THE
METHODIST REVIEW

JANUARY, 1917.

CHRIST'S PERSON AND HIS CROSS.

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I

WHEN we discuss the historic foundations of Christian theology the question is raised by some whether it rests on the Cross of Christ or on his Person. The doctrine of seventeenth-century Orthodoxy, continuing a great Catholic note, rested it upon the Cross of Christ rather than his Person; but, by laying most of the stress on what it called the passive rather than the active obdience, it put its case in a way which has caused a good deal of reaction. The death of Christ was cut off from his life, and an excessive value was given to his submissive suffering at the cost of his moral action, after a pathetic fashion which detached not theology only, but religion also, from a salutary ethic. The chief agent of the reaction from this orthodoxy was Schleiermacher, who rebounded so far to the other as almost to lose Christ's Cross in his Person. By the stress he laid on the God-consciousness of Christ, and our union therewith, he certainly redressed a balance that long had been false. But he fell on the other side. He took from the Cross of Christ its objective and active value. He underprized both history and ethic for the sake of a mystic union; which must certainly be there, but which, if it is not to lose reality, must pass through these points and not go round them. And the history of this branch of theology for the last century has largely been an effort to adjust the two poles, to find the Person in the Cross, and the Cross in the Person, and in both the real moral action of a holy God, and not merely a manifestation or an influence of a God only spiritual.

In what I have to say two things will be indicated:

First, that the ruling interest of an ethical religion is personality. It is Christ.

And, second, that the crowning expression of a moral personality is action. It is the Cross.

There are certain elementary cautions as to words. By the Person of Christ of course we mean much more than his character; we mean something interior to it. And if we speak of the Cross being latent in his Person, we really mean more than latent. We mean active, essential, and dominant there—acting in his teaching as the call for repentance, and, still more deeply, in his death and resurrection as the power of regeneration; for the Cross meant more than that we repent—we must be born again. The Cross is latent in Christ's Person as the oak in the acorn. The acorn must end in the oak and come to itself there, unless it rot or be crushed. And the whole energy of Christ blossoms in the Cross not as a mere possibility nor as an idea, but as an entelechy, a ruling end, a destiny—as the result not of a mere moral process, but of purposed action. It matters much also where we begin—whether we start as wise men from the mystic East, as devout people seeking for their worship a King of Saints, or as desperate people seeking relief from sin's moral tragedy, and finding it in the tragic salvation neither of a soul nor of a group, but of a world. It matters much for our type of religion whether the central interest of faith is a piety or an action, a choice experience or a crucial action.

II

On the first head, then, the supremacy of personality, I would indicate the growth of that principle as a chief moral development in the history both of the Church and of modern Society.

We may start from the point at which the whole treatment of Christ's work started on its serious career as a part, and the central part, of theology. We may start with Anselm. He begins his scheme with God. For Anselm the first charge upon man or his champion is the satisfaction of the objective conditions in a God who was not only a monarch, and not only absolute, but absolutist. God's first interest was his honor. His wounded honor had to receive reparation for the lese-majesty it had suffered, and for the robbery of its rights. This was done by Christ. But it was done without reference to the moral nature of man in whom the benefit was to take effect. It was done entirely over his head, and he was to be only its beneficiary. The honor of God must be satisfied, and it was indifferent whether by man or another, whether the satisfaction regarded man's moral nature or not.

By the time we reach Protestant orthodoxy, however, the idea had changed. It had become moralized. The juristic development of the Middle Ages had not gone for nothing. For the honor of an arbitrary monarch had been substituted something more constitutional—the idea of a divine justice. The sovereign's private right was replaced by the notion of a public moral order, whose guardian the King was, and which was expressed in civil law and penal justice. From being courtly the ruling idea became juridical—which was ethically to the good. The interpretation of Christ's work on its large lines has always followed the ruling ethical idea of contemporary society; and during the Middle Ages the ideal had become so far ethicized that it passed from a king's dignity to the law's. The categories in which the matter was discussed were more or less forensic. The prisoner was guilty less of treason than of crime, less of imperial detraction than of infringing the moral order on which all law is based and all society secured. The monarch represents law, rather than law the monarch. The king reigned in righteousness. This was an ethical advance, because the making of the satisfaction was a concern not of the monarch's dignity, but of man's conscience as under the moral order of the world which God, its Creator, had to maintain.

