

REDEMPTION AND REVELATION

In the Actuality of History

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they are blended into the unity of one flashing point. The Christian interpretation of history finds its view-point on the hill of Calvary. But the paths leading up to it were those trodden by the prophets and apocalyptists of the Old Testament. These men were unique in the ancient world in tracing the ordered purpose of God in the happenings of history. The peculiar quality of a historical revelation depends on such interpretation. The Christian view of the world completes what they began. To argue any formulation of it here is beyond our scope. But it may be worth while to ask, by way of introduction to this book, what are its axioms. There are at least five characteristics of history which the Christian interpretation of it claims to discern, and on which the truth of the Christian faith ultimately depends. These "axioms" are (1) the creative activity of history; (2) its actuality, (3) its values, (4) its subjective factor, and the transformation of meaning which can result from this, and (5) the inclusion of its temporal events within an eternal order.

§ 1. *Creative Activity.* Since the Christian faith presupposes moral responsibility, there must be some degree of freedom in the moral choice exercised by man. This is not the place to discuss the thorny question of human freedom, the reality of which may be challenged on either a materialistic or idealistic basis. At any rate, we may say that the moral view of history is fundamental for the Christian interpretation of it. This does not mean, as we shall see (§ 3), that the moral standards of any particular stage are necessarily final or complete, nor does it mean unmotived or unlimited freedom. The moral choices of a rational being are not unmotived, and motive depends on character, which has a relatively fixed quality. But freedom is not one element in a chain of sequences; it is the quality of personality acting as a whole and above the level of

psychological analysis.¹ The freedom possessed by a moral agent is certainly limited both by his previous history and by his immediate environment. An act of volition is highly complex, and even if we could analyse all its factors there would remain the something more which belongs to it as the self-expression of a living being. It is that something more which concerns us when we consider the behaviour of moral agents and their interplay in history. It is in regard to this something more that a moral agent judges himself, in terms of blame or credit, and is so judged by his fellows, whether they be his contemporaries or the future historians who gather up the *records* of the past and compile that "continuous, methodical *record*" which is what we mean by history in the narrower and stricter sense. Here we shall use the term "history" for the process itself, as well as for the record of it.

If, now, we think of this conscious possession of creative capacity which underlies morally responsible action and distinguishes man from the order of nature, we can see that such a characteristic has important religious, as well as moral, consequences. In the Bible, as is well known, the knowledge of God is intimately bound up with obedience to God, so intimately indeed that we can say in fact that if a man does not will to do the will of God, he shall not know of the teaching whether it be of God. The emphasis of the Bible falls distinctly on volition, both in the Old Testament and the New, and the obedient will is the doorway to any real knowledge of God. We can hardly over-emphasize this point, both for the Christian faith itself and for the interpretation of history according to Christian standards. According to the Bible the knowledge of God is unattainable by any intellectual argument, and

¹ Cf. *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, by H. Wheeler Robinson, pp. 292 ff., for the conception of a closed psychological circle which is within the total personality to which freedom belongs.

in fact the Bible religion never builds on such a foundation. It demands obedience, and promises growing knowledge through obedience. It suggests that the living God can be known only in terms of life and not in terms of thought. *Life* is in fact a category of knowledge of a new order, and one which is ultimately more important than any category belonging to the intellect.¹ It brings man into as close a fellowship with God as is possible for a creature living under marked limitations. But he is not only a creature; he is also in his own way a creator. He creates the little world in which he lives within the limitations prescribed for him by his heredity and environment. In exercising the creative function which is assigned to him as a moral agent he is potentially capable of entering into a real fellowship with God the Creator, and such fellowship is mediated, not by any abstract knowledge, but by an activity which is in miniature like that of God, however limited its scope.² When man goes forth to his work and to his labour until the evening he does not only take his place in that great creative panorama which the 104th Psalm pictures; he enters into a sphere of creative activity all his own, a microcosm to God's macrocosm.

If we try to estimate the relation of this creative capacity to the work of the divine Creator, we are again entering a very difficult and controversial realm, and no attempt will here be made to discuss the problems.³ But it may fairly be said that the Christian faith, following the pattern set

¹ Cf. F. R. Tennant in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, IX, 200: "the world is not rationalizable without remainder: 'reality is richer than thought', as Lotze often remarks."

² Cf. John Macmurray, *The Chue to History*, p. 33: "What is characteristic of the Hebrew conception of God is that God is primarily a worker. . . . Nothing could express more succinctly the essence of the Hebrew conception of God in its full religious integrity, than the statement attributed to Jesus, 'My father worketh hitherto and I work'."

³ I have tried to deal with some of these in *Suffering, Human and Divine*, Co. VI-VIII.

in the Bible, asserts divine control without admitting prejudice to moral responsibility. No doubt, at certain times and in certain stages of the development of doctrine, the emphasis has fallen more on one side than on the other, as the history of Augustinianism versus Pelagianism or of Calvinism versus Arminianism amply demonstrates. But, on the whole, the normal Christian view is that, whatever the divine control which religious faith demands, room must be found for the real exercise of a creative freedom through man. Let us admit frankly that we cannot frame any formula which would justify this, though we can point to the fact that the surrender made by personal faith in God and the growth in grace of a saintly personality do suggest the possibility of a real freedom co-existing within a spiritual control. It may be that our difficulty in framing any formula is due to the fact already indicated, that the living God is to be known in categories of life and not simply of thought. At any rate we have to think of a continued exercise of God's creative power through the creative freedom of moral agents. Admittedly this is a new level of creative activity on God's part, since, as we have seen, it involves the continuous education of the moral agent, and his growth in grace. We can hardly put it more strikingly than did Thomas Traherne, who said that when God had done all He could by the exercise of His own liberty, then He did more by creating man's.¹

