. But where the authority of Christ is confessed and life, both individual and social, bears the marks of His touch upon it, there we may properly speak of a revelation of that one true rule and realm which in any world and under all conditions is an expression of the will of God.

The relation of Christ to this world becomes plain

when we remember that history is the sphere within which personality develops by interplay with other personalities and in reaction to the circumstances of life. Each individual life is a particular section of history; there can be no such sheer individualism as isolates Christ and the soul and leaves the soul unaffected in its external relations. But that is to say that Christ is relevant to all history. He does not unite men to God and leave them in a state of discord and enmity with their brethren. Any such notion would mean that while in Christ there had been a revelation of God there had been no revelation of true manhood and of the ideal of human life. But if this were so the incarnation would mean for man a way of escape from earthly life rather than the assurance that earthly life had been enriched with new possibilities for its own development. We should then have to think of the supernatural as the contrast to the natural and not as the means whereby the natural is brought to its true fulfilment. Eastern theology with its emphasis upon the meaning of the fact of the taking up of manhood into God, first in Christ and then through Christ in humanity as a whole, has much to teach us here. We may not find it easy to speak as Eastern theologians do of the "deification" of man. Though we know that nothing of the nature of a mingling of humanity and deity is thereby implied, we shall more easily express in some other way what the Easterns are so anxious to affirm. But the ideas which go back to Irenaeus, who, as a theologian, is typical of

the east rather than of the west, that in Christ the natural order is brought to that end which was intended for it in the original creative action of God, and that in Christ humanity is restored to the state which it had forfeited through the Fall, so that what we lost in Adam that we regained in Christ, have great value for a Christian sociology. The Pauline conceptions of the new creation have a more than individual connotation. The apostle was directly concerned with the contrast between the former pagan life of the Christian convert and the new life into which he had been brought through his incorporation into Christ and the Church. We may rightly extend the reference. Just as the individual can never in this life world come to the full experience of his redemption and sonship, but must wait in hope for that perfection of his personality which through the grace of God may be his in the life of the world to come, so the present natural order cannot here be transformed into the perfect environment from which all evil has been cleansed away. The groaning and travailing in pain together of which St. Paul speaks in the eighth of Romans as a mark of the created world in the present stage of its existence cannot wholly cease so long as there has been no full deliverance from the bondage of corruption and from that seeming triumph of death over life which is a perpetually recurring event. But the healing powers which flow from Him in whom the ideal of the perfect man has been made real within this world, and lives on in continual contact with the world's life

through the Spirit and through the Church, are regenerative for the conditions of human life as well as for the personalities who make use of them. Any idea that conditions, economic or political, are of no real concern to the Christian, because Christianity personally can triumph over even the worst of them or because this world with all its conditions is passing away, is the wrong kind of other-worldliness. On the contrary, we must insist on the need for a Christian humanism, based on the fact of the incarnation and the Christian doctrine of man, which shall aim at such a reconstitution of the conditions of life as may be in harmony with those moral and spiritual values which the Christian seeks to achieve.

Religion as a means of escape from the hard realities of life is not the religion of the incarnation. Christians have not always avoided that mistake: especially when the pressure of all the unredeemed elements in the world is most grievous there is the danger of religion being employed as a method whereby compensation may be found for the hardships which have to be endured. The Christian should never be content with such a cleavage between religion and life, nor with anything like a departmentalising of religion. But if he avoids this error, he may safely remind himself that the incarnation has had consequences which only the believer can share. The incarnation led on to the cross and the outpouring of the Spirit and the indwelling of the Spirit in the Church. In each of these events there is some new manifestation

of that unity between God and man which was achieved in the Person of Christ and, through Christ, made the ideal to which mankind might attain. To this the life of the Church is in itself the constant witness. For the Church as the Body of Christ represents that union of the divine and the human which is the meaning of the incarnation. The phrase, "extension of the incarnation", sometimes used of the sacraments, is much better applied to the Church. For the Church is the one body, the home of the one Spirit, —who is the Spirit of Christ—and the union which Christ, as the divine Son and as the Head of the new humanity, has with God the Father is extended to the Church and to its members. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." In the great sacraments this life of fellowship receives both its seal and its support. It has its beginning in baptism and its continual sustenance in the eucharist, those rites and actions in which the individual and the corporate aspects of the Christian Gospel are mutually involved. Especially is it true of the corporate worship of the eucharist that here is the safeguard against the dangers of a narrow religious individualism. For in the eucharistic service it is the Church, the body of Christ, that assembles to partake of the Lord's body and blood. And here again we are brought back to the historical facts. The liturgical worship of the Church does not try to rise into a sphere where history is irrelevant and all that matters is religious experience. In the rite all that Christ does for His people by making them

partakers of heavenly food is associated with what He said and did at the Last Supper. Thus the worship of the Church derives its meaning from the history, from Jesus and His cross. Before any of the great hymns addressed to Jesus were composed the eucharist had ensured Christian devotion against any peril of losing the truly human Saviour. But there would be no eucharist and no Gospel such as is there proclaimed, if the human Saviour were not also divine.

The word "Gospel" takes us back to the first verse of the oldest of the four books that bring us into the presence of Jesus Christ as He was in the days of His flesh. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," writes St. Mark. He had good news of which to tell, and of that good news Jesus was the object. Indeed, so much was He at the centre of the good news, that He *was* the good news. That is the message of the New Testament, a message which widens out to include and illuminate all man's thoughts about God and life. How it is that this should be so, that the Person of Jesus Christ should be both mystery and revelation, is the theme of the doctrine of the incarnation.

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