It is here that the modern view attaches. While it prolongs the ethical strain, it is a more immanential view. God, even as guardian of the moral law and of public righteousness, does not sit deistically apart, with a watching brief for justice in the course of the world he had set going. He is personally and actively involved in the moral order which pervades society and the world. He is at least as near and intimate to the world as that spiritual order is which enmeshes and pervades every soul. The roots of this view of Christ's work go as far back as Abelard, though Ritschl, developing and repairing Schleiermacher, is its most

powerful exponent in recent times. And it worked thus. We have seen that Orthodoxy made, by its jurism, an ethical advance on the absolutism that preceded it. It seems but another step of that ethical progress that the necessity for Christ's death should be sought only in the moral predicament of man's heart and conscience, and in nothing within God's own nature and claim. All that was to be considered was the change to be wrought in man and his moral history. The keyword moved from satisfaction to what would now be called impression, but it did not deepen to regeneration. The Cross was the grand spectacle of God's love; its action was on man only, and its object was to make him penitent (if not always regenerate). All that had to be met was the conditions prescribed for salvation by history or psychology, the obstacles to it in human nature and its fall. In these conditions the moral majesty of God had not to be negotiated in any way, but just displayed as mercy. It had to submit to these conditions and antagonisms subjective to us in order to reach and move us.

Here I say the old juristic necessity seems to become still more ethical. The public justice of the State, after all, is unwieldy to individual cases, as general law must always be; so it is replaced by that more intimate form of the moral order which we call righteous personality—by the norm, or principle, or genius distinctive of personality, by a *living* law. The Reformation, with its conception of personal faith, had been at work long enough to create the beginnings at least of the modern regard for personality, its supremacy, and its freedom from codes or institutions. Authority was not only constitutionalized, but personalized, only not now in a monarch's rank but in a Father's holiness, in a Head not of power alone but of love, of righteous love. Its methods, like its nature, were more ethical and less arbitrary than even Anselm's genius had conceived. The necessity of Christ's death was not theologized as by Anselm, but psychologized, if we may so say. It was called for by the moral psychology of sin. Even if it were not required juridically, as final satisfaction for the past, it would be needed teleologically for the future—*i. e.*, to bear in on men a due sense of the greatness of God's love and the gravity of their own sin in ignoring it—*i. e.*, to create a worthy repentance. On the same ethical lines even public government was on its way to be regarded as more educational than it used to be, and

not merely regulative. A Lessing described God's object and function with the world as its education, its growth in moral personality. And the government of a God of love must go far enough in this educative way to produce that repentance so essential to the Christian idea of such moral growth. The death of Christ was the only means by which man's moral case could be dealt with according to man's moral nature as well as God's majestic, massive, and simple grace. To this end Grotius had made of that death a penal example; while Ritschl, less mechanically, made it a personal revelation, with a power, however, impressive rather than creative. The change by such theories was great, and it was largely due to the growth of the sense that the ruling interest in religion, the ruling power in morals, and the ruling influence in history is personality. Man's prime anchor and need, therefore, is not his adjustment to positive law, but his reconciliation as a person to a person—as a moral person to a person whose norm is not a formal righteousness, but a holy love, vital, mobile, and absolute. The doctrine of Atonement is for the hour withdrawn from action in the interest of a doctrine of Reconciliation. But its retirement from public notice is only for the purpose of its being rebuilt in the new perspective; it is a doctrine that can never really go out of commission. It is the condition of Reconciliation if man is to remain moral. When the moral nature of God as the Holy regains as much attention as has been given to the moral subjectivity of man, then interest must return to what his holiness requires no less than to what our conscience needs; and in the same interest of personality we shall resume an eager, not to say central, concern about the revelation by atonement and its redemption.

It may be interposed that Ritschl, much as he ethicized Schleiermacher, did not say the last word in this direction—in this moralizing and socializing of the divine relation to the world. This is significantly shown by the way in which some of his best pupils have gone back upon him in the matter of the exigent holiness of the divine love, to which Ritschl did no more justice than he did to the doctrine of a Holy Spirit. They took more seriously the idea of judgment, and pressed for a real atonement to God due to this necessity in his own holy nature. The Reconciliation is not sympathetic only, but moral; and its moral conditions in-