In our judgment of history, then, we must give full scope to this conception of it as the record of a creative work of God, highly complicated through the intervention of human agents, exercising their moral liberty. This will account for the slowness of the movement or the obscurity of the divine purpose in it. In spite of them, history is creating something *sui generis*, which is not to be reduced to the mere evolution of physical forces (with a psychical

¹ *Centuries of Meditations*, IV, 46.

not that of a "piecemeal" supernaturalism;¹ He is to be conceived as the home and source of all that makes our true life. "We love, because He first loved us." The values of personality imply and reveal Him. They imply Him, because their compelling authority, their mysterious fascination, their "otherness" and inexhaustible wealth, are all inexplicable unless they exist already in superabundant fullness, and the values of personality can exist only in and for personality, in and for Spirit great enough to include Personality in its attributes. They reveal God, because they are the very content of His nature, because where they are, He is, not simply as a remote Bestower, but as an active spiritual Presence. "In the cases of these Intelligible Orders we have already something more or less religious."² Again and again, the attempt has been made to explain them on the human level, or to give them a religious value without God, and the attempts have always failed. But when the implicit logic of these values is recognized, and they are taken up into the religious consciousness, they obtain their noblest sanction, as God obtains in and through them His most adequate revelation, which is always life, and the whole of life. Our deepest need is to see God steadily and see Him throughout all life.

§ 4. *The Unity of Experience.* Within this great realm of spiritual realities creating the values recognized by the human consciousness as authoritative, the specifically religious values which gather round the Person of Christ occupy a primary place. The historical facts to which Christian faith is directed do not simply provide the nuclei

¹ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 520. The statements made above are perhaps too condensed, but they are expounded in subsequent chapters; see, for example, Chapter XIV, § 2, "The Kenosis of the Spirit," for the application to Christian experience.

² von Hügel, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

of these values, as when Jesus is made the great example of true religion, nor are they simply a means to an end, as when the Incarnation is presented as a revelation of God, designed to produce a moral and religious influence on man. Christianity is a historical religion in a sense deeper than this. God's entrance into history is redemptive actualization as well as revelation; it belongs to His very nature to share our sorrows and bear our sins, and He would not be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ if He had not done this. Nor is the manner of His doing it accidental or arbitrary. "For in Christianity human nature is regarded as becoming not a passing disguise, but a permanent organ of the divine. . . . Man was, it teaches, from the first in the image of God, and the Son is eternally an element in the Godhead. That is, the union of God and man belongs to the very essence of both the one and the other."¹ To these words of a Christian philosopher, we may add those of a Christian theologian: "All genuine religion, especially Christianity, is revelational, evidential, factual—this also within the range of sense-and-spirit, and can never become a system of pure ideas or of entirely extra-historical realities."² But the recognition of this essential truth brings into view the peculiar difficulty of every appeal to religious experience as the basis of theological reconstruction. Christian experience is dependent on a historic revelation, yet it essentially consists in a personal response to God, known to be actively present in the personal consciousness. The consequence is that such experience is always entangled with historical data, themselves legitimately open to criticism, so that an element of uncertainty often creeps into it; on the other hand, when these data are ignored or minimized, Christian faith easily loses its specifically

¹ *Problems in the Relation of God and Man*, by C. C. J. Webb, p. 240.

² von Hügel, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

Christian character. "The religious experience without the vision of history would be empty, the historical event without the religious experience blind."¹ Here, then, are two elements in the Christian experience which seem to base it on feet of mingled iron and clay (the *respective* strength or weakness being defined according to the predilections of the analysts). In contrast with this entanglement, the simple appeal to the authority of either Church or Bible seems to have a peculiar cogency, and has always a plausible simplicity.

But it may prove that the truth lies deeper. If and when God does enter into our experience, there will always be something we can understand, and always something that passes understanding. Both the psychology of religion and historical criticism are legitimate sciences and must be given full scope and receive full attention. But the Christian experience is the unity of God's active presence, that unity which the familiar benediction describes: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit"; the unity of access through Christ in one Spirit unto the Father.² We are dealing with a spiritual experience, and it is of the very nature of spirit to reach a unity by inclusion. There is an entanglement of body and soul, which leaves unsolved problems to both physiology and psychology, yet offers a working unity of experience. There is an apparently closed circle of psychical activities which leaves no place for human freedom, yet personality takes this closed circle up into its exercise of freedom.³ So we may think of that greater unity wrought by the Spirit of

¹ Robert Winkler, in *Das Geistesproblem*, p. 32, an admirably condensed statement of the modern approach through experience.

² 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Eph. ii. 18.

³ See Introduction, § I, and cf. Wobbermin's use of the same figure of the closed circle for the problem here before us, in his *Systematische Theologie*, I, pp. 405 ff.

God, when He takes of the things of Christ and makes them the living tokens of His presence to faith. It is, indeed, the problem of the Incarnation itself repeated in the experience of the believer. The duality of natures is not a dualism. There could be no such unity of man and God in the Person of Christ, or in the experience of His disciples, if there were not spiritual kinship between man and God; but there could be no such fellowship as Christian experience postulates if God were not other than, and infinitely more than, man, and had not made His partial "otherness" accessible and operative through the historical revelation of the Incarnation.¹ History is actual, and its actuality is part of its eternal meaning. No philosophy is adequate for Christian theology which does not make room for this reality. The "Jesus of history" is one with the "Christ of experience" because history is spiritual, and the Lord—the risen Lord of the New Testament faith—is the Spirit. The unity which faith affirmed in the New Testament times is affirmed by the faith of Christian life to-day, on the ground of an experience wrought through the Spirit.

§ 5. *The Moral Conditions.* A further aspect of this complex unity of Christian experience may be seen in the moral demands of faith, the kind of character needed in order to *know*. Here we may trace the historic influence of the Old Testament foundation for the New Testament faith. The "guest-psalms", for example, the fifteenth and twenty-fourth, describe the character of the man who

¹ This is the familiar issue between immanence and transcendence neither of which can be ignored or minimized with impunity. Barthianism has over-emphasized transcendence in reaction from idealistic or humanistic types of religion which dwell too exclusively on immanence. The Christian theologian will always have to wrestle with the task of explaining how the transcendent God can be known through His immanence, which is the essential problem for any doctrine of the Incarnation, or for any philosophy of the relation of time and eternity.

would claim sanctuary in Yahweh's house in terms drawn from the teaching of the great prophets. The demands of those prophets are continued in the teaching of Jesus; *the character of God is known only as it is shared*, and there is no salvation without such knowledge of God. In that cardinal truth lie in germ many subsequent problems of Christian theology, such as the relation of justification and sanctification, or of regeneration and conversion, or of divine grace and human freedom. There is no before and after in these deep realms; we can speak at most of different aspects of the unity of experience, and call them by different names, according to our angle of approach. Both ethics and theology have their legitimate contributions to make, and are left facing each other with their inevitable problems; but the interpreted unity of experience subtly harmonizes their contrasts.

With these more theoretical problems we are not here concerned, but there is a practical problem that has to be faced by most of us. The earnest seeker after God who has come to cry in sincerity, "O that I knew where I might find Him!" is frequently led to expect and to seek an answer in terms too exclusively intellectual. He labours to construct a "belief" where the only satisfying thing is a "faith", a personal trust and obedience making essentially moral demands. There is some excuse for this misconception in the limitations of the English language, for unfortunately there is no cognate verb corresponding with the noun "faith", and the reader, sometimes even the preacher, fails to recognize that "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" really says, "Have faith in Him", i.e. "Trust Him". The result of such misconception is not only that the battle for faith is often waged with but a part of our resources, but that the issue itself seems unfair. Truth is disguised in this or that intellectual garment; faith is made to depend on our acceptance of

some doctrine which needs a scholar's training for its understanding.

The practical solution of the problem is obvious to those who have found their way through doubt to a genuine Christian faith, and it has repeatedly found illustration in the lives of such men. The example of Horace Bushnell will serve to shew this; it is stated by himself in a passage known to be autobiographic:—

"... there comes up suddenly the question, 'Is there, then, no truth that I do believe? Yes, there is this one, now that I think of it: there is a distinction of right and wrong that I never doubted, and I see not how I can; I am even quite sure of it.' Then forthwith starts up the question, 'Have I, then, ever taken the principle of right for my law; I have done right things as men speak; have I ever thrown my life out on the principle to become all it requires of me? No, I have not, consciously I have not. Ah! then, here is something for me to do! No matter what becomes of my questions—nothing ought to become of them if I cannot take a first principle so inevitably true, and live in it.' The very suggestion seems to be a kind of revelation; it is even a relief to feel the conviction it brings. 'Here, then,' he says, 'will I begin. If there is a God, as I rather hope there is, and very dimly believe, He is a right God. If I have lost Him in wrong, perhaps I shall find Him in right.'"¹

We may go further than to point out the practical necessity of some such path, if the moral content of faith is to be known. The moral challenge concealed in the apparent disguise of truth becomes another proof of divine discipline. If the aim of the Christian revelation is not simply or chiefly to impart knowledge, but far more to develop character, to qualify men for a fellowship with God that does not rest on what others have said about Him, but on what He is in Himself, then intellectual

¹ *Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell*, ed. of 1880, pp. 57-59.

difficulties form a necessary part of our training. There is no more impressive statement of this important truth than that of Robert Browning in that highly illuminating poem, "A Death in the Desert". We see the aged apostle, John, as the last link with the Jesus of history. He has committed to writing his testimony, but there are new conditions for those who never knew Jesus in His earthly life. The task and test of life is the learning love, and the proofs must shift to make the test valid and effective and man's progress real. The point for each generation to consider is whether the *present* evidence of faith is adequate, not whether the evidence that satisfied a past generation is still as effective for ourselves. So when we face our modern question whether religion be not projection from the mind of man, we are but learning the wisdom of God:—

"Building new barriers as the old decay,
Saving us from evasion of life's proof,
Putting the question ever, 'Does God love,
And will ye hold that truth against the world?'"

CHAPTER II

THE MINISTRY OF ERROR

IN the previous chapter, the point reached was that truth often presents itself to us in disguise and that its recognition in such conditions forms a moral test and a discipline of character. Only as we practise truth must we expect to be able to recognize it, in spite of its disguise. But one form of this disguise of truth consists in its relativity, which means that it is frequently accompanied by partial error. Such error, accepted as part of the truth by us, would seem to be a constant condition of our progress into truth. It is like the "scaffolding of fiction within the child's mind; deprive it of the scaffolding and it will never grow".¹ This is what Lord Acton meant by his reference to "the mysterious property of the mind by which error ministers to truth and truth slowly but irrevocably prevails".² From this standpoint we can better appreciate the force of Lessing's well-known epigram:—

"If God held in His right hand all truth, and in His left only the ever-active impulse to search for truth, even with the condition that I must for ever err, and said to me 'Choose!' I should humbly bow before His left hand and say, 'Father, give! Pure truth belongs to Thee alone!'"³

¹ R. G. Collingwood, *Spectrum Mentis*, p. 125.