volve not man's moral structure alone, but God's. Besides, it has to be not only shown, nor only offered, but done, and that means a change on both sides of the relation. It is the adjustment not of two hearts only making things up, but of two consciences making things good. And its necessity lies in both parties. That nature in man which required such treatment from God as the death of Christ is the reflection of God's nature as man's holy Maker. If there is a difficulty due to man's moral phychology, the root of it is really in God's, who so made man in his image that the transgressor's way is hard. The necessity is really to be carried back to the moral nature of God, *i. e.*, to his holy nature and its reaction in judgment, were it but automatic judgment, upon sin everywhere. We cannot think of anything arbitrary here. We cannot imagine God (in a Grotian way) reviewing several devices open to him for bringing man to his moral senses, and selecting the most judicious (as a college tutor might choose between gating and fining) out of many expedients otiose to his own nature. Whatever was done embodied a moral necessity for God, one which arose out of his free holiness, just because it had to adjust itself to a moral nature in man which was created in God's image. We have here a necessity which is solidary with that which made him create; and that was no whim. Unless we return there, to a real atonement required by God's nature and not merely by man's predicament, we hardly get beyond an expedient, and we do not really advance in moral reality and seriousness. We do not do justice to God's personality—especially as holy and absolute. We fall behind the old doctrines we want to correct. We do not take seriously enough either sin or grace. We do not find our data in the experience of the saints, but in the postulates of reason. We do not do justice to personality either in God or man. We reach, with Ritschl, the offering brought *to* God in the fidelity of Christ's love, but not to the offering made *by* God in the visitation of that love. The element of holy judgment is either ignored, as by liberalism, or it is severed from love, as by severe orthodoxy; and that cannot be done by either without damage to the moral personality which love is to reveal or to rear. The old view, so far as it went, aimed at something more thorough than that. And, when we are speaking of God, the more thorough is the more true. Deep Church means

more than either Broad or Low. Deep Church is the only true sense of High.

My object has been to suggest the way in which the growing and ruling interest of an ethical religion has come to be holy personality and all that it implies. I now go on to discuss the true expression of such personality, its only adequate expression, which I will suggest is action, and not mere instruction nor exhibition. Christ was more the Plenipotentiary of Grace than its Manifestation, and especially so on the Cross. He did things, he did not simply state them.

III

The second point to be discussed, then, is this: What is the reality of a moral personality? What is sacramentally given us in it? Is it a substance or an act? What is its congenial function? Where does it "arrive"? How does it take effect? Is it merely spectacular, æsthetic, for our contemplation? Or is it ethical, and for action? Does it impress us or remake us? And the answer is for the latter alternative. The crowning expression of a moral and historic personality is action.

How do we get at the entire personality of Christ? The account in the Gospels is too meager for our purpose, and to many it has been made by criticism more or less unstable. With these data we are more successful in reaching the character than the person, though even the character cannot be depicted on modern, intimate, and psychological lines. The motivation, the pragmatism, cannot easily be traced, if at all. As we go into the Gospels it becomes clearer that they were not put there to depict a character, or to be a monument to a personality, but to lead up to the great crisis and victory which, for the first Christians, made Christ Christ before a Gospel was written, even in rudiment. The Gospels have a tendency. There is a movement in them. They hurry, with many a leap, to a *dénouement,* to a goal in which the movement "arrives," where the deep fire flames. They make for a crisis where the center of gravity lies. And, as the interest concentrates, the treatment expands. They are more ample as they draw to the close. They spend a disproportionate space on the passion, and on all the precincts of the Cross. Their stream is never so broad as when it enters the sea and disappears. The Gospels have the work of Christ on the Cross for their goal,

as the Epistles have it for their center. Redemption is their *Leitmotiv.*

This is in keeping with the life of all the men who have been what we call providential personalities. I do not speak of the men of artistic or devout genius, like the poets or mystics, but of those woven into affairs as Christ was, and all the train of the Fathers and Leaders of Church or State. The personality is revealed as it becomes effectuated in deeds. It is incarnated in action. Its object is not just to reveal itself and give play to its powers, but to do something, or get something done, in course of which it is revealed. It makes for action, and for action which is more than mere activity, action for a purpose in a vocation, and not merely in the indulgence of a genius. The world is for the conscience, as for the heart, a tragic world. And the mere repose of a majestic personality, even of Christ's, does not meet that tragedy. It does not speak its language, nor return its note. It is something afar from the sphere of our sorrow. It is apt to produce a passionless Christianity, unequal to the color of life's vitality, the fervor of its fever, or its dramatic choice and issue. More than rapt adoration is called for by the tragedy of life. Personality is an energy. A great and royal world-personality must be gathered by passion into action on that scale. And a complete and vital personality like Christ's must come to a head in one Act, which in its nature is final. Its unity, its singleness, does not take form in a symmetry, but in an achievement. It is not statuesque. Its Reconciliation is not an æsthetic harmony of parts, but a moral union of lives. In the Act of the Cross the whole personality of Christ is thus condensed and brought to pass. The revelation is much more than a manifestation; it is a redemption. The Cross, as the Act in which God and man, Time and Eternity, Sanctity and Sin, meet, lifts Revelation above the mere exposition to our gaze of the rich beauty or spell of that person; the person has in it a vocation to action, both Godward and manward, in which alone it can come to itself. The Christ of the Cross was more than the wonder of the moral world, more than a spiritual splendor; and he stands amid the great moral figures otherwise than as the majestic head of Jupiter Ammon might stand among other fine busts. He was much more than the King of Saints, and more than the condensed Light of the