² *The Study of History*, pp. 54, 55. In his "Note (78)" he gives a striking list of testimonies to both sides of this statement.

³ *Sämmtliche Schriften*, XI (2) 401: English as quoted in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, VII, p. 894.

have planted am I plucking up . . . and seekest thou great things for thyself?"¹

It is sometimes said, and not without justice, that the final test of a doctrine of the Atonement is in its capacity to be preached; can it be turned into the necessarily simple message of the evangelist? The conception here presented can meet that test. When the preacher points to the Cross of the God-man, he can proclaim as Gospel truth that God suffers in His eternal Being through every sin which man commits, even as we see Christ suffering on the Cross. He can declare that God wills to bear that suffering in His love for man, and by bearing it removes the guilt of man by transforming its uttermost consequence. To reject such love, whose only measure is the Cross of Christ, is to love darkness rather than light, to act as an ungrateful churl, and to deprive oneself of the very confidence which life so sorely needs. For "if God is for us, who can be against us?", what power, seen or unseen, "can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?"

¹ Jer. xlv. 4, 5; note the emphasis on the divine suffering caused by man's sin, which Baruch (like his master) is invited to share with God.

CHAPTER XIV

THE REDEEMED

§ 1. *THE Ideal Life.*¹ In the most comprehensive survey of the Christian life which the New Testament affords—that of Romans xii.—xv. 18—the feature of supreme importance is the point at which it begins. The life to be described is essentially a redeemed life, and from that characteristic both its dynamic and its peculiar and essential qualities are derived: "I appeal to you *by all the mercy of God* to dedicate your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated and acceptable to God; that is your cult, a spiritual rite."² Behind this apostolic appeal is God's own approach in the Gospel of Christ, which the apostle has elaborated in the previous chapters. The "brothers" who have responded to that divine appeal have been by their very response initiated into a redeemed life characterized by "righteousness, peace and joy", and sustained by the Holy Spirit,³ the source of that renewal of the mind (xii. 2) which is essential to the life. As the practical exhortations begin, so they fitly end:⁴ "May the God [who is the source] of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, so that you may overflow with hope, *in the power of the Holy Spirit.*" Faith passes thus naturally into hope, because the consummation of faith in a completed

¹ This section is obviously much briefer than it ought to be, but I have discussed its chief points in greater detail in *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*.

² So Moffatt (italics mine); but note that 'bodies' according to Hebrew psychology really means 'personalities'.

³ xiv. 17; cf. Co. vi.—viii.

⁴ xv. 13.

redemption is eschatological. The redeemed life is therefore both retrospective and prospective; it looks before and after, though its "sweetest songs" are not "those that tell of saddest thought";¹ but of forgiveness and of fellowship with God.

The particular kind of life here described is specifically a corporate life, in which each member of that brotherhood which is the Body of Christ accepts his own ordained part a part which is vital and necessary, however limited in scope. In this corporate consciousness, he is humble as to himself, and sympathetic towards the rest; he will serve them in love, and their joys and sorrows are his also. So far as evil has to be encountered in his personal relations with others, he will overcome it by good (after the pattern of the Cross). He will bring loyal obedience to the civic authorities whom God has set over him, whose sword-bearing is a ministry of God; he will not indulge in baser things; he will respect the consciences of those who may be honestly wrong in their judgment; he will transcend all racial differences, such as those of Jew and Gentile.

It is a familiar enough picture to those who have come under the influence of the New Testament, or of the institutions based upon it, but is it, even for the mass of "Christians", more than an unrealized ideal? How many of us would dare to claim that its most intimate and searching principles are substantially true of ourselves? Most of us, indeed, have sometimes encountered a man or woman for whom the claim might be made, and we have felt, dimly or clearly, the fascination and the power of such a character. But probably most of those who bear the name "Christian" would hardly venture more than to agree with the conclusion reached by William James, after his study of "Saintliness":² "Let us be saints,

¹ Shelley, "To a Sky-lark".

² In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Lectures XI-XV.

then, if we can, whether or not we succeed visibly and temporarily. But in our Father's house are many mansions, and each of us must discover for himself the kind of religion and the amount of saintship which best comports with what he believes to be his powers and feels to be his truest mission and vocation".¹

One thing ought to be clear—that we cannot hope to be good Christians in character and conduct without sharing in the essentials of the Christian faith. The redeemed life cannot be lived in anything like its fulness without experience of the Christian redemption. When the apostle Paul is warning Corinthian Christians against the temptation to sexual sin, his argument is twofold:² "you are temples of the Holy Spirit, and you were bought with a price." That lifts the struggle to a different level from any consideration of prudence or even of self-respect. It brings in the highest motives, the fact of redemption and the promise of "sanctification" in order to make the redeemed life an actuality. Similarly, when it is a question of right conduct towards a wrong-headed fellow-Christian, St. Paul points out that this man is "the brother for whose sake Christ died".³ All the great classics of devotion, all the methods of practical discipline in the devout life, are ultimately the elaboration or systematization of this principle. They aim at getting mind and heart so concentrated on the fact of redemption⁴ that the redeemed life may go on spontaneously from strength to strength in its spiritual pilgrimage, by the constant aid of the Holy Spirit.

The prose of theology cannot here replace the poetry of religion. If redemption is to become a sufficient motive, it must be felt as something full of the romance of a

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 377.