World lighting every man. He was Action more than Light, except to such a Logos-theology as impairs a Holy Spirit and its ethic. He did and he does much more than shine or walk in beauty—he is of the Creators and Rulers. If he is King, it is not in splendor only, but in moral power and effect. If he is Light, he is much more than illumination. He is more actinic. He warms, controls, and, above all, changes the world he lights. It revolves round him, it does not simply bask in him. He does not simply show the divinity of Love. Perhaps, after all that poets or other idealists have sung or shown (to say nothing of our heart's native instincts), it did not need the Son of God to show us Love's excellence or its lovableness. The central thing in Christianity is not to convince us, or to impress us, with the principle that God is Love, unless we are made certain that his Love is omnipotent. It is not love we worship in God, but the power of that love to make itself good for the whole world, to establish itself everywhere in dominion over its foes forever. He might love beyond all that heart can conceive, but can he love to any final effect, and does he love forever? Among men, love that has passed all speech has yet changed and faded. Or he might love with a fidelity that outlived all that mankind has *yet* done to try him; but is his Love capable of overcoming every possible enemy to it, of subduing the whole spiritual world, and beating down even Satan under his feet? Is it the eternal omnipotence? It might go far beyond our imagination, but does it go to eternity? Is it equal to his imagination? Is it universal, omnipotent? In one word, is it holy? Is it absolute? Nothing can really win our whole worship but the holy, nothing but the absolute Saviour justify our whole soul's faith. He might love us unspeakably but be helpless, after a point, against the hate that blasts, the malice that wrecks, or the cold that kills. Like the lovely Venus, it might be most moving in its grace but have no arms. We might die for the winsomeness of Christ, but what if in the very end he and we died together? Now, the Revelation that the Cross makes has for its object not simply the existence of God's love, but its power—that last conquest and that last certainty. The revelation was the very victory itself. It was not simply love at work, but love working its final settlement of all things. It is not just Love that Christ reveals there, but the absolute and eternal do-

minion of Love; and that cannot be revealed except as it is achieved. For our soul's last purpose a prophet's promise is of no use. What we have in the Cross is Love in final and decisive effect for the universe. It revealed not by way of a divine impression, but by way of an eternal achievement and accomplished fact. It was the Cross in its holiness that beat down Satan under Love's feet. It secured Love as holy, *i. e.*, as absolute, as final, insuperable, invincible for the universe. The Cross was the Act of that victory by the whole might of Christ's person; it was not simply a case of it, nor its symbol, nor its promise, at last far off, at last to all. And a Church without such a Cross, with a Cross moving but not regenerating, cannot help lapsing into an impotence it feels to its misery but cannot amend to its joy. I know it is a tremendous thing to say this about the Cross and what was done there. It seems sheer extravagance to say that the Cross was a mightier matter than the war, than all wars; that it was mightier to secure love in the world than war can be to destroy it. And indeed it is a belief beyond the power of individual faith. It is the matter of a revelation so great as to be a transforming act both for the soul it comes to and the world it saved. It is so great that only the collective faith of a whole Church can rise to its height, or open to its breadth. We cannot really believe it, if we grasp its significance, except with that vast and reciprocal increment of faith that comes from a whole Church believing together. And the Church's belief is one due to the faith of apostles selected and inspired for this supernatural purpose by the same Spirit as gives her power to believe.

Only in this sense is Christ King, throughout the whole height, depth, and range of human possibility or need, as that need is roused by the world problem on the one hand and by Christian faith on the other. If he is King, it is by action rather than by speech, and much rather than by the mere ideal he presents in his kind, stern, and stately soul. Christianity is not the religion of manifestation, but of redemption; not of the imaginative Ideal, but of the mystic Act, the mystic Will. Christ's religion is not a moral æsthetic, but a moral faith. And, for all its glories, the Ideal does no small damage to our action when it takes the place of faith. The ideal of what may be done can never replace for practical purposes the faith of what has been done for good and

all forever. It does not bring an ought, and certainly not the supreme *ought* which always *is*. If Christ is the King of the world, he must act. And he must act, not in a series of minor acts, but once for all, with all his person, on the scale of the world, and indeed of eternity. Sure faith must have an absolute object. It is the loss of this absolute act out of our Revelation that lowers the pitch of faith, contracts its range, and is the source of so much of the public weakness in our religion, and of the powerlessness of our preaching with men of affairs. Unless it is the message, nay, the energy, the function of a thing done, preaching can do nothing but interest, lecture, or poetize. It cannot convert or control. The Cross was this Act, this pointing, of Christ's whole person. It taxed and focused all the resources of that person to die as he died, to do what the Church has found that he did in his death in the way of meeting God, effecting grace, winning love, destroying sin, and setting up the kingdom. Our only access to the Absolute is not philosophic, but religious. The Act of the Cross, realized by our faith, is the only sure point of the soul's final contact with absolute reality (which is moral reality); and it is the seat therefore of authority, and the source of mastery. That idea of authority is, at last, an Evangelical idea.