² 1 Cor. viii. 11.

³ 1 Cor. vi. 18-20.

⁴ As in Ignatius Loyola's "Tlic est meta laborum" of the contemplation of the Cross (*Exercitia Spiritualia*, p. 265 of 1696 ed.).

great love. It is the love of Christ which constrains the Christian, the fact, not our analysis of it. David's warriors at Bethlehem fight their way through the Philistine ranks to bring him a draught of water from the familiar well, for which he had vainly longed. The romance of their daring stirs him to a fitting response: "he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord."¹ There is a contagion in the realm of the Spirit, by which like awakens like. That Christ died for all is the dynamic of the obligation "that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again."²

It is this personal response which best displays the psychological nature of Christian faith in the New Testament sense. It is primarily an act of will; the emphasis on volition is characteristic of both human and divine personality in the Bible. This is often concealed from the English reader because of the literal translation "heart", which suggests to us the emotional aspect of consciousness. When Pharaoh's heart is hardened this does not mean that he becomes callous to Israel's sufferings, but that his *will* is "made strong"³ not to release the people. Similarly, St. Paul's psychological terms, though Greek in form, usually have a Hebrew connotation,⁴ and we must emphasize the volitional reference in his use of the term "heart", i.e. in the words "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt have faith in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."⁵ Here the intellectual content of the faith is explicitly brought out, but its essential feature is a volitional response of the whole personality, the response

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 16.

² So the Hebrew in Ex. iv. 21.

⁴ Cf. "Hebrew Psychology in relation to Pauline Anthropology" in *Mansfield College Essays*.

⁵ Rom. x. 9.

³ 2 Cor. v. 15.

of an indivisible unity, like Wordsworth's motionless cloud in the sky:—

"That heareth not the loud winds when they call:
And moveth all together, if it move at all."¹

As a sound comment on the Pauline conception of faith, we may take Luther's classical definition:—

"Christian faith is not an idle quality or empty husk in the heart, which may be in deadly sin (as they say) until charity come and quicken it; but if it be true faith, it is a sure trust and confidence of the heart, and a firm consent whereby Christ is apprehended. So that... Christ Himself is present... Faith taketh hold of Christ and hath Him present, and holdeth Him enclosed, as the ring doth the precious stone."²

This "will to believe" is, however, no arbitrary act or experimental venture. In modern phrase, it is a value-judgment, which derives its inner (moral) compulsion from the nature of divine grace as seen in Christ. We can also call it an "intuition", for it is the direct "looking into" the historical actuality of Christ which penetrates through the human to the divine and reaches Him who thus exercises His power over us. Such faith may have its dim beginnings far away from its ultimate goal; it may well be at first no more than that struggle for faith which Robert Louis Stevenson has so finely described:³—

"still to battle and perish for a dream of good . . .
. . . contend for the shade of a word
and a thing not seen with the eyes:
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night
That somehow the right is the right."

¹ *Resolution and Independence*, XI.

² *Commentary on Galatians* on ii. 16; fo. 61, 62 of Vautrouillier's (1575) edition.

³ *If this were Faith* ("Poems", p. 179 of 1922 ed.).

But, dim or clear, Christian faith is the personal response to the objective reality of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. With such a faith, repentance and the peace and joy of forgiveness are indissolubly linked; in fact, these are different aspects or applications of the unity of faith, though they may not all be apparent together or be brought out in any systematic order. "Repentance" is properly that inner change of mind (*metanoia*) which may be called the negative side of faith. The intuition of a new value inevitably carries with it the application of a new standard to character and conscience. That which is incompatible with, or hostile to, the new value is condemned as evil and there is self-condemnation because of our responsibility for this evil.¹ The "change of mind" may be no more sudden than the gradual inflow of faith. But it may safely be said that repentance will deepen as faith in Christ deepens, because of the ever-growing vision of the new standard. That is why the sense of sinfulness is always deepest in the saints, though present in every Christian. The need for repentance stands in the forefront of the preaching of Jesus and His disciples,² and repentance before God is coupled indissolubly with faith in Jesus Christ.³ Such repentance necessarily involves sorrow,⁴ but it is a "godly sorrow" in the true line of life and salvation. It points forward, or rather, it is actually interwoven with the positive side of faith which is confident of forgiveness, because of the redemptive suffering of God. Here the full redemptive content of faith comes into action and becomes the basis of that "joy and peace in believing" which permeates the New Testament consciousness and gives to it its most characteristic features, lifting it to the mountain heights where the winds of the Spirit blow, to give health and strength to the redeemed life.

¹ Acts viii. 22; Heb. vi. 1.
² Acts xx. 21.

³ Mark i. 15; Acts ii. 38.
⁴ 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10.

Further, though the redeemed life is always individual in its response to Christ, it is always life in a new "corporate personality" or social solidarity. The most characteristic work of the Holy Spirit, on whom the whole Christian experience depends, is the creation of a new fellowship (*koïnōnia*). The gifts and graces of the Christian life are all pointed towards mutual service; they are all created within, and primarily for, the Christian community, by the Holy Spirit (cf. "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" in the Benediction). The Church is the outstanding expression of this ideal fellowship of the Spirit,¹ cherished amongst its members and outflowing towards "them that are without".

One of the tests of any doctrine of redemption is its adequacy to bring the believer into so close a relation to Christ that faith in Him is justified. In the New Testament, as we have seen, there is no difficulty about this, because prevalent conceptions of "corporate personality" with a long Old Testament and ethnic history² made perfectly natural the conception of Christ as representing or "recapitulating"³ the community of believers. The social emphasis of the new faith was manifest from the beginning. The teaching of Jesus is dominated by the two conceptions of the Fatherhood and Kingly rule of God, both implying a community, whether of sons or subjects. The Epistle to the Hebrews (xii. 22f.) reminds the men of faith that they have already come to "the general assembly and Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven".

¹ See more fully on this subject my book, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*, Chapter VI.

² Cf. "The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality" by H. Wheeler Robinson in Bethell 66 of the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1936); A. Causse, *Du Groupe Ethnique à la Communauté Religieuse* (1937); *The Individual in East and West*, ed. by E. R. Hughes (1937).

³ Cf. Eph. i. 10 and the development of this idea in the theology of Irenaeus.

The unity of believers in Christ is so vital and actual that it can be set forth under the Johannine figure of the Vine and its branches (John xv), or under the Pauline figures of a temple, with Christ as its cornerstone, a body with Christ as its head, a bride whose husband is Christ.¹ But the most explicit statement of corporate personality is the Pauline contrast of Adam and Christ,² each the representative head of a group which is naturally conceived as sharing in the life or status of its representative.³ Given such a conception of corporate personality, as part of the common stock of ideas, faith was the simple acceptance of a relation already fully intelligible, and the way was easy for one with so ardent a temperament as Paul's to be conscious of a mystical union with Christ—"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; (and yet) no longer I but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."⁴

The conception of corporate personality no longer remains vital in modern civilization, characterized as this is by a strong accentuation of individual life, though there are approximations to it in the conception of the nation or the Church. But to these, for the most part, at any rate, the accepted realism of the ancient idea is lacking, and they are rather final constructions of "ideology" than premises of faith. The closest realistic parallel might perhaps be found in the growing conception of social solidarity, the recognition forced on us all in modern times that none of us *can* live unto himself.⁵ It

¹ Eph. ii. 20, 21; i. 23; ii. 14-16; iv. 4, 12, 16; v. 23, 30, 25-27.

² Rom. v. 14 ff.; 1 Cor. xv. 20 ff., 45 ff.

³ Cf. the "representative" theories of e.g. McLeod Campbell and Moberly, to which reference was made in XIII. § 3.

⁴ Gal. ii. 20.

⁵ The original point of the phrase is "not unto self but unto Christ" (Rom. xiv. 7 ff.), though the extension to mean, "not unto self but unto my neighbour" is a true expression of the New Testament teaching (Matt. xxv. 40, Rom. xiii. 8-10, 1 John iv. 20).

may well be that, in days to come, a still livelier and more widely spread recognition of this fact will become the basis not only of a new social and international order but also of a new and more living consciousness of what the Church essentially is. If that were to come about, faith would cease to seem (as it does to so many) an arbitrary opinion and an individual idiosyncrasy; it would be a perfectly natural expression of a social realism which all accepted. We might then cease to call faith-union with Christ "mystical", for it would correspond to the actuality of normal social relations. Such a basis is still far from existing to-day, but its very possibility, and its partial and imperfect beginnings, may confirm the believer in holding that he does actually share with his fellow-believers in the benefits of Christ, the Head of the Body, animated by the Holy Spirit. In such a Church-consciousness, the contrasting emphasis of the "evangelical" and "catholic" Christian would be blended, to the advantage of both.

The ethic of the redeemed life, so nurtured on the actuality of redemption, so controlled by the nature of that redemption, so sustained by the Holy Spirit through whom Christ is still within and amongst His followers, is, in a single phrase, the spirit of the Cross. The believer, in his own degree, bears the Cross with his Master, and bears it cheerfully and courageously, because he now sees life, past, present and future, in a new perspective. The transformed mind¹ transforms the world. The present penalties of sin, inevitable as its present consequences, are accepted as just desert, the sufferings to be encountered in the Christian path are transformed into valued discipline, the mystery of death becomes, for the Christian hope, the door of entrance into the fulfillment of life's best, the home of that music of which we hear but faint and fleeting

¹ Rom. xii. 2 (*metamorphosie*).

echoes, and of that poetry of which we take but a few fragments to our hearts.¹

§ 2. *The Kenosis of the Spirit.* In the account of the "redeemed" life which has just been given, the emphasis fell on that which is the foundation of the whole structure, viz. the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The new life was described as the activity of a personal response to the grace of God actualized in Jesus Christ. But it is necessary to supplement what has been said by considering this redeemed life more directly as the sphere of divine activity, the work of the Holy Spirit continuing the work of Christ. There are many ways of doing this, but a very suggestive (and often neglected) one is to ask what it must mean for God to dwell as Spirit within the believer. This point of view is indicated when we speak of "The Kenosis of the Spirit". The phrase is meant to suggest that God as Holy Spirit enters into a relation to human nature which is comparable with that of the Incarnation of the Son of God at a particular point of human history.

As applied to the Person of Christ, the term "kenosis" is taken from St. Paul's description of His pre-existent glory, of which He "emptied Himself" (*εαυτον ἐκένωσε*), that He might become the Redeemer of men by His death upon the Cross.² We are not here concerned with this "self-emptying" in regard to the Son of God (see Chap. XI), except to note that because of it, Jesus wins the new title "Lord", and universal adoration, after the pattern of

¹ Cf. J. B. Priestley's striking play, *Johnson over Jordan*, pp. 37, 91-92.
² Phil. ii. 7 ff. In *The Cross of the Servant*, pp. 78, 74, I have given my reasons for thinking that the phrase is derived from Isa. lili. 12: "He emptied himself to death" (cf. verse 7). In the Pauline echo of this original, three participial clauses occur in parenthesis to describe the self-humbling of the Son, before the completion of the phrase in verse 8 by the words "unto death". This view of the passage throws the emphasis, as elsewhere for St. Paul, on the death of Christ, rather than on the Incarnation, though this was a necessary condition of the Cross.

Isaiah lili. 1 The task now before us is to trace the continuity of the Spirit's work in completing the work of Christ by what may properly be called a similar method of "self-emptying".

When we speak of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the redeemed life, we ought to be as definite and clear as to what we mean as when we speak of the presence and activity of the Son of God in the days of His flesh. The scope of the activity is, of course, enormously increased, as is the variety of application. Every redeemed life becomes a new product and illustration of it, and adds to its variety by the surrender of the individual consciousness to the power and presence of God. That is what we ought to mean by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit—God Himself personally present in all this variety of redeemed lives. It makes no essential difference to our meaning (as we may see from Romans viii. 9) whether we speak of the indwelling of the Spirit of God or of the Spirit of Christ. For St. Paul, the complete unity of divine activity is expressed by the words: "*Through Christ we have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.*"³ On the practical side, that is the most important statement about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity which the New Testament contains. The direct and immediate contact with God is always through His presence as Spirit. Only Spirit can touch spirit with that inwardness and directness which Christian experience demands. But this contact is itself "mediated" by the historical personality of Jesus Christ, signalized as Son of God from His resurrection.⁴ All Christian experience is through Christ, because it is based on His work as Redeemer, and permeated by the influence and quality of that redemption. Through Him, then, we have our

¹ This is the underlying reference throughout Phil. ii. 5-11.

² Eph. ii. 18.

³ Rom. i. 4 (*ὁρισθέντος*).

access to the hidden God, whose Fatherhood is revealed in the open secret of the Gospel. The Spirit of God covers many other realms besides that of the redeemed life, but here, as "Holy Spirit" *par excellence*, the personality of Christ is taken up into the direct line of divine activity. We may speak, then, of a Real Presence of God as known in His Son, to be found in the life of every believer. Do we take seriously enough the stupendous implications of this truth? It is an overwhelming thing to say, "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me."¹ A missionary in China once asked a Chinese scholar, who had read the New Testament through several times, what struck him most. He answered that the most wonderful thing to him was that a man could become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Pringle-Pattison has written of the doctrine of the Trinity as being, when rightly understood, "the profoundest and therefore the most intelligible, attempt to express the indwelling of God in man,"² and in another place remarks, "If God is not thus active in the time-process, bearing with His creatures the whole stress and pain of it, the immanence of the Creative Spirit becomes an unmeaning phrase."³ In the New Testament this Real Presence is personally conceived, just because it is God who is present, and present through the Personality of His Son. It is Presence grieved by our sins, insulted by willful relapse, teaching patiently our infant lips to cry Abba, and witnessing with our spirit that we are God's children, helping our weakness and making intercession for us.⁴ Such phrases would be equally true of the spiritual sufferings of Jesus in the days of His flesh, just as we may venture to transpose much of what is said of His spiritual sufferings in to the sufferings of the Holy Spirit of God in us.

¹ Gal. II. 20.

² *The Spirit* (ed. by B. H. Streeter), p. 18.

³ Cf. Eph. IV. 80; Heb. x. 29; Rom. vii. 15 f., 26.

⁴ *The Idea of God*, p. 410.

We still speak of crucifying Christ afresh by our sins, though what we really mean, in theological accuracy, is that we are crucifying the Holy Spirit. For, as Horace Bushnell forcibly expressed it, the Spirit "has His Gethsemane within us . . . if the sacrifices of the much-enduring, agonizing Spirit were acted before the senses in the manner of the incarnate life of Jesus, He would seem to make the world itself a kind of Calvary from age to age."¹

God does not wait until man is perfect before making him in some way a partaker of the divine nature.² Just as it is true that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, so is it true that while we are very unworthy Christians the sanctifying Spirit lives within us. In both ways, not in the first alone, the redeeming love of God is proved to us. The spiritual life of man, like the moral, is essentially the subtle interweaving of two elements, not yet brought into full harmony. Our moral problems are largely constituted by that warp of the body into which the shuttle of the soul must weave the web of its higher nature. The redeemed life lifts the moral problems to a new level of meaning, and makes us conscious of dependence on something higher than ourselves for any success. This duality of individual life is seen on a larger scale in our social relations, economic, international and ecclesiastical. Even that New Testament Church which elicited some of St. Paul's most deeply spiritual utterances was the Church that desired to retain within its fellowship a man guilty of incest. It is this spirit of compromise within the Church which so often provides the first shock of dis-

¹ *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, pp. 43, 47; see also the well-known passage in John Maesfeld's "The Everlasting Mercy", where the Quaker evangelist says to Saul Kane the profligate, "every dirty word you say is one more hint upon His way. Another thorn about His head."

² This phrase, found in 2 Peter i. 4, means (as Bigg says, *ad loc.*) "very much the same as St. Paul's 'fellowship of (the) Spirit'."

illusionment to the young believer, as it serves to provoke the most pointed criticism of the outsider.

Yet, in spite of our sins, the Holy Spirit does not abandon us. He remains to reinforce the voice of conscience, to awaken the slumbering spark of higher aspiration into a clear flame, to bear with us the shame of our broken vow and frequent fall. In this continued fellowship, there is a deeper humiliation for God the Holy Spirit than ever came to God the Son. For Jesus Christ, the enemies were without, not within, and the body was a holy temple for the indwelling Spirit. But in 'Mansoul' there are always traitors within the gate, and God must accept an unholy temple for His abiding—till He can transform it into holiness. *This* kenosis of the Spirit is therefore even deeper in its self-emptying than the kenosis of the Son, whilst continuing His redemptive work.

Even apart from human sin, there is always a divine self-limitation in the very conditions of human life, its finite nature, its progress by error,¹ the limits and imperfections of our vocabulary in which even the highest realities must find expression.² The Spirit speaks our language, just as Jesus spoke Aramaic. There can be no spiritual communication in a vacuum. There is always some medium, even though the fellowship mediated may be called "immediate" in comparison with more external media.³ The texture of our truest thoughts about God must be woven out of earthly stuff, however heavenly the pattern of divine grace shown by it. The whisper of the Spirit must come to *our* ears, the impulse of the Spirit must fall upon *our* wills, and it is *our* minds that have always to recognize and interpret the divine event that has befallen us. We shall be taught humility and saved from fanaticism, if we realize more clearly *this* kenosis of

¹ See Chapter II.
² See Chapter VI.

³ See Chapter III.

the Spirit also, which indeed goes back to the divine creation of human spirits, and is seen all along the line of human history. At one point in that history, the Holy Spirit claims a unique and supreme place for His work through the Personality of our Lord Jesus Christ. But there is a far wider activity of the Spirit, which would, if we could conceive it clearly, bring all existence into unity, and show us the divine self-emptying from the foundation of the world. Through this long and patient kenosis, God has carried the burden of all humanity, the humanity which it is His purpose to redeem. The believer is simply entering into a new and greatly deepened experience through Christ of what God has been doing all the time by His "preventive" grace.

If, then, the Spirit of God continues to sustain and indwell a world that is so inadequate or contradictory to His holy nature, we have a redemptive kenosis that is worthy to be ranked with that of the Incarnation and the Cross, a kenosis that is, in fact, ultimately the expression of the same redemptive grace of God. We are confirmed in our interpretation of the Cross as actualizing in time the sufferings of the Eternal God through and for mankind. Every redeemed life which is transformed into the pattern of the Redeemer—for that, at the last, is the goal of salvation—is a new product of the Holy Spirit, at the cost of long patience and grievous pain. Every sin into which the believer may fall is not simply a set-back in moral development, it is a hurt to God. I have heard it said that this doctrine of the Christian life makes it too hard and terrible to be lived. So it would be, if God were holy in wrath and not also holy in love. Not till we realize that the worst aspect of our sin is the wrong and hurt we do to God by it—not its consequences to ourselves or to others, grievous as they may be—shall we know the magnitude and depth of the divine grace.

One other aspect of this great theme must not be forgotten, forming another parallel to the work of Jesus. The kenosis of the Spirit means the concealment of God, so that it may often be hard to recognize His presence and activity within us or around us. If He dwells in some degree even with the sinner, and identifies Himself so closely even with the imperfect saint, then the same thing will happen as befell Jesus, the friend of publicans and sinners. The divine is in disguise, and no official mark of an external and independent authority can ultimately decide for us that the divine is there. There is a moral as well as a theological challenge in this, both in regard to Christ and in regard to the Holy Spirit. They must both be recognized by the intrinsic qualities that are theirs. They must speak with their own authority. The note of authority is indeed the one infallible mark of the divine—not the authority of the sergeant-major, or of the totalitarian dictator, but that of an inner compulsion which goes deeper and carries further, because it awakens that love which is the only fulfilling of the law. We must not, therefore, because we humbly claim a place amongst the redeemed, expect a revelation of duty that will occasion no conflict of loyalties, an illumination of truth that demands no diligent search amid perplexity, a holy peace that needs no constant guarding, if it is to guard us.¹ The veritable signs of God's presence are intermingled with many other things. We walk with a stranger on the road to truth, and all the evidence of identity given to us may be the heart that burns within. We know the clash of duties and the hesitancy as to which is God's choice for us. We discover that the fellowship of the Church is a very imperfect thing, and far from the beauty of the bride of Christ for which we had looked. If we are ever tempted to wonder whether good is after

¹ Phil. iv. 7.

all not divine but human, let us meet that challenge by thinking of the divine kenosis, through which the very question has become possible. The heavenly treasure is indeed stored in earthen vessels, but its intrinsic worth is proved, "by the manifestation of the truth."¹

§ 3. *Personality and the Life Beyond.*² The Theban Sphinx asked "What is life?" and made death the penalty of ignorance. Her riddle would have been shrewder and subtler had she asked "What is death?", but then she would have condemned herself, for not even a Sphinx could have answered it. Of all facts of human life, death is unique in this—that no hypothesis about it can be proved or disproved by experiment, though the experience of it will be universal. It is because of this paradox that our speculations abound, for none can give an authoritative denial to the wildest dreams or the most sentimental trivialities. Death still remains

"The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds."

Is there a door behind that Shadow which any of the keys will unlock, a door through which we pass beyond the Shadow into the dawn of a new day? Or is the Shadow that of an impenetrable rock, where man's only discovery will be that

"—every mother's son
Travails with a skeleton?"

Even then, we might elect to take refuge in the reflection with which Cicero closes his discussion of old age: "If I am mistaken in believing that the souls of men are immortal, I am content to be mistaken, nor do I wish to

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 2.

² On the whole subject, there are two excellent recent books, viz. John Baillie's *And the Life Everlasting* (1934) and A. E. Taylor's *The Christian Hope of Immortality* (1938).