IV

We hear much (or did when we could hear anything but the din of arms hurtling in the air) about our loss of the sacramental idea—the loss of the sacramental interpretation both of the world and of the Church. The chief defect of non-Catholic religion, it is said, is the lack of the sacramental type. It is a charge to which we should pay due attention. Properly understood, the sacramental idea would protect us not only from hard, soulless, and trivial religion, but from the prevalent mysticism which bounds to the other extreme. The sacramental is the mystic element *in* things, and not over their heads, conveyed *by* things, not *round* them. It is a mystic influence which is inner-worldly and not other-worldly, working through the conductivity of nature and history, and not simply arriving by wireless. God is in Christ and in Christ's Church, and not just wherever we may recognize a Christian spirit coming by aërial post. He does not go round

Christ, reach us by an intuition, and leave Christ and all history otiose to the soul.

But there is a reaction against the sacramental which is not without its ground. For the chief exponents of the idea have left it, for all the glamour on its face, too metaphysical at its heart and too little energetic. Their sacramental theory has turned on a metaphysic of being instead of energy, of matter instead of action, of essence rather than ethic. It has dwelt too much on the conversion of substance, and too little on the conversion of will, on the refining of flesh and blood to a celestial body. (Is it wonderful that, after all the Church has done, wills are so little changed as they are either within the Church or without?) Its sacraments have been therefore too static and too little dynamic, if these ungainly words may pass. They are apt to be more consoling than inspiring, and more perfunctory than effectual; working too much in the way of infusing into us the Saviour's heavenly substance, and too little in the way of creating in us his moral salvation. With the coming of the activist philosophies, however, both the scenes of Nature and the sacraments of the Church are now beginning to pass, the one into the revelation of an endless energy, and the other into a phase of the eternal Act, which (and not a supernal fluid) is Eternal Life. A sacrament is less a heavenly food than a spiritual energy, action, and gift. What has been lacking in the view of sacraments is the dramatic element. By this, of course, is not meant the histrionic, but the element of some positive thing done—some final thing done instead of some fine thing merely shown (as with Protestant Liberalism) or some rare thing merely infused (as with Catholic Sacramentalism). The lack at the religious center is the lack that we feel within much of the religion of cultured pietism or sympathetic rationalism—the lack of action, of power. We feel it both in preaching and in worship. They are spineless. Our preaching, at the least interesting, and at best inspiring, is yet not sacramental. It is not regenerative; because it has not the note and movement of a moral thing finally and creatively done as its motive power. In respect of worship, the Romanist at his Mass can always say to the Protestant: "I have, at the center, something *done*. Do your people leave worship with the same sense as mine of something really done, and done in the spiritual

world? Do you feel that what you have been engaged in has left any mark on the world unseen? Your devotion is too little dramatic." But upon the Romanist himself it can be retorted that in his sacraments also there is too little that is really dramatic amid so much that is but spectacular movement. There is much that passes, but too little that is done. What is done is too metaphysical and too little moral. There is too much in the way of mystic alchemy, and too little in the way of moral transaction. I know the word "moral" here may to some bring down the whole matter in a sudden bathos. But it is not so. For I speak of the moral at its mystic height of holiness, as the very persons of the Trinity prosecute their eternal converse, communicate their eternal powers, and mightily and sweetly order all.

It is not simply action we need in our worship, nor only collective action, but sacramental action; not man's earnest prestation of praise, but God's full and passionate donation of himself. We need a revelation which is not truth, but action, and action which is not simply a deed, but an eloquent deed. We need more of the sacramental, truly, but a sacrament in a reciprocal act of persons, and not in the act of a person on a substance; not a conveyance to our nature of Christ's person merely, as a finer light in light, but a conveyance to our will of Christ's Act as the mightiest power in power—crowning, winging, and affecting all his person, and working by faith a response of personal, holy, and sacrificial love in us. The moral is the real. Reality is not a substance, but an eternal act. The transcendently moral, the holy, is the last reality. There is no higher gift than Grace at work refining Grace. An essence given is not so great as mercy given. It is not yet God as the gift. It does not rise above the first creation to the second. For the very self of God is not his essence all-divine, but his holiness and its Act of self-donation in the person and work of Christ—of a Christ not infused as the finest substance subduing our disease like a potent elixir, but as moral Omnipotence destroying guilt at his Word. "By his own will begat he us." The real presence in the worshiping Church is the presence of a real Christ gathered into a real act, conveying his holy deed of saving Grace, and not distributing the substance of his sacred soul. We become partners of his Act, and not merely partakers of his Person. We receive

the Lord's death more than the Lord's body. Reality is an Act, and not an essence, and such is the real presence. It is Christ in action, not in elements.

V

A person who does not eventuate in adequate action is no true representative (whatever ornament), and certainly he is no king, of a community, whether it be nation or Church. The Church at least, as it arose from God's supreme Act, stands on that Act always. And the supreme Act was not simply Christ—that is too indefinite—but Christ crucified, and crucified not simply as the result of human crime, but in the exercise of his own will. Christ willed to die. His death was a deed. (Though the form of it was willed by man's wickedness.) And he willed to die because his Father willed it. He took death from God's hand with his whole active will. And, retrospectively, the Cross was the principle of all his ministry. The end was in the maker's thought. It was the supreme determinant, unconscious or conscious, indirect or direct, of his life. So that, if it was not his effectuation, it was his failure. For he put all his life into it. It either crowned his person or stultified it; for it did rule him. It was his crowning work or his crushing fate. If he was not final Redeemer, he was fruitless martyr. If his person did not destroy sin, it was destroyed by it. But it did destroy it. The Cross was the only place where sin was thus paralyzed—as the Resurrection showed. There is no sign that Christ took the Cross as a foreign fate, or raised a protest against its destruction of his real work. It was his vocation; it did not destroy his vocation. His word was Love, and sacrifice is Love in its native action. He died with all his heart—with all his broken heart, with all his moral soul, and strength, and mind. His greatest work was to triumph over the failure of his work. Forgiveness to the uttermost meant forgiveness for treason and desertion. It meant sacrifice to the uttermost, self-emptying to the Cross. His great victory was over his God-forsakenness; for it is easy to be good when God is a delight. So the Eternal Redemption came not merely as the fullness of time, but as an irony on time; not as the blossom of history, but of Grace; not as a fruit, but as a crisis in the standing miracle of Grace.

"For we gave Him the Cross where we owed Him the throne."

VI

It need hardly be pointed out that if our attention is turned wholly on Christ's person and on our absorption into its consciousness of God, if it is diverted, therefore, from the effectuation of the person in an Act which settles and solders all, we have the result that appears in Schleiermacher and his magnetic line. We have no such thing as Atonement; and that is to say we have a religious but no moral center of the world. Its morality does not come to a head in an effective act with an imperative in it, but remains at best an ideal. And the case of Germany, which disclaims a morality for the State, shows that, when the religion of a whole people deserts its moral source with characteristic thoroughness by discarding the creative center given in a real Atonement between man's conscience and God's, it loses its public ethic. The Cross, as such a real Atonement, is the source, standard, and dynamic of any ethic on a world-scale. This is the weakest part in Schleiermacher's system. And it flowed from the same defect in his idea of God as led him to abjure petitionary prayer. Our relation to God, he said, is absolute dependence; therefore we cannot act upon him either in the way of rousing his anger, or of obtaining our request, or of uniting with Christ's act (but only with his consciousness). Some, who are not with Schleiermacher in the matter of prayer, are yet with him in regard to Atonement and its place in the Christian type of religion. For them it is not central. To some young amateurs of piety it is a theological nuisance. The judgment of God is a mere parergon, a mere desciplinary device, outside the Cross of his Love, and irrelevant to a real faith. A share, or a copy, of Christ's personal sense of God is everything. This is bound to have a great effect on the moral quality of such faith, and in the end an effect not happy. It must soften it too much (especially among the young) to a mystic piety which is as attractive to the religious fancy as it is indifferent to conscience. I mean that the ethical element becomes but sequential to the faith; it is not intrinsic to its nature, as it must be in any creed where the Cross is the Act of *holy* Love. Piety of the kind I describe gravitates to think of Christ's person as no more than the mercy-seat, as the trysting-place of God and man; that is to say, as an inert area with an atmosphere instead of an active and decisive moral power, as a

divine site rather than a divine Saviour. It misses the fact that Christ was above all things a Doer in and for man, that his supreme deed was toward God, and that this came to a head in the Cross, which, as it was the greatest opportunity for all that the person could do, was God's greatest gift to him. He came to give his life as a ransom, which was at least a degree above mere service, and many degrees above mere boon. To hold the Cross to be comparatively irrelevant, and to treat it but as the great instance of self-sacrifice is a temptation of that moral inexperience in youths and women which responds to heroism but does not grasp the nature of salvation because it does not yet know how heavy sin weighs.[1]

The truth is that Christ was bearing the saving Cross all his life. But that he could not have done except for the complete unity of his death with his personal life; and apart from that unity the Cross would have had no effect except as beclouding his person and truncating it. It was all one act; else, living or dying, how could we be the Lord's? When he startled his public by forgiving sin, it was the same shock as he gave his disciples by accepting the Cross. It was the same shock working two ways. Let us learn to think of personality as itself one grand and standing act, not as a mere vital entity. Human life is not a mere interplay of parts; nor is it a long process; but it is a standing *act* of resistance to death and defiance of it on the part of the race. So in the moral sphere, all Christ's life he was exerting the Cross, and growing in conquering personality as at every stage its domination deepened. But for the Cross that life would seem casual and unbraced, the life of a preaching friar or vagrant benefactor. It would seem pointless, planless, and without a ruling purpose. But it all shaped to the Cross, which was a *dénouement,* not a *débâcle.* It was not but another incident in a life of activity, it was the culmination of a life of sacrifice, the goal in which all the prior energies found themselves. It was not but one action the more on a larger scale, like the ring at a chain's end, which you could drop without breaking the chain.

The matter of New Testament preaching is the person of

[1] "In the dormitory we heard Dr. ——— on the Power of the Risen Lord. We were specially anxious to hear him, for he plays such a good game of tennis." (Letter from a student at a Swanwick conference.)

Christ, but only as he is what he is supremely in the Cross—as he is the vehicle and crisis of God's Grace and the agent of his Redemption. He is not merely the great mouthpiece of that mercy, nor the infectious ideal of divine excellence. What makes the interior of his person is the redeeming Grace of God; and it works out sole and clear in the Cross as the point at which he bursts into his absolute Lordship and full universality. Only an act could destroy sin, which is an act, and vanquish it as a personal power, as the work of the Devil. Only a universal act could undo its universal bane. The Gospels read like a triumphal procession of Christ through hosts of demons; or it is as if he were cutting a way through such a bodyguard in the kingdom of Satan to reach and dethrone their King upon the Cross. Only upon such an act of Judgment and Redemption could universal Love stand for what Christ revealed it—as holy Grace. Only on such an act could a Church stand, with the like differentia from every other society in the world—as holy. It could not stand or grow upon an inert person, nor upon one merely influential. Nor could it stand on a closed personality whose life-movement was but self-contained, however holy or lovely he might be to our contemplation. That were but an æsthetic figure, and could produce but an æsthetic ethic, a religion of charm and charity, a cloistered faith, and a sectional, not to say sectarian, community—like the winsome Christ, or the undergraduate's Christ, of whom we are apt to hear too much. The Redeemer is not in the first place the Christ of the young. Two things are not always well remembered—that the Church rests on the New Covenant, and on the suffering Saviour. Christ was more concerned about the founding of the New Covenant, the new moral relation with God, than about the founding of the Church. And the Gospel was not, Jesus is Messiah; it was the Gospel of a suffering Messiah who was Jesus.

We are apt to speak as if Jesus had no more to do than open up (though it might be even by the Cross) his capacious soul, and display the overwhelming wealth of his spiritual interior. But that is not the New Testament idea of revelation—which is the moral Act of redemption as the function of his entire person. How little, when we think of it, he does in that way of self-exposure! He was very reserved, not to say elusive, about the

penetralia of his soul, about what was idiosyncratic in his own faith. What we reach of his inmost life we reach indirectly and inferentially, by making his teaching *yield* an autobiography it does not describe. To teach love and live it would have made a supreme saint, with disciples, but it would not have made Christendom.

We must escape from the limited conceptions of sin that are given by the personal lapses of the decent or the small circles of the pious. We must learn to view it in historic dimensions if we are to escape from the sectarian righteousness which ends in religious egoism, priggery, and futility. We must think of it imperially. We must realize sin distinguished, subtle, cosmic; sin so universal that it needs a Church truly catholic to cope with it. Think of great sin, of world-sin, sin in the grand style, sin Machiavelian, national, warlike, sin past thinking of, and you must turn to the Cross. View the death of Christ as the self-condemnation of a people, of the select and chartered people, brought about by a society of religious, earnest, influential Pharisees, and not by a crowd of evil livers. Indict a nation. View its doom as the result of national sin. Israel did not fall by immorality, like drunkenness, or licentiousness, or swindling. On such counts Rome was much worse. Israel fell by a sin too great for most Israelites to call it sin. All its rabbis, even the Hillels, the whole scribal professoriate, its most interesting Sadducees, were against Christ and for a righteousness which the Son of Man called sin. It sinned much more against its light and its calling than Rome did—just as Christianity can be much more inconsistent than paganism. It fell by a corporate, and national, and constitutional sin, by the sin of a decent society as dense as it was cultured and as blind as it was sure, by the choice of its religious leaders and public representatives, by a political slavery fatal to the old genius, the moral soul, and the spiritual mission of the nation, by sin lordly rather than coarse or mean. The death of Christ is a revelation of sin such as we do not get from his life alone, of sin more deadly and desperate than arises from the mere neglect or dislike of his person. It was a revelation not of the common sins of the common man, but of high-placed sin—of illustrious sin, imposing, even dazzling, sin, of distinguished perdition and unsuspected ruin; the sin of a fine fearless godlessness abetted by earnest ecclesiastics, scholars, jurists, by party politicians, popular leaders, sentimental preachers, deserting disciples, and betrayers who kept all the commandments perhaps from their youth up, by spiritual wickedness in high and reputable places. It was over the *city* that Jesus wept, the collective center of his nation's culture. That is how we must see the deadliest sin to realize the saving Cross. It is how the saving Cross, as the compendious Acts of Christ's national universal person, opens our eyes to the perspective of sin.

VII

There is another way in which the sting and deadliness is taken out of sin, and so the Cross is moved from the vital center of the moral world. Some do not begin with the historic Cross and God's revelation of the holy, the evil, and the eternal there, but with the idea of a divine, moral, and spiritual order of the world, fundamental to its constitution, and condensed and incarnated in Christ. This means that he would have come to history in the working out of creation's destiny whether sin had entered or not, only in some other form. To this Christianity, coeval with creation, Christ is as the sun that gathers up the preëxistent light. He concentrates the light that lighteth every man in his very constitution as man. He is not so much the center of life's tragedy and the Saviour there of its ruin and despair; he crowns a process, and represents the ripening, of a constitution of things which is imperishably good, and has an exhaustless power of self-recuperation. Man is the compendious summit of creation, and Christ of man; so that in Him we have the proleptic surety of the great ordered end. But it is not clear whence this idea reaches us with such power and certainty that we can make it the foundation of our interpretation of Christ and the basis of our faith. Does it come from Christ himself? If so, where? In his teaching or his Cross? Surely not from his Cross. It is most prevalent among people like the Friends, whose theology has never done justice to the doctrines of Grace, the cruciality of the Cross, and the fontality of its Atonement for all we are perfectly sure of in God's moral dealing with the world and its reconciliation. It is more like an importation from the religious theosophies, or the philosophic constructions of religion—more that than a theology that analyzes the moral reality of God's one his-

toric Word—Christ crucified. It seems but an attempt to do no more than exhibit in the Cross an outcrop of all the antithetic tensions so finely balanced in the processes of Godhead. This is a version of the matter which lets personality and its moral action down in discussions about the make-up of the divine constitution, lowers the idea of sin as it lowers its burden, and reduces the value of Christ's conflict as the crisis of eternity and of the war in heaven no less than of time and of history. It is not just to the New Testament at least to regard Christ in the Cross as the supreme symbol of a humiliation and suffering which the Word undergoes in each individual. He is the Source and Creator of all the humiliation that is noble, and of the suffering which learns to rejoice.

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HIGHER AND RECONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM ILLUSTRATED.

THE RESCUE OF LOT FROM SODOM.

BY PROF. W. W. MARTIN.

I

CITIES, like individuals, loom up in the vista of the most ancient past. Rome, Athens, Corinth, are cities which have come out of Japhetic peoples; Nineveh, Babylon, Ur of the Chaldees, are cities which belong to the Semitic peoples upon the Tigris and the Euphrates; Samaria, Jerusalem, and Sodom are cities along the Jordan, two at least being Semitic. Rome, the majesty of law and the majesty of power, sitting on the seven hills, her throne, governed the world; and Rome is cherished by mankind. Historians trace "The Decline and Fall of Rome." But, in the last analysis, the cause was the trailing of her laws in the dust and the using of her magnificent power for oppression. Athens, like her great Athena, was the embodiment of grace, truth, and loveliness. When her citizens pleaded in the agora for the rights of her own people and the rights of the stranger, when her sculptors wrought out living beauty in marble, declaring the greatness of man, Athens was the light of the world. But when the orator forgot his neighbor and the stranger except to exact from them wrongfully, then the light became darkness. Corinth by the sea, on the highway of nations, so long as she loved the flowers of her hillsides and wrought their forms in stone for the capitals of her columns to adorn the temples of her God—Corinth was then the joy of the whole earth. But when she made her art to adorn places of luxury and dissipation, the outward beauty only enhomed the madness of grief. The majesty, the light, the joy passed away because of the sins of these peoples. We have not the words of their prophets.

Nineveh we know mostly through its pitiless crushing of small and great nations through greed of power. Samaria, the brightest jewel of Palestine, was violently snatched from its setting and placed in the Assyrian crown. A destructive young lion was Assyria. Yet Assyria grew not to power through violence. Listen to one of her teachers, as he prays to the God of Nineveh: