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THE CONCEPT OF THE ATONEMENT
IN THE THEOLOGY OF D. M. BAILLIE

being a Thesis presented by
GEORGE ARCHIBALD AFFLECK B. A.
to the University of St. Andrews
in application for the degree of M. Th.

April 1967



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following Thesis is based on the results of research carried out by me, that the Thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree.

The research was carried out in St. Mary's College of the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that GEORGE ARCHIBALD AFFLECK has spent four terms at Research Work in St. Mary's College of the University of St. Andrews, that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance No. 61 (St. Andrews), and that he is qualified to submit the accompanying Thesis in application for the degree of M. Th.

TO

FRO, MARGARET and PETER

CAREER

I matriculated in the University of St. Andrews in October, 1964, and followed a course leading to graduation in theology until August, 1965.

In October, 1964, I commenced the research on "The Concept of the Atonement in the Theology of D. M. Baillie" which is now being submitted as an M. Th. Thesis.

I graduated in theology from Emmanuel College of the University of Toronto in 1939. Since then I have been in the pastorate of the United Church of Canada.

Three years were spent in Young People's Work in Ontario and Quebec. This was followed by five years on an Indian Mission on the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia. From the Indian Mission I moved to Kimberley, British Columbia, a mining town in the Rocky Mountains, where I stayed for five years. This pastorate was followed by five years in the city of Vernon, British Columbia. Tuberculosis necessitated a year in a Sanatorium at this point and this was followed by pastorates at Crescent Beach, British Columbia and Powell River, British Columbia, thus completing twenty-four years in the active ministry.

Previous to my training in theology I studied from September, 1931 to May, 1935 for the degree of B. A. in Honours Philosophy and History in Victoria College of the University of Toronto.

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PREFACE

The lucidity and down-to-earth quality of Donald Baillie's writing and thinking have long held an appeal for me and I have for many years had a desire to follow further his application of these qualities to the deep mystery of the Atonement. Opportunity finally came with access to his unpublished notes and sermons. This was granted to me through the kindness of Principal Matthew Black and the authorities of St. Mary's College under whose care this material is held.

As I studied his writing and thought in depth, the conviction grew on me that he had a most significant contribution to make to modern theology. Consequently, I have included a chapter on "The Nature of His Contribution to Modern Theology" and have sought to highlight this contribution in the examination of each aspect of his theological position.

The research was done under the direction of Professor N. H. G. Robinson to whom I owe a profound debt of gratitude. Not only did I benefit from his keenly-critical literary ability, and from the way in which he drew my attention to many immature judgments, but also from his personal friendship and constant encouragement. I would also like to express my thanks to the staff and students of St. Mary's College, especially to Dr. and Mrs. Ernest Best, for their interest and support, to the library staff of St. Andrews University who were willing to go to endless trouble to locate rare

periodicals, and to Miss Maisie Blackwood, the College secretary, whose cheery friendship and thoughtfulness did so much to make us feel at home. The typing was done by Mrs. Muriel Wells of Vernon, B. C., and the final draft was done by Mrs. Kay Sharpe of Port Alberni, B. C., who worked numberless hours overtime in order to get it done. My sincere thanks to both of these people for their invaluable help. Finally I must acknowledge the support and encouragement of my wife and family without which the whole project would not have been possible.

Port Alberni, B. C.
April 28th, 1967

CHAPTER 1

THE MAN

Invariably a man's theology is influenced by the period in which he lives. It is also heir to the thought of the ages. And it is not immune to the influence of the experience of his own life's pilgrimage. The theology of Donald M. Baillie is no exception. By no means subservient to the theological trends of his time, their influence is yet discernible in the development of his thinking. And, while no eclectic, his debt to the thought of the past, notably that of Schleiermacher, Kant, and Ritschl, is evident. Primarily, however, his theology grew out of his own thought and experience. And this is why it is important to know something about the man.

In spite of a native shyness and an inherent humility, Donald Baillie was profoundly interested in people. Coupled with this characteristic was a consuming concern not only to understand but to communicate the good news of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. As might be expected, consequently, he was the confidant of staff and students alike. And not only in the university, but in church and community as well he was as deeply loved and respected as he was widely known. Confirmation is to be found among the tributes that flowed in from near and far at the time of his death. The late Dr. G. S. Duncan, Principal of St. Mary's College, wrote, "He always began by getting

alongside his fellows and taking them with him".¹ Principal T. M. Knox of St. Andrews University said:

Many of us and many of his students knew and loved him as a friend. We have had cause to be grateful to him for sympathy in trouble, for advice in difficulty, for aid in need.²

And a former graduate wrote from America, "None of us ever discovered the boundary or depth of so great a heart. ...We came expecting to be friends, but we were loved".³ Perhaps the most illustrative tribute was paid by one at whose home he had regularly called in his capacity as an elder of Martyr's Church. A dozen years after his death the affection and admiration for this Christian scholar were still evident on the face of a humble and unlettered woman as she said, "I never felt awkward in his presence".

This concern for people, this understanding of and familiarity with the human scene, and this passion to make Christian truth communicable, were the factors that provided the starting point of Donald Baillie's theology. That is why it is helpful to an understanding of it to see the areas of his life in which these factors had their source. They were due in part to a naturally warm and unselfish personality and a temperament and training that made him

¹ "The Glasgow Herald", November 1954, reprinted in a pamphlet entitled Professor D. M. Baillie, held in the possession of Professor Emeritus W. R. Forrester.

² In speaking to the Senatus Academicus of St. Andrews University, November 12, 1954, recorded ibid.

³ C. B. Ketcham in the Dundee "Courier and Advertiser", November 6, 1954, reprinted ibid.

scrupulously honest. They were due in part to a close and treasured family connection. They were due in part to the experience of seventeen years in the pastorate and his involvement in the lives of people there. But this provides only a partial explanation. The other major factor was his own prolonged and profound struggle for faith. His father had been a minister of the Free Kirk in the Western Highlands. And although the father died when Donald was only three, his mother was determined to bring up her sons in the faith of their father. As his brother John expressed it:

Our father's Calvinism had been of the most rigorous and uncompromising kind and, true to the memory of a husband with whom she had lived for only six years, our mother was most anxious¹ that her children's upbringing should be in the same tradition.

And further light is thrown on the matter of Donald's struggle as he goes on:

I have often reflected that parents who dutifully bring up their children in a traditional orthodoxy...and who send them to a school whose whole ethos is of humanist inspiration, seldom realize the extent of the² spiritual stress and strain to which they are subjecting them.

Peculiarly enough, and indicative of their closeness, his only confidante at first was his mother. Characteristically, he did not want his doubts to do damage to anyone else's faith, and so shared them only with her. When he reached university he found some help in the fact that others shared his doubts. But at the same time his in-

¹ John Baillie, "Donald, A Brother's Impression", a biographical essay included in The Theology of the Sacraments by Donald M. Baillie, (London, 1947), p. 13.

² Ibid., p. 14.

tellectual distress had become greater than ever as his uncertainties extended to more fundamental issues.

It was this struggle that shaped his theology of the nature of faith. John writes of it:

Throughout this period he remained not only most regular in his devotions but also most scrupulously conscientious, and even what would seem to some supersensitively so, in his bearing towards and dealing with all those with whom he had to do; scrupulously honourable, unselfish, chaste, truthful.¹

It was a soul-shaking experience. And of undoubted significance is the fact that in the depths of it he got help from "that greatest of nineteenth-century preachers",² Robertson of Brighton. Particularly helpful was his sermon on "Obedience the Organ of Spiritual Knowledge". This taught:

There are hours...when...you doubt all--whether Christianity be true: whether Christ was man or God or a beautiful fable. ...In such an hour what remains? I reply, obedience. ...Act--be merciful and gentle--, honest: force yourself to abound in little services: try to do good to others: be true to the duty that you know. That must be right, whatever else is uncertain. And by all the laws of the human heart, by the word of God, you shall not be left in doubt. Do that much of the will of God which is plain to you, and 'you shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God'.³

The influence of this experience on his concept of the nature of faith was profound. But out of the struggle there developed a deep faith which was the foundation of his theology.

There is one facet of his experience during this struggle that

¹ The Theology of the Sacraments, p. 13.

² Ibid.

³ Quoted Ibid., p. 21.

it is important to note, namely, "one thing...was always clear to him - that without God and Christ human life was without significance of any kind, devoid of all meaning."¹ Determined as he was to start at the point of human experience in developing his theology, he was equally determined to make it thoroughly theocentric.

Closely related to this is a notable feature evident in Baillie's experience that is paradoxical in nature and has been evident in the lives of many Christians before. The feature is that those who have had to struggle for faith - for example, Martin Luther and John Wesley - seem most keenly aware that faith is a gift. In any case, this feature finds embodiment in the development of his understanding of the nature of faith. Here he insists that human initiative and responsibility have a place, and yet he is at the same time equally insistent that faith is a gift of God.

There is some criticism of Donald Baillie to the effect that his theology is so thoroughly grounded in human experience that it never quite transcends it and borders with dangerous proximity on humanism. An examination of his life, however, makes clear that whatever weakness may exist in his theology at this point - and this criticism is certainly a matter of debate - it is entirely in the nature of his theological structure and not in the faith of the man. All available evidence is strictly to the contrary. In his own private life he was meticulous in the time reserved for private prayer and meditation. With consistent regularity he participated in morning prayers at the

¹ The Theology of the Sacraments, p. 21.

University Chapel. And to his own students preparing for the ministry he counselled discipline regarding the daily renewal of their spiritual lives and their due offering of worship to God. He was most conscious of his dependence upon God.

In any case, this background of dealing with people and their problems in the pastorate along with his own struggle for faith led to a deep and constant interest in people and in man's search for meaning in life. It filled him with a passion to make the good news of the revelation of God in Christ communicable, and to help all and sundry find that the Christian faith is relevant to every man. He knew also how desolate life could be without a faith in God. Consequently, it is not surprising to find that in the development of his theology he starts from the human situation and makes the Christian faith immediately relevant to the human scene. This accounts in large part for the remarkable lucidity and simplicity of his writing. In his great desire to communicate he strove to be simple and clear, however profound. John writes of this, "He used to say that clarity was the only grace of style for which he ever strove."¹ And again:

It was his endeavour to find as it were the handle by which each facet of the Christian doctrine could most easily be grasped by the contemporary mind, to discover the way of presenting it which would best reveal the genuinely and 'existentially' Christian meaning which it had been designed to express and to preserve.²

~~It is~~ this characteristic of his approach to theology that makes his thinking congenial to that group of theologians known as "existentialists". In this connection it is of interest to find Dr. Rudolf

¹ The Theology of the Sacraments, p. 29.

² Ibid., pp. 28 f.

Bultman, in a note to John Baillie following Donald's death, writing of him as follows:

It is with deep thankfulness that I think of him who has fallen asleep. That I should have been permitted to know him remains as one of the most important and significant of my experiences. ...There stands out in my memory with special clarity one evening when we sat together in his study in theological discussion. On that occasion he gave me his book God was in Christ, and it is a joy to have that book in my possession as a gift from him. It is the most significant book of our time in the field of Christology. It is a model of versatile and understanding dialogue with other theological and religious outlooks, and above all of interpretation of the dogmatic tradition. In this interpretation, which in my terminology I like to call 'existential', I feel myself deeply at one with him, and I have found it richly rewarding.¹

Thus it is not merely an attempt to join the popular "existentialist trend" that leads to the claim that in a real sense Donald Baillie was an existentialist. He invariably starts the development of his thought from the point of human experience. He starts with man and his doubts and his search for meaning in life - all of which were so much a part of his own experience. But he leads from there through morality to a theology of revelation. His theology is an attempt to give communicable expression to the orthodox Christian faith, and to demonstrate its relevance to modern man. In his effort to do this, however, he never accommodates his theology to philosophic or cultural presuppositions in a way that would sacrifice any essential part of the Christian faith. He was convinced that full freedom and responsibility must be retained for man. But he was equally convinced that God must be recognized to have sovereign power and to hold the initiative; he never lost his awareness of the

¹ Ibid., p. 35.

transcendence and complete sovereignty of God. The comparative emphasis on the two sides of this antinomy did change during the development of his theological thinking, but he never wholly sacrificed one to the other. He holds the two together and, if he be granted the use of paradox, in sound balance.

It is the contention of this thesis, therefore, that he retains the essential values of both the "subjective" and "objective" approaches to theology. And that, moreover, he provides a meeting place for them as a solution to their eternal dialectic. This meeting place is to be found in the inherent moral consciousness and capacity of man which man holds independently of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. In this area man can recognize reality in his own experience, and in this area he holds responsibility in preparing himself for a God-given faith. No doubt his right to use morality in this way will be questioned. And the possibility of including morality in modern theology will also be questioned, as has already been done by Professor John McIntyre in his Foreword to the 1964 edition of Faith in God and its Christian Consummation.¹ To a consideration of this matter we will return in Chapter 3.

It is axiomatic that every age needs to provide for itself a vehicle, in terms of language and concept, that will communicate the faith to its generation. It is equally obvious that this vehicle must be adequate to contain the faith. Increasingly, the church is

¹ D. M. Baillie, Faith in God and its Christian Consummation, (London 1964), pp. 16, 26.

becoming aware that in this last half of the twentieth century she is more and more talking to herself and that her vehicle of communication is in serious need of an overhaul. The criticism that is diminishing her effectiveness is not that her message is wrong but that it is utterly irrelevant. It seems obvious that she needs to listen to the existentialist in his insistence that she must find a point of contact where she can be understood, and a set of concepts through which she can communicate. Yet it seems equally obvious that, at the same time, she must listen to the dogmatist in his insistence that she cannot afford to allow the accommodation to be such as to lose the uniqueness of her message. It is in the retention of the essential values of both approaches and the provision of a meeting place for these two great schools of thought that Donald Baillie has something of very great significance to offer to modern theology. We will examine further the nature of this contribution and its position in modern theological thought in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF HIS CONTRIBUTION TO MODERN THEOLOGY

I

The Development of Theological Thought

The struggle that is going on between modern theologians regarding differing opinions as to what is constitutive of the Christian faith is not a new phenomenon. Similar struggles have been going on since the discussion as to whether or not circumcision and observance of the Jewish Law were necessary prerequisites to becoming a Christian. And the modern struggle has to be seen against the background of this long history of development before it can be fully understood. What really is constitutive of Christianity?

When Paul once called at Ephesus he encountered a group of disciples whom he had not met before. And he asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they replied, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."¹ Were we to ask some groups of Christians to-day whether they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed, and what they meant by such long-used terms as "redemption" and "atonement", they would be equally vague and more disinterested. But if we were to ask about the cross of Jesus Christ they would be much clearer about the content of meaning that it held

¹ Acts 19:2 Revised Standard Version, hereafter referred to as R. S. V.

for them.

Since the time of the crucifixion the cross has been central to any faith in God that merited the name "Christian". It is not without reason that it has come to be universally recognized as the symbol of the Christian faith. Whatever else is omitted, this must be retained. But Christians have not always been of one mind about its meaning and significance. Particularly has this been true in this century and it is notably true at the present time.

How did the New Testament regard it? This again is a matter of controversy. Dr. Rudolf Bultmann believes that the New Testament is so infused with the ideas and so contained in the categories of Greek thought that it must be "demythologized" before the original "kerygma" or message can be uncovered. This salvation-message he finds to be the challenge which the cross presents to individual existential decision. Dr. Karl Barth, on the other hand, finds the cross to be an act of God which is alone effective in achieving man's salvation.

It would seem that St. Paul saw it as the focal point of a mighty deliverance from sin and death. How far his metaphors are to be taken literally as his understanding of the mode and meaning of the deliverance and how far they are mere figures of speech used as vehicles for conveying his conviction that a deliverance took place, may never be precisely decided. He moves from the court room to the slave market in a mixed metaphor that really does not make sense logically.

But however telescoped are the figures of speech, the meaning is abundantly clear. From the court room where man before God is obviously guilty and worthy of death, to the situation of a slave or a captive, man is declared innocent, set free and rescued in ways that are utterly beyond his ability to achieve for himself. Then the metaphor moves to the temple where the wrath of God is propitiated by the blood of Christ in the figure of speech of a sacrifice.¹ And once again man is delivered in a fashion completely beyond his ability to achieve for himself. As Dr. C. H. Dodd writes:

The metaphors serve in each case to emphasize the pure objectivity of that which God has done for men. Paul is...here concerned...with their (men's) status before God, which is altered by an act of God himself. ...What he is here concerned to make clear is that by no possible effort of his own could man alter his status before God...but that God, by a sheer act of grace, has made this change of status possible.²

Thus, to Paul, this is beyond doubt an objective act accomplished entirely by the grace of God in complete independence of anything that man might contribute towards its effectiveness.

Claiming support from Paul's interpretation, some modern theologians start their theology from this act of God. With scientific exactness they seek to eliminate all extraneous evidence and to develop its meaning and significance from within itself. As Dr. Karl Barth has so ably shown, a very strong theology can be so constructed. But the

¹ There is much discussion as to whether Paul meant "propitiation" -- the appeasement of the wrath of God -- or whether he merely meant "expiation". This will come under further discussion in dealing with the meaning of the atonement in Chapter 5.

² C. H. Dodd, The Epistle to the Romans (Fontana paperbacks, 1959), p. 80; first published in the Moffat New Testament Commentary, 1932.

question is whether or not this is a completely adequate interpretation of Paul's understanding of the "good news" and whether Paul would confine himself to such a narrow interpretation of the revelation of Christ. Certainly he saw this as a mighty deliverance from sin and death, but was this all that he saw in it?

In this consideration two factors have to be borne in mind. One is that Paul was not a systematic theologian and did not attempt to build up a fully systematic theology. The other is that although Paul made little specific reference to the stories that were later incorporated in the gospels, he almost certainly knew of the life and teachings of Jesus. Such passages as 1 Corinthians 13 would so indicate.¹ In this regard Dr. Dodd writes:

He had the story of Jesus before him, even although our gospels were not yet written, and the facts on which Paul went are there accessible to us. We read there how Jesus dealt with the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12), the sinful woman (Lk 7:36-50), the publicans and sinners who crop up all through the Gospels; we read His own parables by which He interpreted and defended His action, especially that of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32); and we read the Gospel story as a whole, observing how the attack he made upon the barriers which had been set up by the religious against the sinful led directly to His death, so that in this sense (as well as in others) He dies for other people's sins. These are the 'data' for Paul's conclusion that God provided for the justification of sinners by means of the self-sacrifice of Christ in life and death. With the Gospels before us, we must either agree with the enemies of Jesus that He suffered justly for an attitude to sin that undermined the foundations of morality; or we must conclude that this way of dealing with sinful men is inherently divine, and an index of God's unchanging attitude to sinners.²

¹ Principal Matthew Black suggests that if you exchange the word Christ for the word charity in this passage you have a very good portrait of Christ (Matthew Black in a lecture at St. Mary's College, 1965).

² C. H. Dodd, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 81.

This would indicate that more than the cross itself must be taken into consideration if we would grasp the fullness of the revelation or encompass Paul's understanding of it. The life, character and teaching of the Man who was crucified are also important, as well as the activities that led up to the crucifixion. This has at least two major consequences.

In the first place it means the recognition that in the contemporaneous situation of Christ's earthly life, it was His love for sinners, as Dr. Dodd points out, that was a primary cause of his crucifixion. If, therefore, this same Spirit which motivated Christ is the Spirit of Christ¹ which motivates us, who as the redeemed are "ambassadors for Christ",² then we must be under the divine impulsion of the love of God to seek out sinners just as He did. This is not so much a logical deduction as a fact of experience. All true Christians are concerned to communicate. But this would seem to indicate a responsibility and compulsion to communicate that is not fulfilled by the simple proclamation of a theology regardless of whether communication is taking place or not. We are not excused from further responsibility on the grounds that the results must be left to the doctrine of the divine election. As Paul himself said, "I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some."³ This saying of St. Paul's

¹ It is of interest to note that Paul uses the terms "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of Christ" interchangeably--see Acts 16:6 f.

² 2 Corinthians 5:20, R. S. V.

³ 1 Corinthians 9:22, R. S. V.

seems highly relevant to the present-day concern to communicate. In the existential situation we are under the compulsion of the love of God to communicate the Good News by every means possible, short of compromising the Good News itself.

In the second place it means recognizing that however firmly Paul grounded man's relationship to God on faith, it also involved a personal and, consequently, an ethical relationship. This by nature was contained in the primary ethical category of love. And it involved a relationship to one's fellow men at the same time. The pattern of this was the earthly life and teaching of Christ.¹ These "fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ"² were a part of the redeemed life, and if they were not in evidence the validity of the redemption itself was in question. This involved human responsibility and Paul here encounters the paradox of grace, even although he does not describe it as such in so many words. He writes:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.³

And of himself he writes:

that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that

¹ See reference to 1 Corinthians 13 on p. 13 above.

² Philippians 1:11, R. S. V.

³ Philippians 2:12, 13, R. S. V. (Italics mine).

I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.¹

Thus if the thesis be granted that Paul was familiar with the life and teaching of Jesus, and the evidence strongly points in that direction, then this awareness of human responsibility must be retained in interpreting his message as it relates to modern theology. There are important consequences. The first is that it is important to retain, as a part of the revelation, the life and teaching of the historical Jesus as well as the central act of the cross and resurrection. In spite of the doubts cast on the validity of the Synoptic record, our knowledge of the life and teaching has not been obliterated.² Dr. Barth shows little interest in this and Dr. Bultmann considers it irrelevant. But Donald Baillie considers it a part of the revelation, and it holds an important place in his theology. A second important consequence is the compulsion that it makes clear to communicate. This is a fundamental concern of existentialist theology. Barthian evangelical theology, working from within revelation and sensitive to the danger of losing the essence of the faith, is not willing to make accommodations to current cultural and philosophical concepts in order to communicate. Donald Baillie is profoundly concerned to communicate, but moves from human experience to revelation without

¹ Philippians 3:10-12, R. S. V. (Italics mine).

² See discussion of this in Chapter 4.

sacrificing anything of the essence of the faith. A third important consequence is the place given to human freedom and responsibility in relation to the grace of God. Existentialist theology makes human decision central and gives small place to the activity of God. Barthian theology gives large place to the grace of God and practically eliminates human freedom and responsibility. A fourth consequence is the emphasis on the important connection between morality and religion. Dr. Tillich, Dr. Barth and Dr. Bultmann have little place for morality in their theologies. For Donald Baillie it has a very important place. All of these aspects we will consider further when we come to consider the contemporary situation. But all theologies find their roots in the New Testament, and this throws some light on the nature of Baillie's contribution to the modern struggle.

Apart from this, of course, the cross itself was still central to Paul's theology. This was the mighty act wrought by God to deliver man from sin and death. This was the sole means of reconciliation between man and God. This was the gateway to the Kingdom of God, here and hereafter. And faith held the key. This central place of the cross is of the essence of Christianity.

II

From St. Paul to the Jesus of History

For our present purpose it is not necessary to trace the development of theology from St. Paul to the present. But there are some stages in the development that are important to an understanding of the contemporary situation.

During the Middle Ages, based largely upon the work of St. Thomas Aquinas, there was developed in theology an encompassing metaphysical system that took in both history and supra-history. Heaven and Hell were vividly portrayed as places above and below and to the people of the day they were real in a very material sense. This world was but the ante-chamber of the world to come, and there was nothing more important in this life than making sure of a place in heaven when life on earth came to an end. The theology of the period was really a synthesis, a two-storey structure that had natural theology on the ground floor and revealed theology on top. St. Thomas' five famous 'proofs' of God were reached by inference and deduction based on natural phenomena. The existence of God could thus be established. But the nature of the relationship between man and God was a revelation. It was the revelation of the truth that man was sinful and destined to Hell, but God had sent His Son as the Saviour. Although Christ came as Saviour, however, He was Saviour only of a redeemed unit, namely, the Church. Consequently, she held the keys of the Kingdom and the only hope of salvation lay in becoming a part of the Church. In 1027, for example, Canute, King of England, made a pilgrimage to Rome and wrote of it:

I sought this blessing because I heard from wise men that St. Peter, the Apostle, has received from the Lord a great power of binding and loosing and bears the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: therefore I deemed it¹ useful in no ordinary degree to see k his patronage before God.

¹ R. L. Hale, "The Mediaeval Unity", The Roads Converge, editor P. Gardner-Smith, (London, 1963), p. 143.

The Church, represented by the priest, came between the individual and Christ. Thus the Church was in a position to dictate the terms of salvation. Pope Boniface VIII declared: "It is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff".¹ In this way individual responsibility was smothered, salvation being more of a corporate matter than an individual person-to-person relationship between man and God. It is true that the individual was responsible, in obedience to the Church's direction, for building up merit by his own power such as would gain for him entrance to heaven. But he was far removed from contact with a living Redeemer and the type of responsibility that such a relationship would place upon him. The historical Jesus was pushed far into the background.²

With the Reformation the emphasis changed from the redemption of a collective unit—the Church—to the redemption of the individual. This development had consequences of profound significance. The individual thus gained an entirely new prominence and importance; yet at the same time he was made fully aware that salvation was by faith alone.

¹ Ibid., p. 145.

² It is not easy to make clear-cut, unequivocal and yet comprehensive and accurate statements about the nature of individual responsibility and the nature of the relationship of the individual to God as they were understood in the Middle Ages. There were notable exceptions to the above description, such as that of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis simply sought to do the Lord's work and strongly felt that Christians had to get back to emphasizing the love of Christ. As Christopher Dawson has written: "What St. Francis desired was not a new religious order nor any form of ecclesiastical organization, but the following of Christ—a new life that would shake off the encumbrance of tradition and organ-

For Luther, the prospect of winning salvation by merit was utterly hopeless because it constituted a misunderstanding of the nature of man's relationship to God. Nevertheless, the individual was his own priest and alone stood responsible before God. As Professor Roland Bainton has put it:

By Luther, the individual was made to stand in naked confrontation with his God, his Redeemer, and his Judge. He became more important because he must live for himself, die for himself, and be saved for himself. Yet he was made so aware of his own creatureliness and impurity that all of his own worth and claims were cancelled and his complete reliance was upon his Maker and Master, through the inner experience of faith.¹

Not only, however, did redemption become a personal matter, but the Redeemer became a real Person. "It was among the rare excellences of Luther's Christology," wrote the late Professor H. R. Mackintosh, "that he fastened an indissoluble bond, as St. Paul had done, between the person of the Redeemer and His redeeming work".² Thus the relationship of the redeemed and the Redeemer was immediate and personal

ization and property and learning and recover an immediate personal contact with the divine source of life as revealed in the Gospel". Christianity and the Rise of Western Culture, (London, 1950), p. 257. Even St. Thomas recognized that in the last analysis faith is confirmed in experience. On the whole, however, salvation was conceived as being corporate in nature and the individual shared in it through obedience to Mother Church.

¹ Roland H. Bainton, The Age of the Reformation (Anvil Paperback, Princeton, N. J., 1956), p. 82.

² H. R. Mackintosh, The Person of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh, 1912), p. 231.

and became evident through the inner experience of faith. This involved a totally new concept of individual responsibility. No longer-- for the Reformers--was it understood as the responsibility to gain merit through obedience to the Church or through the doing of good works in order to gain access to heaven.¹ Now it was seen to be the type of responsibility involved in a personal relationship to a living Redeemer.

It is of major significance to our later consideration to note how greatly this enhanced the importance of the individual person, and how this brought an entirely new and revolutionary emphasis on human freedom and responsibility. Our whole scientific and technological development and our emphasis on the ascendancy of man stems from this. It is of equal importance to note that it contained, at the same time, an equally heavy stress upon the fact that the individual could not achieve his own salvation--salvation was sola gratia. And it is of still further importance to note that a new insight was

¹ This should not be misinterpreted to mean that it was their opinion that the individual did not carry personal responsibility for his manner of life or that he was not responsible before God for his conduct. Certainly salvation could not be won by good works; but this is not equivalent to relieving the individual of responsibility. Luther wrote: "although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought...in every way deal with his neighbour as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him. This he should do freely, having regard for nothing but divine approval. ...We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself but in Christ and in his neighbour. Otherwise he is not a Christian". Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian", Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings, editor, John Dillenberger (Anchor Paperback, Garden City, New York, 1961), p. 80. This is a small treatise dedicated to the Pope, first published in November 1520.

thus grasped regarding the nature of revelation, even although this insight was not immediately incorporated into systematic theology. In the recognition that salvation was related to a living Person rather than to a static truth, Jesus Christ emerged from scripture as a living Redeemer.¹

Following the Reformation, however, this insight regarding the nature of revelation was lost for about three hundred years. The loss was partly due to an excessive emphasis on the forensic aspect of the Latin interpretation of the work of Christ carried over from the pre-Reformation Church and quickly reinstated by Luther's contemporaries and followers.² It was also partly due to the Reformers' claim that authority lay solely in the Scriptures. Although they acknowledged that the truth of scripture must be affirmed for the individual by the inward action of the Holy Spirit, they nevertheless also claimed that Scripture was literally inspired and was inerrant.

¹ It is also worth noting in passing that for Luther the Jesus of history was important. As Professor Mackintosh has written: "to him the manhood of Christ signified more than to any other post-apostolic teacher. The foundations of faith are to be laid on the recorded facts of our Lord's career as a man, and anything else would be to start building from the roof". The Person of Jesus Christ, p. 231.

² Professor Gustav Aulen claims that Luther held the "Classic" interpretation of the Atonement, but that his contemporaries and followers quickly reinstated the Latin interpretation. For a discussion of this see Gustav Aulen, Christus Victor, (London, 1934), p. 139f; first published, 1931.

Calvin, according to Professor Roland H. Bainton, affirmed that the biblical writers were "the secretaries of the Holy Ghost, authentici amanuenses, notaires authentiques".¹ He could even speak of "the style of the Holy Ghost".² In spite of the new insights, therefore, this literal interpretation led back to the position that regarded revelation as the unveiling of the static truths contained in Scripture. To Calvin, for example, systematic theology was still the systematic correlation of these static truths. They did not succeed in incorporating their new insights into a systematic theology; they "left their work half done".³ They sought to contain their new insights within the framework of the old two-storey theology which they had inherited, and it was not able to contain them. Not until the nineteenth century did a new framework begin to emerge—a framework not yet completed—that is more adequate to contain the Reformation faith.

Schleiermacher was the pioneer. He saw what the Reformers had seen but had failed to incorporate in their theology, namely, that the revelation of Christ is not the unveiling of a static truth about redemption, but is rather the revelation of a living Redeemer. The essence of the matter is the realization that God does not reveal Himself through static truths about Himself, but through a living relationship with a living Person. God cannot be objectified or captured

¹ Roland H. Bainton, "The Bible in the Reformation", The Cambridge History of the Bible (Cambridge, 1963), p. 12.

² Ibid.

³ H. R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology (London, 1937), p. 6.

in a concept; it is through a personal relationship that He makes Himself known. It is in this relationship that faith is born, and faith finds its confirmation not by way of rational deduction or by rational acceptance of static truth, but through experience. This insight of the Reformers Schleiermacher incorporated into a systematic theology, and in doing so he marked the end of the reign of rationalism. He did not start the structure of his theology in metaphysics nor on the base of natural theology, but on the base of religious experience. He went astray in interpreting faith as feeling. But he so silhouetted the necessity of encountering Christ as a living Person, of finding God's revelation of Himself in personal experience and of finding the confirmation of faith in experience rather than in reason, that he inaugurated a "Copernican Revolution" and gave a new orientation to theology. "With the work of Schleiermacher", Dr. Mackintosh wrote,

theology may be said to have entered a new phase. ...The thinkers had forgotten the human heart and its thirst for the Unseen. Schleiermacher felt that men must be led back to the elementary but life-giving perception that religion is an experience.¹

Although he did start theology in a new direction, however, and constructed a systematic theology of such merit that Dr. Mackintosh can write of it, "next to the "Institutes" of Calvin it is the most influential dogmatic work to which evangelical Protestantism can point",² he left much to be desired in terms of giving an adequate

¹ Types of Modern Theology, p. 4.

² Ibid., p. 60. This assessment was made, of course, before the completion of Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics.

place to revelation. "What is revelation?" he writes,

Every new and original communication of the Universe to man; and every elemental feeling to me is inspiration. The religion to which I will lead you demands no blind faith, no negation of physics and psychology; it is wholly natural, and yet again, as the immediate product of the Universe, it is all of grace.¹

Schleiermacher is not always easily understood and is frequently ambiguous, even seeming to take both sides alternately in the battle between the philosopher and the theologian within himself. But his method, broadly, is that of introspection.

From this psychological subjectivism neglect of the objective element in revelation was to be expected. It was here that Dr. Karl Barth saw the necessity of parting company with him if he would be true to Biblical revelation. One can understand how easy it would be for this theology to not only accommodate itself to the philosophical, psychological and cultural concepts of its day, but to become subservient to them. And Dr. Barth's accusation is that this is what in fact did happen.

The next major step forward in the development of this new orientation was provided by Dr. Albrecht Ritschl. His determination was to build a theology based on revelation that would rest exclusively on the revelation of God in Christ. Schleiermacher, as we have noted, found his starting point in what happens within the believing soul rather than in the historic fact of the revelation. To Ritschl this was intolerable and amounted to romantic sentimentalism. The way of

¹ F. D. E. Schleiermacher, Addresses on Religion to its Cultural Despisers (London, 1893), quoted in Types of Modern Theology, p. 44.

escape lay in establishing a firm foothold in history and this he found in the Person of Jesus Christ, the revelation of God, as recorded in the New Testament.

But Ritschl went on to argue that specifically Christian knowledge of God takes shape in value judgements evoked by revelation. For example; the statement that "Jesus Christ died on Calvary" is a judgement of fact which any historian might make as a pure historian. If, however, he went on to say "we have redemption through His blood" this would be a value judgement or a personal conviction. Ritschl's intention is clear enough, but this is where his theology went wrong. In this approach the question then has to be answered, "where does the standard of value come from by which the individual is enabled to make these value judgements?". And his answer is that man has it in him. That is, he brings it with him to the historical event, and it is this possession which makes the historical event into revelation. Thus he made the fatal mistake of allowing morality to dictate to revelation. He saw one side of the paradox inherent in the believing response to Christ, namely, that He does appeal to our sense of right and wrong and we must make a response. But the essence of revelation is lost unless the other side of the paradox is included, namely, that it is God who through Christ makes the appeal, that simultaneously with or even prior to our subjective response is the voice of God speaking to us and also God acting in us. As Professor P. T. Forsyth has expressed it, "we believe because He makes us believe with a

moral compulsion".¹ Ritschl misunderstood the real nature of revelation, and because he did he missed the fullness of the Revelation.

It should be noted that the declared intention and aim of Ritschl is almost identical with that of Professor Karl Barth. They both undertook to construct a theology inspired throughout by scripture. Ritschl, however, did not hold to his purpose, whereas Dr. Barth does with remarkable consistency. "It is in the performance", writes Dr. Mackintosh, "not in the chosen aim, that the two men stand so far apart".²

It was morality, therefore, that led Ritschl astray. Dr. Barth was determined not to allow anything, including morality, to lead him astray from his expressed goal. His exclusive purpose was to develop a theology, by scientific exactness, from within the revelation of the act of God in Christ. And so convinced was he of the correctness of sticking exclusively to this purpose that he has stated that if his approach were ever abandoned theology would return to Schleiermacher rather than to Ritschl. His reason for making such a statement would seem to be that, while recognizing the contribution made to theological thinking by Schleiermacher in the insistence that revelation consisted in the revelation of a living Redeemer rather than a static truth about redemption, he also saw that there was a further considera-

¹ P. T. Forsyth, The Justification of God (London, 1916), p. 47.

² Types of Modern Theology, p. 173.

tion of very great importance. This further consideration was the method of dealing with this new understanding of the nature of revelation. Either one must approach it through its subjective effect on the individual, as Schleiermacher had done, and build a theology on this foundation; or else one must deal with the fact itself and develop its meaning from within itself, as he most consistently has done. Schleiermacher was consistent in building a subjective theology based on experience. Ritschl set out to build an objective theology based on the Word, but allowed morality to dictate to it. By saying, therefore, that should his approach ever be abandoned theology would return to Schleiermacher rather than to Ritschl, Dr. Barth seems to be saying that one approach or the other may be chosen, but once chosen must be persistently pursued and that the two cannot be joined. In thus developing his theology from within the revelation Dr. Barth finds little place for morality.

D. M. Baillie does not believe that the two approaches are mutually exclusive. And he not only does give a place to morality in his theology, but he gives to it a very important place. For him, indeed, it proves a bridge between the subjective and objective approaches. And in emphasizing again the close relation between morality and religion and in thus providing a bridge between these two modern approaches to theology, he has a contribution of profound significance to make to modern theological thought.

Although he was deeply influenced by Ritschlian thought through his teacher Herrmann, he does not allow morality to dictate to reve-

lation as Ritschl allowed it to do. Rather it is seen as a pathway. Not a pathway that leads men inevitably to revelation, for this would put revelation within their grasp. But rather a pathway that leads to the area where revelation is more likely to take place. To put it more concretely, he believed that the imago dei is not completely obliterated in man; that God can speak to man through moral values, and that if man is faithful to the right that he knows he will grow in his understanding of righteousness. This does not lead directly to faith. But it prepares the ground into which the seed of salvation may more readily be received; it enables man to grow in his capacity to recognize the moral ideal. And when he meets the living embodiment of it in the life, teachings and death of Jesus Christ it will be self-authenticating. This, however, is not the total content of the revelation. If man is obedient to this Person who is the embodiment of the moral ideal, he will discover further--it will be revealed to him--that this Christ is also the means of his reconciliation with God. The full development of this contribution must await the review of other movements in modern theology. Suffice it for the moment to note that Donald Baillie was close to Ritschl in his awareness of the relationship between Christian faith and morality. But he was far distant in his understanding of the nature of that relationship.

III

The Jesus of History Emphasis

As already noted, the Reformation bequeathed to theological think-

ing a new understanding of the nature of revelation even although this new understanding was not immediately incorporated into systematic theology. This, however, was not our only inheritance from the Reformation. It wrested the scriptures from the custody of the Church and made them available to every man. And, also belatedly, this bequest of the "Open Bible" has proved to be of equally profound significance for modern theological thought.

The mood of empiricism that has produced such staggering results in science and technology and has been so influential in philosophy, found its way, towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, into theology as well. This entrance was made by way of literary criticism of the text of scripture. Through it the "Jesus of History" emerged from the mists of metaphysics like the dawning of a new light upon the nature and reality of God. For many thousands of people this emergence held all the wonder and invigorating power of a new revelation. Faith came alive, and people became aware of what being a follower of Christ meant in terms of human relations, social justice, and their own private life. A new passion seized Christians to spread the Good News. The Student Volunteer Movement even adopted the slogan "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation". The Christian faith became a powerful influence in matters of this world rather than something that was mainly concerned with the world to come. It was immediately relevant to life as men were then living it, and did not lose itself in dead dogma or mystical metaphysics. This concerned

every man and all society and was close to the heart-beat of life itself. One did not need to be a theologian to understand this. Here was the winning and commanding personality of the "Man of Nazareth". This you can understand. He speaks your language. He appeals to all that is good in you. Leave the perplexities of dogma and the mysteries of metaphysics and follow Him. And as you do you will begin to understand the dogmas about Him. "It seemed to be a rediscovery of the right starting-point for an understanding of the Christian faith;", wrote Baillie, "for it was like beginning where the original disciples began."¹ Its impact on lay Christianity was so great that even to-day great numbers of Christians are mystified by the return to theology. Indeed, in spite of all the developments in theology since then--and they have been extensive and have much to contribute as we shall see--the "Jesus of History" would still seem to be the most hopeful point of contact in demonstrating to modern man the relevance of the Christian faith.

Not only, however, did the discovery make an impact on lay Christianity, but it had an immense impact on theology as well. In one of his books Baillie entitles a chapter "The End of Docetism".² Never again could theology minimize or fail to recognize the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ. The movement reached its most characteristic expression and its climax about the turn of the century in the work of Dr. Adolph Harnack and Dr. Wilhelm Herrmann. Of their work

¹ Donald M. Baillie, God was in Christ (London, 1948), p. 31

² Ibid.

Baillie writes:

To Harnack, the church historian of the school, the history of the early Christian centuries was a story of the gradual adulteration of the original Galilean gospel through the infiltration of Greek philosophy. And thus the true hope of Christian theology must be in a movement back to the Jesus of history from the metaphysical dogmas about His Person. Similarly to Herrmann...the starting point of Christian faith, and therefore of Christian theology, must never be in ready-made metaphysical dogmas about Christ, but in the historical Jesus with whom we are confronted in the gospel story, and whose inner life becomes to the honest seeker the very revelation of God.¹

Nor was the impact confined to continental theology. For example, in 1922 a great Anglican bishop wrote, "one of the most vital districts of Christian truth has been restored to us."²

But the influence of the "Jesus of History" emphasis, which had surged so strongly in the late nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries, receded, at least in theological circles, almost as quickly as it had come. It soon developed some real difficulties. For one thing, the great rash of "Lives of Jesus" that were forthcoming, which sought to display the personality of this great Leader and Example, were often contradictory. So much so that it was difficult to decide what He really was like. This was climaxed by Dr. Albert Schweitzer's "Quest of the Historical Jesus",³ which portrayed Christ as being obsessed with an eschatological outlook to such a

¹ Ibid., pp. 32 f.

² Charles Gore, Catholicism and Roman Catholicism, p. 35, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 34.

³ Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, (London, 1911).

degree that the thought of following Him would be distasteful and irrelevant for modern man. It was a reductio ad absurdum result, but it did serve to point up one of the weaknesses of this type of approach to theology. Moreover, the Form Critics were casting real doubt on the reliability of the text and whether or not we could be at all sure about the dependability of the record of Jesus' life and teaching. So much so that Dr. Rudolf Bultmann, in explaining his approach to his study of the New Testament and the reason for his effort to establish the original "Kerygma", could write:

interest in the personality of Jesus is excluded--and not merely because, in the absence of information, I am making a virtue out of necessity. I do indeed think that we can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus; since the early Christian sources show no interest in either and are, moreover, fragmentary and often legendary: and other sources about Jesus do not exist.¹

The approach of building a theology on a base that was vulnerable to the historical scientist left theology in a very unstable position indeed. To be dependent on the records for the life and teaching of Jesus, when they themselves were in question, left theology intolerably insecure.

Apart from the problems brought about by conflicting portrayals of the personality of Jesus and by Textual Criticism and the relation of theology to history, however, there were other serious problems as well. "The eager, loyal, and sometimes sentimental following of the Man of Nazareth"² was in some danger of becoming a Jesus cult repla-

¹ D. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word (London, 1935), p. 8.

² God was in Christ, p. 41.

cing Christianity. Moreover, the emphasis on human freedom and responsibility and on human capacity, and the presence in the background of the idea of inevitable progress, led to the minimizing of the awareness of the sovereignty of God. There was little room for grace, and what there was was more in the realm of idea than of power. Christological considerations were largely relegated to the category of mystical metaphysics and were thought to be of small importance. The central place which the concept of sin held in traditional Christian theology was reduced to particular bits of wrong-doing, so that the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation was tremendously reduced, and the felt need for atonement almost disappeared. The revealed Christ was the great Comrade and Leader rather than the Saviour. The cross was regarded as the climax of the revelation that love is the basic principle of the Christian life, but not as the mighty act of God delivering men from sin and death, as Paul understood it. A growing conviction developed that the "Jesus of History" theology was not only inadequate but was bordering with perilous proximity on mere humanism. Adding all of these problems together, it is not surprising that a powerful reaction set in against the "Jesus of History" emphasis.

Just as the continental theologians took the swing of the pendulum in liberal theology to its extreme limits, so now they led the reaction to its extreme limits at the other end of the swing. Just as Dr. Harnack and Dr. Herrmann had given leadership in one direction, so now Dr. Emil Brunner, Dr. Bultmann and Dr. Barth gave leadership in the

other. They left entirely the effort to reconstruct the "Jesus of History", and turned to find the proper approach in revelation. Here, they insisted, the true significance of Jesus Christ was to be found. Indeed, the other approach they considered to be, as Donald Baillie puts it, a "wrong way of using the Gospels", which led to a "misunderstanding of the Christian religion".¹ Dr. Brunner writes:

In faith we are not concerned with the Jesus of history as historical science sees Him, but with the Jesus Christ of personal testimony, who is the real Christ. ...If once the conviction is regained that the Christian faith does not arise out of the picture of the historical Jesus, but out of the testimony to Christ..and that it is based on this testimony, then inevitably the preference for the Synoptic Gospels and for the actual words of Jesus, which was the usual position of the last generation, will disappear. This view springs from a conception of Jesus, and of our relation to Him, which cannot really be combined with the Christian faith in Christ.²

Dr. Bultmann considered it not only impossible, as we have seen, but irrelevant to attempt to capture the personality and portray the life and teaching from the historical record. And Dr. Karl Barth is of the same opinion. He not only agrees that it is impossible to discover what Jesus was like as a human personality from a study of the Gospels, but that even if you could it would not be a revelation of God but, rather, a veiling of God. The revelation, they held, is to be found primarily in the cross and resurrection. The "Jesus of History" is eliminated.

Here again, as in the question of morality, Donald Baillie's theology stands against the stream. And herein is contained a further

¹ Ibid., p. 34.

² Emil Brunner, The Mediator (London, 1934), p. 172. See also p. 159 footnote.

important feature of its contribution to modern theology. It retains the "Jesus of History".¹ He considers it only pessimism and defeatism to allow textual criticism to rob us of the historical Jesus. "I cannot believe," he writes, "that there is any good reason for the defeatism of those who give up all hope of penetrating the tradition and reaching an assured knowledge of the historical personality of Jesus."² He overcomes the theological weaknesses of the "Jesus of History" theology by moving beyond it to a theology of revelation. But he insists that the life and teaching and personality of the Man who was crucified is as integral a part of the revelation as the crucifixion itself; it is all of a piece. Commenting on Dr. Brunner's statement that "the Jesus of history is not the Christ of faith", Baillie writes, "I do not believe that this can be a stable position for theology."³ And elsewhere states,

If we cannot validly find any revelation of God in the portrait of Jesus as an historical person, how are we ever to reach and accept the dogmas about Him?⁴ The meaning of the cross could not be understood without some knowledge and understanding of the person who died on it.⁵

He would insist, of course, that we can only know that Jesus is the Christ by revelation. But he would go on to question, does this come about independently of the historical person? And his answer is contained in the following quotation:

¹ By the "Jesus of History" he means: "Jesus as He really was in His life on earth", which includes of course what He did and said, what He intended and what He taught." God was in Christ, p. 47.

² Ibid., p. 58.

³ Ibid., p. 54.

⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

⁵ Ibid., p. 181.

To each person to-day, as to Simon Peter of old, in response to the confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God', there come with unabated truth the words: 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven'. It is neither ocular nor historical proof, but divine revelation, the testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum. And yet it remains true that the revelation came to Peter as an inward witness to the Jesus whom he knew in the flesh and it comes to us as a witness to the Jesus whom we know as an historical personality through the Gospel story.¹

This retention of the historical Jesus is important, therefore, to Baillie's own theology. It is in the historical figure that man is able to recognize the embodiment of moral perfection, a perfection that is self-authenticating. And if he is obedient to this and follows Jesus, the ground will be prepared for the further revelation that this is "the Christ, the Son of the living God". There is a correlation between the historic figure and the inward witness; it is through the historic figure that the revelation comes. Thus his theology is able to develop, through the historical figure, from a beginning in human experience to a theology of revelation.

This retention of the historical Jesus is also important, for the same reason, to modern theology. It is part of the bridge between the subjective and objective approaches to theology. Theology can start with the human "existential situation" and, by way of the ethical life of the historical Jesus, move to a theology of revelation. Moreover, as already noted, this feature is of further profound significance in that it seems to be the most hopeful point of contact in demonstrating to modern man the relevance of the Christian faith. To this we

¹ Ibid., p. 51.

will return later in examining the question of "where do we go from here?" in modern theology.

IV

The Barthian Emphasis

Once Dr. Bultmann, Dr. Barth and Dr. Brunner have together brought theology back to an emphasis on revelation,¹ they then part company and travel far in opposite directions. For Dr. Bultmann the significance of the revelation is to be found in the Message that is proclaimed. For Dr. Brunner and Dr. Barth the significance of the revelation lies in this mighty act of God wrought for man's salvation, lacking which man is without hope in the world. They are convinced that it is in its failure to see this that theology got so far off the track. Writing about Schleiermacher, Dr. Barth says:

He is disastrously dim-sighted in regard to the fact that man as man is not only in need but beyond all hope of saving himself.²

Dr. Barth, particularly, is determined to develop his theology from within this revelation and, with scientific exactness, confine himself within the limits which the revelation provides. He is determined not to accommodate his thought to the philosophical and cultural concepts of his age as Schleiermacher had done--and as the existentialists insist must be done--but to build a theology solely on the Word of God.

That he succeeded in history-making fashion few will attempt to deny. It is the opinion of so careful a theologian as Dr. H. R. Mac-

¹ This revelation, of course is not found in the life and teaching, but in the cross and resurrection and the significance to which these events bore witness.

² Karl Barth, Word of God and Word of Man (London, 1928), p. 195.

kintosh that, "In him we have incontestably the greatest figure in Christian theology that has appeared for decades."¹ And a less neutral judge writes:

The contribution of Karl Barth to theology is, like that of Albert Einstein to natural science, so deep-going and fundamental that it marks one of the great eras of advance in the whole history of the subject.² (He) is incontestably the greatest figure in modern theology since Schleiermacher.³ No one who really gets inside Barth's thinking and has learned to follow him in his persistent and profound enquiry into the Truth of God can remain unchanged or unmoved, or be ungrateful.⁴

With at least this last assessment by Dr. Torrance there can be no quarrel. To leave theology at the mercy of the historical scientist was an intolerable situation, and Dr. Barth has done a very great deal to put it back on a sound foundation. It was sick with extreme individualism and subjectivism and he prescribed the cure. It is another question whether, as Principal John Baillie put it,

(he) administers this medicine ... in such merciless overdoses, that in the end I find myself not only refusing to swallow it

¹ Types of Modern Theology, p. 263. L. Harold DeWolf writes, "There is no doubt that Karl Barth has made a stronger impact upon Protestant theology than any man in the twentieth century, thus far. Barth's influence is so varied and far-reaching that no one can ignore Barth's ideas and gain even an elementary understanding of the present situation in theology." Present Trends in Christian Thought (Association Press, 1960). Quoted in Introduction to Karl Barth's God in Action, by Elmer G. Hamrighausen (New York, 1963).

² Thomas F. Torrance, Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, 1910-31. (London, 1962), Preface.

³ Thomas F. Torrance, "Karl Barth", Ten Makers of Modern Protestant Thought (New York: Reflection Paperback, 1958), p. 58.

⁴ Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, Preface.

but at the same time suspecting that something is wrong with the prescription.¹

In other words, it is another question whether his refreshing emphasis on the sovereignty of God has left any room for an adequate doctrine of man.

One cannot begin to understand his theology until one realizes that it is thoroughly theocentric. It does not start with man but with God. "One can not speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud voice,"² Dr. Barth writes. It is not a case of God being questioned by man in order to give meaning to man's subjective experience and in order to be used as an auxiliary to man's understanding and purposes and designs. Rather, it is man finding himself being questioned by God--down to the very roots of his being. It is God who is sitting in the judge's seat, not man. The meaning of man's life is not to live to his own glory and aggrandizement and satisfaction, but to live entirely to the glory of God. Writing concerning Schleiermacher's departure from the main stream of the Christian heritage, Dr. Barth says:

The very names Kierkegaard, Luther, Calvin, Paul, and Jeremiah suggest what Schleiermacher never possessed, a clear and distinct apprehension of the truth that man is made to serve God and not God to serve men.³

¹ John Baillie, The Sense of the Presence of God (London, 1962), p. 182. The Gifford Lectures 1961-2.

² Word of God and Word of Man, p. 195.

³ Ibid.

God is absolute sovereign. Man has no approach to God. He cannot even be aware of God unless God designs to reveal Himself to him. There is a gulf between man and God that only God can cross. Man cannot even begin to approach God on his own initiative and in his own strength. Man is utterly and completely helpless in the hand of God. All initiative must come from the Godward side of the Great Divide. This was the Truth of God revealed in the historic incidents of the cross and resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. This was the prescription which Dr. Barth provided for this "morbid disease",¹ this "cancerous subjectivism"² from which modern theology was suffering. This was the approach that must be followed if theology was to be rescued from the dictates of historical science and from subservience to the philosophical and cultural concepts of the age.

It is of no small interest to read Dr. Barth's own analysis of how he reached this position. He writes:

had the pious man...become, in our own person, problematical? Was it the encounter with socialism that opened our eyes to the fact that God might want to be God and to speak quite otherwise than in the fusty shrine of the Christian self-consciousness? Was it--and for me personally this played a decisive role--the failure of the ethics of modern theology at the outbreak of the First World War which led to our discontent with its exegesis, its conception of history and its dogmatics? ...or more fundamental than all this, was it the discovery that the theme of the Bible...definitely could not possibly be man's religion and religious ethics--could not possibly be his own secret godliness, but--this was the 'rocher de bronze' on which we first struck--the Godness of God,

¹ Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, p. 31.

² Ibid.

precisely God's Godness, God's own peculiar nature over against not only the natural, but also the spiritual cosmos, God's absolute unique existence, power and initiative above all in His relationship to man? We felt that it was in this way, and only in this way, that we could understand the voice of the Old and New Testaments, and that it was from here, and only from here, that we could from now on be theologians and particularly preachers, ministri Verbi Divini.¹

This conviction regarding "God's absolutely unique existence, Power and initiative" placed the great gulf between God and man in his theology. "May we be preserved," he quotes Kierkegaard in his commentary on Romans,

from the blasphemy of men who...hope to have direct knowledge of that which cannot be directly known...and do not say that He was truly and verily God because He was beyond our comprehension.²

It is in this connection that he speaks of the life and teaching of Jesus as constituting a veiling rather than a revealing. He writes:

the revelation which is in Jesus, because it is the revelation of the righteousness of God, must be the most complete veiling of His incomprehensibility. In Jesus, God becomes veritably a secret... He protects Himself from every intimate companionship and from all the impertinence of religion, etc. In Jesus the communication of God begins with...the exposure of a vast chasm.³

And again he quotes Kierkegaard:

by discovering an unreal and merely human compassion, it (Christianity) forgets the qualitative distinction between man and God.⁴ If Christ be very God, he must be unknown, for to be known directly is the characteristic mark of an idol.⁵

¹ Karl Barth, God, Grace, and Gospel (Edinburgh, 1959), pp. 33 f.

² Karl Barth, Commentary on Romans (London, 1933), p. 279.

³ Ibid., pp. 98 f.

⁴ Ibid., p. 38.

⁵ Ibid.

Thus, for Dr. Barth, modern Christianity as in Pietism or in Schleiermacher or in the "Jesus of History" school "had read the New Testament Gospel backwards,"¹ for instead of taking the way...

from God to man (and only then from man to God) it had reversed the gospel of election and grace, and had sought to take a private road from the depths of human experience and consciousness to God.²

This, to Dr. Barth, was not only a serious misreading of the Gospel but a disastrous loss to Christian truth and a fatal departure from our heritage. And this he set himself to rectify.

It would not be feasible nor is it necessary to our purpose to examine his whole theology. Three major points will suffice: his concept of "diastasis", his concept of grace, and his concept of the Incarnation.

In Dr. Barth's second Commentary on Romans the emphasis all the way through is upon what came to be known as "diastasis", the separation between God and man. According to him there is an infinite qualitative difference between God and man. There is no immanent continuity, there is no point of contact from man's side or anything in man that would enable him even to be aware of God. There is a great gulf fixed and the initial flow of traffic is always from God to man. Man cannot begin to know anything about God except by revelation. Man is completely helpless in regard to taking any initiative in approaching God.

¹ Word of God and Word of Man, p. 286.

² Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, p. 46.

With this Donald Baillie could not agree. He would not agree with Dr. Barth that the imago dei is completely obliterated in man; that there is an "infinite qualitative difference". Man, he holds, has moral capacity through which God speaks to him and moral awareness which involves responsibility for obedience to the good that he knows. Revelation is an act of God,¹ but man can inaugurate a search for meaning in life in response to his innate need of it, and progress towards faith in God by way of moral obedience.²

Closely related to this emphasis on "diastasis" is the second point we wish to consider, namely, Dr. Barth's concept of the saving grace of God. Speaking of it he writes:

We are not in a position to say anything that is relevant concerning grace and sin until our perception has been sharpened and we are protected from pantheism by being reminded of the critical significance of the death of Christ; until we have been liberated from obsession with the problem concerning what we can do or not do. Grace is the Kingdom of God, His rule and power and dominion. Grace is radically contrasted with the whole realm of human possibility, yet nevertheless, for the same reason, it judges human life and launches a disturbing attack upon it.³

In this realm man is obviously helpless and, it would seem, irresponsible. A student of Paul might question whether or not this is exactly what Paul said—that salvation is by grace. Salvation is certainly brought about by an act of God's grace. But does not faith have some-

¹ See above pp. 37 f.

² For further discussion of this point see chapter 3.

³ Commentary on Romans, p. 215.

⁴ Romans 3:24.

thing to do with it? Dr. Barth would say that this again is totally a gift of God. Man cannot in any degree achieve it. In God's purpose and election it comes to him:

As a tumbler sings when it is touched, so we and our world are touched in faith by the Spirit of God. ...He is the miraculous factor in faith, its beginning and its end.¹

Thus, in this matter that is so crucially important to man--his salvation--he is utterly helpless. There is not only nothing that he can do to achieve it, there is nothing that he can do by way of taking the initiative towards its achievement. And it would seem to follow that if he is so utterly helpless he cannot be held responsible. It seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that in Dr. Barth's presentation of the situation man carries no responsibility in regard to his salvation. Again Donald Baillie does not agree. Although he knows grace to be all of God, he still insists on retaining human responsibility.²

The third point proposed for consideration is Dr. Barth's concept of the Incarnation. In interpreting him Professor T. F. Torrance describes the Incarnation as:

the miraculous ingression of God into our human and historical existence...in which God has given himself to man and reconciled man to himself, thus creating for man the objective possibility of revelation.³

¹ Commentary on Romans, p. 129.

² For further discussion of this point see chapter 4, Section IV.

³ Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, pp. 115, 116.

But does not this posit the necessity of having a man to receive the revelation--of setting "the Word of God in the framework of an anthropology?"¹ Dr. Barth's answer is:

Jesus Christ is the 'Man' who is included in the Word, for he is the Word made flesh; he is himself the Word of God addressed to man and also Man hearing and receiving that Word adequately and appropriately and perfectly. Therefore he, Jesus, is both the objective and subjective possibility of its revelation to us and of our receiving of it, for through reconciliation and union with him in the power of the Spirit we are enabled to hear and understand the Word, as we are quite unable to do on our own.²

What this seems to mean is that in Christ there is a union of two disparate natures--Man and God. Within this union God speaks and Man receives. And somehow, individual men and women, by the miraculous power of the Spirit, are united with Christ in some inscrutable way with which they have nothing to do, but which effects the Revelation for them so that in this union with Christ, God speaks to them, judges them, and the "contradiction between man and God overcome in Jesus Christ is actualized as the victory of God within us."³ In this way there is no need to study man as a necessary part of a full understanding of the Word. So Christology, as Professor Torrance puts it,

has for Barth a supreme and critical significance, for it is through Christology that theology is enabled to break through subjectivism, in its romantic-idealist or in its existentialist forms, to the sheer reality of God.⁴

¹ Ibid., pp. 140 f.

² Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics II, Lectures 25, 26, quoted in Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, p. 142 (italics mine).

³ Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, p. 117.

⁴ Ibid., p. 143.

And so also, by holding such a Christology, it would seem that Dr. Barth rules out of the picture any adequate doctrine of man.

Christendom will ever be indebted to Karl Barth for restoring to theology the sovereignty of God and for restoring its awareness that its source and strength lies in revelation. As Principal John Baillie has well said:

He has changed the face of Protestant theology far more radically than any other theologian during my lifetime. ...Whatever the measure of our agreements or disagreements with him, we all have to reckon with him. I have often said that there can be no hopeful forward advance beyond his teaching, as I fervently hope, there will be, if we attempt to go round it instead of through it.¹

It is in an attempt to "go through" that we hold to our contention that this portrayal of the Incarnation is inadequate because the doctrine of man that it incorporates is inadequate. However Dr. Barth may insist on retaining the reality of the human—even "fallen" human nature—, "Man" seems to be a "type" man, a category rather than a living individual, a concept rather than a reality. A real Incarnation—if it is to be conceived as the union of two natures—must be a union with a living, free, responsible, individual man, as dynamically conceived as God is dynamically conceived.

Moreover, in this theology, the relation of individual men to it is only possible through the miraculous, inscrutable action of the Holy Spirit. Man is helpless to see any revelation of God whatever in

¹ The Sense of the Presence of God, pp. 254 f.

the Incarnation without an act of God. He is "opened up from below" and brought into union with Christ by the Holy Spirit. As Professor T. F. Torrance interprets Dr. Barth:

The objective possibility of Revelation is given in Jesus Christ in whom God communicates himself to man.... But the obverse of that is that God also comes to man, is personally present in him, opening up man from below, empowering him to receive what God gives and reveals....¹ The subjective possibility of our knowledge of God is derived from beyond us in the objective act of the Spirit opening us up subjectively from below.²

All evangelical theology admits not only that the revelation is given, but that in some sense the response is also given. Donald Baillie speaks of the "prevenient" grace of God and of how, in retrospect, the Christian recognizes that it was "all of grace". And yet the Christian also knows that somehow he retains responsibility; that in some sense the response is also his response. Barthian theology, however, not only emphasizes that the revelation is given and that the response is also given, but affirms that the response is in every sense given. And our contention is that this does not do justice to what the Christian knows to be true. Speaking out of his own experience the Christian says, in effect:

I am challenged by the Cross to the very roots of my being. Love so amazing, so divine, does demand my life, my soul, my all. There is revelation here for me. Maybe it is brought about by the Holy Spirit. But still it is my life, my soul, my all that I have to decide to

¹ Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, pp. 116 f.

² Ibid., p. 117.

surrender. The claim may seem to be such that I have no choice. And yet I know that I do have to decide and that I have responsibility in the matter. Even as the cross reveals to me that there is something accomplished through it in effecting my salvation that is utterly beyond me; at the same time I know that I am also responsible.

Christian faith and experience would seem to insist on this. As we already noted in considering his theology of salvation, this would seem to be Paul's point of view. Although not under the burden of working out a systematic theology, this aspect of Christian truth he did maintain.

It would be quite wrong, of course, to leave the impression that Dr. Barth solves the difficult problem of human self-determination vis-a-vis determination by God's grace by simply ignoring the reality of human freedom and responsibility altogether. He writes in The Doctrine of the Word of God that the Word of God is not addressed to "beasts, plants, or stones, but to men."¹ And he admits that although "the fact that this (the revelation of the Word of God) befalls it and the nature of what thereby befalls it are not the work of man's self-determination", nevertheless, "it is the work of man's self-determination which it befalls."² But as Professor N. H. G. Robinson comments:

Man is here allowed to be a self-determining being, but in the realm of grace his self-determination is within, or subordinate to, the determination of his being by the Word of God. And there, Dr. Barth insists, we must leave the matter. We must not at any price seek to understand this relation of self-determination to determination

¹ Karl Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God (Edinburgh, 1936), p. 230.

² Ibid.

whereby the former is "overlapped" by the latter. To do this is to adopt the standpoint of an onlooker and allow philosophy to intrude into the dogmatic domain.¹

But to leave this paradox just here and then proceed to develop a whole theology, with scientific exactness, from within the revelation of God in Christ, results in portraying the grace of God as really creating a new man rather than transforming the old one, and virtually denies self-determination altogether. In other words, although Dr. Barth insists on the reality of human freedom and self-determination, the working out of his theology has the ultimate result of paying only lip service to it.

It is in the retention of human freedom and self-determination as factors of vital importance that Donald Baillie has something to offer to Barthian theology. After considering other developments we will return to this later and try to show how Baillie's theology incorporates the essential values of both the subjective and objective approaches. Suffice it for the moment to note that in this central doctrine of Christology he does not surrender human freedom and responsibility. Nor does he surrender it in his total theology. In view of the emphasis of Barthian theology, this is of fundamental importance in assessing his contribution to the modern situation.

Thus, in Dr. Barth's theology, man receives no adequate consideration as a responsible human being. The grace of God so envelopes him and the doctrines of predestination and election so imprison him that

¹ N. H. G. Robinson, Christ and Conscience (London, 1956), p. 98.

it is not without reason that it has been called "inhuman". This is not to say that it has no concern about man's salvation—far from it. But it is so thoroughly theocentric, so completely enveloped by the sovereignty of God, so thoroughly a theology of predestination and election, so completely contained in a particular segment of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, and, as a consequence, so unrealistic about man as he really is, that it is understandable that it should elicit a reaction. This has come.

V

The Existentialist Emphasis

In protest against this great gulf fixed between man and God, this emphasis on the utter helplessness of man, this insistence that his response to God is wholly determined by God, this denial that his life is turned in any way towards the God he cannot name or that there is anything in him that would inaugurate a search for meaning in life, has provoked a reaction that finds expression in the existentialist school of thinking. Here the names of Professor Rudolf Bultman, the late Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Professor Paul Tillich prominently appear. Professor R. Gregor Smith, although he does not add significantly to the thought of the school, contributes additional understanding by way of being something of an extremist, while the significance of the approach has had greatest impact on public opinion through the pen of Dr. J. A. T. Robinson. The existentialist claim is that this complete divorce between man and God, this emphasis on man's utter helplessness

and consequent irresponsibility in regard to his relationship to God or in regard to finding a meaningful faith, has not only rendered faith in God irrelevant to modern society, but is not realistic in the light of man's history and experience. Man does carry responsibility and he does have some self-determination and he is in search of some meaning in life. So, in a profound apologetic concern to make the Christian faith meaningful to modern man, they go to the opposite extreme. Instead of starting with the concept of the complete sovereignty of God and working out a "dogmatic" on the basis of the revelation of God's action in Christ, they start with man.¹ They do not start, it should be made clear, with an examination of the human ego as such. Their starting point is not the same as that of Descartes in his philosophy based on cogito ergo sum. Nor is their starting point an introspective examination of experience within the individual. And, of course, they do not think of man in the abstract as Dr. Barth tends to do. Rather, theirs is an examination of man in relationship, in his "existential situation", in the thick of life in relation to his fellow men and in search of some meaning for it all.

This theology is as thoroughly anthropocentric and subjective as

¹ It is true that the initial factor in Dr. Bultmann's theology is the revelation contained in the Christ-event. But he leaves the total background of the Christ-event in complete mystery and really starts to build his theology on man's response to the message contained in the Christ-event. To this extent it is true to say that he does start with man.

Barthian theology is theocentric and objective. Indeed, Dr. Barth once observed that Dr. Bultmann's theology was not theology at all but would be better described as a study in anthropology. And Dr. Bultmann replied, "I heartily agree: I am trying to substitute anthropology for theology, for I am interpreting theological affirmations as assertions about human life."¹ The extent to which he pursued this is evident, as Professor John Macquarrie points out, "in his exposition of the entire Pauline theology as an anthropology or doctrine of man."² And the extent to which the New Testament can be coloured by the glasses with which it is read is illustrated in Dr. Bultmann's claim "that in making his theology centre in the question of man's existence he is simply following the precedent of the New Testament."³ His emphasis on the human existential situation as a basis for theology might foster the expectation that he would be found in the "Jesus of History" camp. As we found, however, the exact contrary is the case. Not only, as a Biblical scholar, does he think that we cannot know anything for certain about the life and personality of the historical Jesus, but he is not interested. He writes: "For those whose interest is in the personality of Jesus this situation

¹ John A. T. Robinson, Honest to God (London, S. C. M. Paperback, 1963), p. 50.

² John Macquarrie, An Existentialist Theology (London, 1955), p. 11.

³ Ibid., pp. 11 f. An example of this anthropocentric point of view is his description of the conversion of St. Paul as "his entering into a new understanding of himself". Ibid., p. 11.

is depressing or destructive: for our purpose it has no particular significance."¹ With Dr. Barth he is intensely interested in the revelation of God's Word as it is revealed in the Cross. And with him also he shares the new understanding of the nature of revelation, namely, that it is not a revelation of static truth, but is a dynamic revelation. What each of them sees, however, as the content of the revelation could hardly differ more.

Dr. Barth interprets it entirely from the "Godward" side. Dr. Bultmann interprets it entirely from the "manward" side. Dr. Barth, although his whole work is overshadowed by the concept of God as Creator, professes not to allow any presuppositions. Absolutely nothing that would in any way limit the revelation can be allowed. Only that which comes from within the revelation itself, he believes, can be taken into consideration. Dr. Bultmann, on the other hand, claims not only that one should bring presuppositions to the revelation but that they are inevitable and that, consequently, one should bring the best. He chooses to bring the philosophy of existentialism. This philosophy dictates the questions to revelation and revelation is confined to answering them. The approach of both men is that of the preacher concerned to communicate the gospel. Dr. Barth feels that this can best be done, not by accommodating the Gospel to current philosophical and cultural concepts, but by developing its strength from within God's revelation of Himself as God's Word to

¹ Jesus and the Word, pp. 13 f.

man. Dr. Bultmann, taking the opposite view, feels that communication can best be accomplished by starting with man in his existential situation responding to his innate search for some meaning in life, asking the questions that arise therefrom and confronted by the "eschatological event" of the cross. Dr. Bultmann does not agree with Dr. Barth that man is so utterly fallen that he has no knowledge of his own fallenness or need of salvation. He does see man, of course, as being subject to sin; accumulated sin in the world of which he is a part and to which accumulation he has contributed and for which he carries a measure of responsibility. He writes:

Indeed, Paul can even express the fact that the world masters those who constitute it by speaking of 'the spirit of the world' (1 Cor. 2:12). In modern times 'the spirit of the world' is the atmosphere to whose compelling influence every one contributes but to which also he is always subject.¹

So, man is in need of forgiveness and salvation. But in some sense he knows it. His quest for some meaning in life, "his quest for significance, security, status, ...is evidence that his being is turned towards the God he cannot name."² The Bible is the answer to his need and throws light on his whole situation. When he is confronted by the event of the cross, he sees his sinfulness and need of forgiveness and is faced with the necessity of decision. In the Christ-event Dr.

¹ Rudolf Carl Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, (London, 1952), p. 257.

² Alan Richardson, "The Rise of Modern Biblical Scholarship", The Cambridge History of the Bible (Cambridge, 1963), p. 326.

Bultmann sees the call to decision as almost the only significant feature of the Person and work of Christ. But it is of infinite importance because it illuminates man's whole existential predicament and confronts him with the necessity of decision. This living Word, this vital call to decision, is of pivotal importance to man's salvation. And Dr. Bultmann's consuming evangelical fervour is to confront the twentieth century with it. But a mythological, metaphysical structure, offensive to modern man's intelligence and baffling to his understanding, is unnecessarily in the way.

In his Theology of the New Testament he shows that the beginning of the gospel message was a simple call to decision by a Jewish carpenter-rabbi. But by the second century A. D. this call had somehow

been metamorphosed into a Hellenistic-Gnostic mythology about a Man from Heaven who had descended to earth to rescue fallen humanity by imparting saving 'gnosis' and defeating the evil powers who rule the world, and who had finally ascended again to heaven when his mission was accomplished.¹

The obvious task was to get behind these mythological accretions and set in sharp relief again the original message. This he first attempted in an essay in 1941.² And the message that emerged was this call to decision. This constituted the saving fact of the death of Christ. There is no need for a metaphysical mythology of a God-man who descended

¹ Ibid., p. 324.

² See Kerygma and Myth, edited by H. W. Bartsch and translated by R. H. Fuller (London, 1953).

from heaven and after the crucifixion rose from the dead and ascended again into heaven. This is no part of the gospel of salvation and only alienates people from it and deprives them of it. In Jesus and the Word he writes:

I have especially aimed to avoid everything beyond history and to find a position for myself within history. Therefore evaluations that depend on the distinction between the historical and the super-historical find no place here.¹

Perhaps a word about Dr. Bultmann's understanding of the meaning of myth might be relevant here. There are truths that do not lend themselves to conceptualization as static truths do, and the truth of revelation is of this nature. At the same time, although the revelation did take place in history, neither does historical science provide an adequate vehicle for containing this truth. Although the revelation occurred at a fixed point in time, --although it had this objective-historical quality and differs from the Greek myths in having its origin in an objective event of world history--, it is also always contemporaneous, it also has an existential-historical character. In every age, whenever the story of the cross and resurrection is told again, the revelation takes place again and grace is effective again. As Dr. Macquarrie expresses it:

Grace is present in the proclamation, the saving deed itself is present, for as saving deed it is an eschatological or existential-historical event and therefore not tied to a particular point in

¹ Jesus and the Word, p. 7.

time.¹

Thus the revelation is both rooted in history and yet ever contemporaneous because it has this "eschatological" quality. Consequently, the only vehicle that is adequate for it is myth. Myth cannot be eliminated, but it must be interpreted, and all unnecessary myth must be removed. The truth contained in the myth of the Son of God coming down from heaven is of the same nature as the story of God walking in the Garden of Eden. It must not be interpreted literally. It is an act of God, but all that we can really know about it is the effect that it has upon us. And we do know that the cross and resurrection call men to decision. We also know that when man makes the decision for God and against self-centredness and the world, life falls into place, the meaning of his existence becomes clear and man finds his salvation. Dr. Bultmann insists that this is a work of God; that it is an invasion of history by God. Moreover, it is only because of this action by God, this confrontation of man with the revelation, that human decision is possible. If, however, we approach revelation from the point of view of man in his existential situation, all that

¹ An Existentialist Theology, p. 225. He also writes: "it is not the objective-historical element in the mighty acts that is of primary importance for theology. This primacy belongs to...that element in them which makes them significant for my existence, that is to say, which sets before me a present possibility. This is their eschatological character in virtue of which they are not merely past happening but God's present act of grace in my situation." Ibid., p. 171.

we can know about it is that it confronts man with the necessity of decision.¹ And when he makes the decision, faith is born. "Faith", Dr. Bultmann writes, "is the decision in the face of the grace which confronts us in the proclamation of the Word."² The revelation is an act of God, but what is behind the objective-historical event is in the realm of mystery and how it is effective contemporaneously is in the realm of mystery. All that we can really know about it is that it confronts man with decision and his salvation hinges on that decision.

Thus faith is "the decision to make the possibilities offered to man in the 'kerygma' my own."³ This means entering into a new understanding of the self in the light of the cross and resurrection. So, for Dr. Bultmann, "theology is the systematic analysis of the understanding which is given with faith."⁴

But if theology is to be thus confined within the boundaries of human existence it is in grave danger of eventually being divorced from its origin in the cross and resurrection of Christ and becoming merely an existentialist philosophy. And we must ask, therefore, is this theology adequate? How can forgiveness and reconciliation take

¹Dr. Macquarrie comments: "Bultmann has not fallen back into the belief in man's self-sufficiency, but he tends to overemphasize the importance of decision." Ibid., p. 197.

² Quoted Ibid., p. 193.

³ Ibid., p. 241.

⁴ Ibid., p. 242.

place wherever the Gospel is preached—even if man does make a decision—other than by an act of God? Dr. Bultmann, of course, recognizes that it is accomplished by an act of God. But the strict structure of his theology simply does not have room for his Christian insight that this is essentially all a work of God. As Dr. Macquarrie puts it:

As soon as we speak of mighty acts or of grace or of revelation or of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, we are making or implying statements which are not statements about human existence, and we have abandoned the concept of a purely existential theology. That is the inconsistency in Bultmann's own position. He puts forward a view of theology that calls for radical demythologizing, and the translation of all transcendent statements into statements about the understanding of the self. Yet at the same time he believes that God has acted decisively in Christ, and he does not appear to realize the incompatibility of the two positions. ...Theology is concerned not only with statements about human existence but with statements about God and his activity as well—transcendent statements...which, because we lack categories for the understanding of transcendent being as such, can only be expressed in symbolic or mythical form.¹

In Dr. Bultmann's theology, therefore, all depends on decision by man. The salvation message of the Gospel lies primarily in the challenge to decision. But faith depends on decision by man, and salvation depends on decision by man. "God", he writes, "...reveals himself in faith to the man who freely decides to obey his summons."² Of enveloping importance in effecting salvation, therefore, is man's decision. Admittedly an adequate theology must have a place for

¹ Ibid., pp. 243 f.

² Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I., p. 327.

human self-determination, but this is too large a place. In this theology man is very much at the centre and God is left on the fringe, clouded in mystery. The attention that Dr. Bultmann draws to the existential-historical significance of the mighty acts of God is most timely in helping modern man to see their present relevance to his existence and his demythologizing has done much to make the Christian faith intelligible to the modern mind. But theology cannot remain within the boundaries of human existence, however important it is to establish the relationship. Theology must go on to speak of the transcendent and of God. We cannot escape the conclusion that this theology does not contain an adequate doctrine of God.

R. Gregor Smith goes even further in making man the measure of all things and develops his theology exclusively within history. There is no need, he believes, for man to move beyond history to find the meaning of life. The placing of the centre of interest in a metaphysical world that was supposed to include history, was the work of Thomas Aquinas, not Christ; there is only one world. Speaking of the Renaissance, which he calls the "Great Revolution", he writes:

History was no longer seen as the necessary but tiresome ante-chamber of supra-history, but as an existent power whose meaning could be sought in itself. This was the fundamental insight that broke the bonds of medieval metaphysics.¹ From that time the concern of man has been with the realities of human history as containing their own principles of movement and explanation

¹ R. Gregor Smith, The New Man (London, 1955), p. 40. The Alexander Love Lectures, 1955. (Italics mine).

and their own clear and self-authenticating autonomy from any kind of metaphysical system.¹ History had fully taken over; nature was but the raw material, metaphysics and a possibly more real world only a misleading dream. Man had come of age.²

It is history that gives meaning to life. In fact, God and history seem perilously close to being considered interchangeable. This does not mean, he insists, the "throwing out" of Christianity:

It is important to note that this revelation in human self-understanding is not in its essence at variance with Christianity. Its fundamental element is to take the history of man as the controlling material for an understanding of man's destiny. And this, indeed, seems to me to be one inescapable consequence of any doctrine of the Incarnation, of God becoming man, namely, that man in history is the important matter.³

He would almost seem to be saying that the real meaning and significance of the Incarnation is not that God became man but that man became God. In any case, it is important to note that the Incarnation is viewed not as the intrusion into history by God to rescue man from sin, but as the divine stamp of approval on man becoming the master of all things.

If, therefore, there is only one world and the metaphysical world "above" is pure myth, what meaning is left for "transcendence"? This he hails as one of the great new discoveries of modern theology. "Transcendence" does not consist of a relationship to a God "above" or to a metaphysical world "above", it simply means "otherness". It is the "otherness" of the other in the "I-Thou" relationship of

¹ Ibid., p. 42.

² Ibid., p. 49.

³ Ibid., p. 43.

human relations. He writes:

It is the otherness of the other...which is the basic manifestation of transcendence in human life.¹ This otherness or transcendence is not an extra brought in from some remote sphere of understanding, but it is the central element which makes...the relation, the humanity of life, possible at all.²

Thus the meaning of life is to be found in the "I-Thou" relationships within history, in openness to the other within human relationships.

This is where God will be found.

God is met in His works and gifts, not in himself and not in an idea of him.³ This facing of God is always in and through, and not other than or additional to, the facing of other people in the emergent community with them.⁴ Absolute openness, unreserved togetherness, is the very place where the Spirit is found.⁵ The mystery of God has been equated with a kind of terra incognita, an as-yet unknowable rather than a truly ineffable mystery, which is to say a "present" mystery whose mystery is an actual, encountered, lived experience of an incomprehensible but not inapprehensible gift.⁶

The search for faith, therefore, does not lie in trying to live a holy life,⁷ or in trying to be religious, or in trying to make contact with a separated metaphysical God. Faith will be found by living in complete openness and otherness in the human situation. The Incarnation discloses the "man for others". If man accepts that and follows it, he will find faith. "We call the way of meeting it and accepting

¹ Ibid., p. 65.

² Ibid., p. 66.

³ Ibid., p. 111.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

⁶ Ibid., p. 99.

⁷ He quotes Bonhoeffer with approval. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison (Fontana Paperback, 1963), p. 125. First published 1953.

it faith."¹ Here man will meet God. Here is the place where man is made new. And he concludes:

The new man is man in community with man in the strength of the given grace which meets him as tasks and responsibilities and opening freedoms in actual situations in their wholeness. ...We may hope that out of the living encounter with God, within the structure of grace, of the given situation, the tenuous, fragmentary web which holds together in the delicate bonds of responsible freedom all those who are turned out from themselves into the needs and enterprises of the world—we may hope that out of this encounter new history may be made. For this encounter is the burning point, the crux, the only truly live point in the whole story of mankind; the point where a man in the full depth of his humanity, with the whole burden of his memories which we call culture and the whole burden of his failures and sin, takes to himself, in his whole life, the words of forgiveness and the invitation to faith which are the palimpsest of all the pages of history.²

This theology has many weaknesses. In the above quotation Gregor Smith speaks of "sin" and "forgiveness". But in this theology sin cannot be more than failure in openness. It falls far short of the Christian insight regarding the nature of sin which is in some sense a breach of the personal relationship between man and God, and results in an alienation from God. Although existentialists claim that man has "come of age", they admit, of course, that he is not perfect. They admit that he knows failure and is in need of forgiveness and think that the solution to his ills is to be found in Jesus Christ. In fact, it was the evangelical concern that modern man might find God through Jesus Christ and that the Christian faith

¹ The New Man, p. 109.

² Ibid., p. 112.

might be seen to be relevant that led them to develop this line of thought in the first place. The point of pivotal importance is whether man's predicament is merely imperfection and immaturity or whether it is defiance and revolt, resulting in alienation. Dr. Bultmann's claim, as Dr. Macquarrie states it, is that

so far as man is fallen away from his true self he is fallen away from the being which the Creator has given him. ...alienation from God follows from alienation from the authentic self.¹

That is, in so far as he fails to measure up to his true self he suffers alienation from God, and the essential nature of sin is failure. But sin, as the Christian faith understands it, is not failure to live up to one's true self; it is primarily not of the nature of failure at all. It consists rather of disobedience to the will of God; it is primarily rebellion. And this disobedience is the source of the alienation. This is a very important point indeed and is a serious weakness in existentialist thinking. Baillie's theology does not have this weakness as will be clear from the following quotation:

The situation is quite different when the soul is oriented towards God. Then morality is no longer 'mere morality'. ...Then the consciousness of moral failure becomes something different; it becomes a sense of sin against God, a sense of having disobeyed the will of God, of having betrayed the love of God.²

¹ An Existentialist Theology, p. 109.

² God was in Christ, p. 165.

Dr. Smith also speaks of the "structure of grace"¹ and of "grace springing up in the midst of human life"² from no particularly recognizable source other than this area of men in the relationship of openness in which the Spirit dwells. But this too is far short of the Christian belief that grace is the prevenient action of a personal God in redemptive outreach to individual men. This basic insight of faith Baillie also retains, as we shall see in his concept of the paradox of grace.

Further, the concept of the Incarnation as the seal of the divine recognition of the maturity of man and as the revelation of Christ as the "Man for others", is something less than the Christian concept of the coming of a Saviour. It is something less than the revelation of the saving act of God by which He redeemed mankind and through which He still redeems individual men. There is a content of much more consequence and significance than the revelation of a way of life by which, if a man decides to accept, he can work out his own salvation, -even if it is "within the structure of grace". Donald Baillie retains the fundamental Christian conviction that the Incarnation is an ingression by God into human history in the person of Jesus Christ His Son in a mighty and costly act of redemption to rescue man from sin and death. Baillie would agree that Jesus Christ is the 'Man

¹ The New Man, p. 112.

² Ibid., p. 90.

for others'; but he would insist that He is much more than that. And the conclusion that the Incarnation represents the seal of divine approval on man's ascendancy he would consider a very doubtful conclusion indeed. Rather he would see it as a sign of man's need of a Saviour.

Finally, in the existentialist view, faith is born in the human decision made within the existential situation, following confrontation with the 'Man for others' and is fostered in the existential situation, by way of obedience to "otherness". In other words it is dependent on man's decision. Here again this theology, by placing such importance on man viz-a-viz God, falls short of Christian truth to such degree that it amounts to a perversion of it.

Baillie would agree that the human decision is important in man's quest for meaning in life; that innately he has an awareness of the morally good and that he has responsibility in being obedient to it. Moreover, that this responsibility still holds, even although he may not recognize that disobedience is disobedience to the will of God. But faith in God, and the fulness of faith that God was in Christ reconciling, comes by revelation.¹ He would insist that there is a correlation between faith and revelation that puts faith beyond the reach of man's decision.

¹ See pp. 37 f.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion, therefore, that this theology is inadequate as a vehicle for the full Christian faith. It must be admitted that there is a faith in God evident. Dr. Smith, for example, says, "Human life involved not two worlds but one world... into which God's Word penetrated."¹ And Dr. Bultmann, even although he leaves its origin in complete mystery, places pivotal importance on the Christ-event. The Incarnation seems to require some act of God intruding into history, however mysteriously. And grace and the confirmation of faith are "actual, encountered, lived experiences of an incomprehensible but not inapprehensible gift."² Nevertheless, God's place is most peripheral. There is a faith in God evident behind the theology, but the theology itself does not provide for it nor contain it. It suffers from the lack of a dynamic concept of a living God who stands over against His creation as Creator and Sovereign Lord, and who has the redemptive interest of "Our Father". It lacks an adequate doctrine of God, and this deficiency Baillie's theology goes far to rectify.

Our purpose in outlining existentialist theology in relation to the analysing of the nature of Donald Baillie's contribution to modern theology has been two-fold. In the first place it has been to point out that even although Donald Baillie shares the existentialist

¹ The New Man, p. 45. (Italics mine).

² See p. 63.

approach, he avoids its major weaknesses and retains in his theology essential elements of the Christian faith that in existentialist thinking are in danger of being lost. In the second place it has been to set out some outline of existentialist theology in order to demonstrate the sharpness of its contrast with Barthian theology with a view to showing how Baillie's presentation bridges the gap between them and at the same time retains the essential contribution of both. It is in these functions that Baillie's theology has such an important contribution to make at the present time.

The main contribution of existentialist theology lies, at least at the moment, not so much in its theology as such as in its approach to the subject. It would not be unfair to say that in the main it is more concerned to demonstrate the relevance of the gospel to modern man than to build up a systematic theology. Its suggested changes in the concepts into which it would put the Christian faith are the consequence of its main purpose. This has to be appreciated before the full import of Baillie's contribution can be assessed. Having examined the theology itself, therefore, we will turn briefly to examine its approach to the subject in the light of the contemporary situation in theology and in the church.

VI

The Modern Ferment

Existentialism is a way of thinking rather than a system of thought. Consequently, no one man's theology provides a norm by which

to assess the rest. But the motivation behind it and the approach itself are most popularly portrayed by Bishop John A. T. Robinson, especially in his two books Honest to God and The New Reformation¹. The interest in it has arisen not only out of a reaction to the inhumanity of Barthian theology, as has already been noted, but also out of a profound concern with the fact that theology simply is not making contact with modern man. The Church has largely lost its capacity to communicate. It is not speaking to the young people nor to the working man nor to the intelligentsia, who are, on the whole, conspicuous by their absence at public worship. And they are absent not so much because they have doubts about the truth of the Church's message, as because to them it seems entirely irrelevant. The reaction of the Church to this profoundly challenging situation seems to be two-fold. Some clergy are restless.² They would like to seek a fresh presentation, a new conceptual framework for faith, that would improve communication and enable modern man to see that the Christian faith does have something to say to him that is relevant; to make its relevance more obvious to him. Describing this segment Bishop Robinson says:

¹ John A. T. Robinson, The New Reformation (London, S. C. M. Paperback, 1965).

² This is evidenced in the number of clergy leaving the ministry and the number interested in specialized ministries rather than the regular pastorate. In some churches almost half of those preparing for the ministry are looking forward to specialized ministries. In 1966 in the United Church of Canada more ordained men left the ministry than new candidates entered training. It is also evident in the inadequate number preparing for the ministry.

There is a ferment in the Church, which even a couple of years ago I think no one could have predicted.¹

The mood and approach of existentialist theology captures the interest of these men. But others are fearful lest such accommodations would jeopardize some of the essentials of Christian truth, and tend to retreat within the stronghold of a theology based upon revelation and exclusively developed from within the revelation. They tend to move in the direction of what Dr. R. Gregor Smith calls a retreat to "heteronomy". He writes:

The Church...has...attempted to contrive for itself, out of the fragments of the whole tradition of Christian authority, a new heteronomous structure. ...(It) has sought to preserve its message and with the message to preserve itself...by imposing itself and its message as an alien law on man's mind.² This heteronomous effort reaches a typical climax in the modern orthodoxy or neo-orthodoxy.³

Dietrich Bonhoeffer considered it unworthy of the Church to refuse to recognize that man has "come of age" and that he is no longer in need of "religion". His opinion was that it is not only un-Christian but futile to attempt to force a mature man back into the religious mould of which he no longer has any need. He wrote:

The attack of Christian apologetic upon the adulthood of the world I consider to be in the first place pointless, in the second place ignoble, and in the third place un-Christian. Pointless, because

¹ The New Reformation, p. 17.

² The New Man, p. 55.

³ Ibid., p. 56.

it looks to me like an attempt to put a grown-up man back into adolescence, that is, to make him dependent upon things on which he is not in fact dependent any more, thrusting him back into the midst of problems which are in fact not problems for him any more. Ignoble, because this amounts to an effort to exploit the weakness of man for purposes alien to him and not freely subscribed to by him. Un-Christian, because for Christ himself is₁ being substituted one particular stage in the religiousness of man.¹

Nor, he believed, is the way ahead to be found in insisting that the answers to the "ultimates" of life, such as sin and death, are to be found only in God. The Church insists that these ultimates are beyond the borders of man's capacity and that we can be delivered from their power only by God. But, he asked,

Is even death to-day, since men are scarcely afraid of it any more, and sin, which they scarcely understand any more, still a genuine borderline? It always seems to me that in talking thus we are only frantically trying to make room for God. ...On the borders it₂ seems to me better to hold our peace and leave the problem unsolved.²

In what direction, then, does the way ahead lie? It lies, he believed, in an honest and courageous acknowledgement that man has come of age, and an equally honest and courageous and humble³ attempt to build a new framework of faith that will speak to him and be meaningful to him in his new status.⁴

¹ Letters and Papers from Prison, p. 108.

² Ibid. ³ He refers to Mt. 18:3 re:humility.

⁴ Letters and Papers from Prison, p. 121. Alex Vidler writes: "We can best serve the cause of truth and of the Church by candidly confessing where our perplexities lie, and not making claims which, so far as we can see, theologians are not in a position to justify." Soundings: Essays concerning Christian Understanding (Cambridge, 1962), Editor Alex Vidler: p. IX.

This idea Bishop Robinson articulates in The New Reformation. "Those who change history," he writes, "are not those who supply a new set of answers, but those who allow a new set of questions."¹ And after considering the questions he goes on to build the first storey of the "framework" in indicating where the answers are to be found.² Man's question, to which the old Reformation provided the answer, was, "how can I find a gracious God?"³ The answer was "by faith alone".⁴ By faith, through revelation, man would find God. Neglect to take up the offer could only lead to his own damnation. But since man has "come of age" this approach is speaking to fewer and fewer people. Bishop Robinson describes the situation thus:

If we say, in effect, 'take it or leave it', they leave it. And if we content ourselves with saying that at any rate we have 'preached the gospel', 'whether they hear or whether they forbear' we shall find it increasingly difficult to carry conviction even with ourselves. For the fact remains that to larger and larger numbers of our generation this is simply not gospel, it evokes no sense of good news. ...And a Church which is identified with this function becomes progressively more irrelevant.⁵

¹ The New Reformation, p. 12. The Bishop further writes: "Theology will carry conviction not by the assurance of its answers but by the integrity of its questioning, and by the vigour with which it is seen to respect the critical disciplines, historical, scientific, and linguistic, of the world it would serve. We must be prepared to be stripped down to the few things we can trust, and not be worried about the many things we do not know." Ibid., p. 23.

² This first storey is much less radical in design than the shape of the foundation would indicate.

³ The New Reformation, p. 32.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 33.

Where then, he asks, does the way ahead lie? It is in the recognition that modern man no longer finds meaningful a metaphysical Transcendent (in the sense of being above him in a metaphysical other world) God. It is to acknowledge that in present-day society man is no longer looking for a gracious God because he does not feel the need of one. But he is looking for a "gracious neighbour".¹ The beginning cannot be made from revelation because he has no confidence in it and it is meaningless to him. Theology must find a new starting point. It must begin with man in relationship because it is at this point where the vital interest of modern man lies. If Christianity can speak to him here it will indeed be relevant and he is bound to listen. He is fully prepared to listen to any conviction that arises out of experience. But he is most suspicious, and even aggressively opposed, to any deductive certainties derived from revelation; and especially if they attempt to speak to him with authority.

But can theology accept this new starting point,--namely, that man's question "in the first instance"² is about man and not about God,--and not "sell out"? Bishop Robinson's claim is that we must accept it. But he insists with equal vigour that this does not constitute "an abandonment of the Christian gospel".³ Nor does it mean that we should "turn our back on a theology of revelation".⁴ "There is nothing further from its spirit than an air of self-confident humanism."⁵ But it does mean that we cannot start with the presentation

¹ Ibid., p. 32

² Ibid., p. 34.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

of authoritarian truth arrived at by deduction from revelation.

The starting point, therefore, must be a starting point that will speak to man in relationship and from there we must proceed with honesty and courage. Where, then, in the presentation of the gospel, can the starting point be? It would mean starting by presenting Jesus "not as a Messianic figure but as one of themselves".¹ It would mean presenting him as the gracious neighbour--"the Son of Man incognito".² This is "the way into the truth as it is in Jesus".³ It is here, as the man for others and with others, that they will get to know him; and it is from here that he can make himself known to them as the Messiah. "Perhaps the primary task of theology and of the Church in our generation could be described as making such a meeting possible again,"⁴ he writes. Then in following Him, in the everyday relationships of life, they might "discover the revelation in the relationship".⁵ The discovery of Jesus as a man worthy to be followed as an example, will be in the realm of the moral. He explains:

As in the first generation, Christianity is again for our contemporaries being judged primarily as "the Way", and if it seems irrelevant as this men will not stay to test its claims as the truth.⁶ For most doctrinal questions to-day, in contrast with the period of the previous Reformation, present themselves in the first instance as moral questions.⁷

This theology--or search for a theology--, therefore, will have a definite starting point. It will be the presentation of Jesus as a

¹ The New Reformation, p. 35.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 38

⁷ Ibid.

man having something to say to men in relationship. But it will have no pre-set conclusions. It will be "open-ended".¹ Even although "open-ended", however, it must include the essential elements of the Christian faith. He writes, "I have not the least desire to weaken or deny the distinctive affirmations of the Christian faith."² It is another question, of course, what these "distinctive affirmations" would be considered to include.

We have already dealt with the major weaknesses of existential theology as such. But this examination of Bishop Robinson's presentation serves to make clear the starting point and the nature of the approach of this "new" theology. And it is of no small interest to note that he feels that the first storey of the new framework must have room for both revelation and morality.

VII

The Nature of Baillie's Contribution

It would be difficult to find a set of requirements, in so far as starting point and method of approach are concerned, that would more aptly fit the theology of D. M. Baillie than these. As has been frequently noted, he invariably starts the development of his theology with the human situation, the human experience, and uses it to throw light on and to show the relevance of the particular doctrine in question. Indeed, he is most sensitive to the need of demonstrating

¹ Ibid., p. 46.

² Ibid., p. 13.

the relevance of whatever segment of theology is under discussion.

In his book, God was in Christ, in regard to such a central matter as Christology, he writes:

It is often said that in the modern world the besetting question about the Christian faith or about any statement of it is not 'Is it true', but 'Is it relevant?' However tired we may be of the word 'relevance', there is some point in this remark. In past ages, and especially at certain periods, it has been a common enough experience for devout souls in Christendom to find themselves doubting what they have been taught to believe, ...But now something new seems to have appeared: there seem to be many people...whose perplexity is not as to whether religious beliefs can be true, but as to whether it makes any difference. Does it matter to me, in the actual business of living, whether the mysterious being called God really exists, or whether I believe in His existence, any more than it matters whether I know of the existence of some distant star that is not visible to the naked eye? And more particularly, many men to-day, after listening to an elaborate argument about the Incarnation, designed to make it intelligible and credible that God was incarnate in a man..., will ask: Why is it so important? In what way should I be the better for believing in it?

If such blank questioning is widespread, this is doubtless an indication of the extent to which Christianity has moved away from an even elementary knowledge of Christian teaching. ...But the questions themselves are perfectly real and reasonable, and they must be answered.¹

And in dealing with so crucial a doctrine as the Atonement he writes:

I have tried to exhibit the Christian experience of reconciliation in order to work back from it to a consideration of that which made it possible, the Cross and Passion of Christ.²

But although this is his starting point and method of procedure, his theology is not "open-ended". It leads to revelation and an adequate doctrine of God. And this, it is our contention, is as important as

¹ God was in Christ, pp. 157 f.

² Ibid., p. 180.

having the right starting point. Otherwise existentialism, with all its ability to restate the faith in terms more adequate and intelligible for modern man and its timely caution that we must not allow our idea of God to become God, could lead to an intolerable accommodation to modern culture and philosophy. An accommodation, indeed, that would be as weakening and as damaging to Christianity as was Schleiermacher's accommodation to the culture and philosophy of his day. This is certainly the danger. If the Barthian dogmatists can be accused of pushing man out to the fringe of their theological system and not giving him the place of importance that our experience of reality would seem to insist for him, the existentialists can equally be accused of pushing God out to the fringe of their theological system, whatever may be their protestations to the contrary. The cost of accommodation, as outlined in dealing with existentialist theology above,¹ however much may be accomplished in enabling modern man to see his relation to the Christian faith, is too high. There is truth being sacrificed, especially in regard to revelation both in the Incarnation and in man's experience of salvation, that the Christian faith cannot lose and live. On the other hand, the insistence on the complete and exclusive centrality of God that pushes man out to the fringe of a theological system and robs him of initiative and responsibility, seems to make him something less than human, and puts God beyond his reach as the

¹ See above pp. 64 f.

Father that Jesus revealed in the New Testament cannot be beyond our reach.

Many are convinced that reconciliation between these two theologies is impossible. Bishop John A. T. Robinson thinks that there is some common ground. He writes:

It is not for nothing that we have been to school with Karl Barth and Emil Brunner and Reinhold Neibuhr. Indeed, if there is a phrase which provides a bridge across into the theology I am concerned to advocate it is Karl Barth's own recent title, 'the humanity of God'.¹

Professor Thomas F. Torrance, however, thinks that there is no common ground. You may choose one starting point or the other, but once this choice is made you can never cross over nor bring the two theologies together. He sees what he calls "the great watershed of modern theology"² most clearly in the doctrine of the Incarnation.

On one side of that watershed the Incarnation is taken seriously as the coming of the Son of God into human experience and history, as the Being of God in space and time at work for us and our salvation, in the atoning life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. ...That supplies the basic frame of reference for all theological doctrines and gives them their realist character. It is here that Karl Barth, standing in the centre of the whole Christian tradition from the earliest times to the present, has given us massive and formidable articulation of the substance of the Christian faith.

On the other side of the watershed the Incarnation is regarded as a mythological construct designed to express in an objectified manner the creative spirituality of the early Christians. Behind this lies a horror for the notion of the Being of God in space and time and therefore for the concrete act of God in the historical reality of Jesus Christ. Hence, everything is given a fundamentally symbolic interpretation, not symbolic of an objective reality, but symbolic of a subjective state or of a basic self-understanding of

¹ The New Reformation, pp. 34 f.

² Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, p. 206.

man over against God. The rejection of the Incarnation as the real advent and presence and activity of God in space and time, supplies the frame of reference for the reinterpretation of all other doctrines and gives them anthropomorphic character, for they have to be 'demythologized' of their objective content and transposed into determinants of self-understanding. It is here that Rudolf Bultmann stands in the centre of an anachronistic reaction that moves away from the centre of the Christian faith out onto the marginal areas of gnostic speculation and self-redemption.....

This is the great watershed of modern theology: either we take the one way or the other—there is no third alternative. That does not mean to say that one must wholly follow Barth on the one hand or wholly follow Bultmann on the other, but that one must go either in¹ the direction taken by Barth or in the direction taken by Bultmann.

But is this true? Is it true that there is no third alternative?

Is it true that if theology starts with the human existential "situation" it must inevitably lead to "the dissolution of Christianity in secular culture"?² The concern of many Christians, while they sympathize deeply with the effort of the existentialists to reconstruct the gospel in language and concept that will be meaningful to modern man, is that this accommodation to modern philosophy and culture will indeed lead to the dissolution of Christianity in secular culture. But must this necessarily happen? And, on the other hand, must we not be honest enough and realistic enough and courageous enough to face the fact that modern man's response to the dogmatic "take it or leave it" approach is to leave it? And if we give any credence to the claim that the life and teaching of Jesus constitutes part of the revelation, can we salve our conscience by saying that we have preached the gospel and our respon-

¹ Ibid., pp. 206 f. (Italics mine).

² Ibid., p. 207.

sibility ends there?¹ Was it not Christ's persistence in consorting with sinners in the contemporaneous situation of his earthly life, and his insistence that he was doing the will of God in so doing, that roused such hot wrath against Him in the thinking of the religious authorities on the grounds that he was breaking the moral laws of God? Is not the ground of our gratitude founded in the fact that "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us"?² Is this, indeed, not our only hope? And if this is Christ's attitude to sinners, maintained to the point of death, which is the ground of our hope, can we be complacent about communicating the knowledge of that love to others? Must we not use every method and means within our power to make the gospel relevant to our contemporaries? Must we not at least attempt to "be all things to all men that we may save some"³—even as we recognize, as Paul recognized, that the saving revelation itself is an act of God? As Christians stand in the shadow of the Cross they are overwhelmed by the awareness that love so amazing,

¹ Dr. Barth still claims no interest in the historical Jesus. Writing in 1960 he said: "To me it is significant that present-day Old Testament scholars, especially in regard to the old, yet always new, theme of 'faith and history', are on the whole on much better ground than the authentic New Testament men, who to my amazement have armed themselves with swords and staves and once again undertaken the search for the 'historical Jesus'—a search in which I now as before prefer not to participate." (The Christian Century, 20 January 1960, pp. 74 f) quoted in Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, p. 208.

² Romans 5:8

³ See 1 Corinthians 9:22

so divine, demands their life, their soul, their all. And if this love is for all men then they feel the compulsion to communicate, a compulsion that is not neutralized by the doctrine of election. We simply must attempt to present Christ in terms and concepts that are relevant and meaningful for modern man. And if "in order to re-establish its credibility in the secular age the Church must emphasize the ethical rather than the confessional aspect of Christ",¹ then this may be the place to start.

But this does not mean that we necessarily end in an intolerable accommodation to current philosophy and culture or that it will inevitably lead to the dissolution of Christianity in secular culture. It is the thesis of this paper that Christianity can speak meaningfully to modern man in his existential situation without watering down its content or losing its essential message. It is our thesis that the presentation can start with man in his existential situation and yet lead him from there, not directly to revelation, but to an area where revelation is likely to take place, and in doing so retain human freedom and responsibility and an adequate doctrine of man. It is our thesis that man can begin by finding in Christ the "Man for others" and, by the grace of God and through a faith given by God, end in acknowledging Him as Saviour and Lord. It is our thesis that there is a third alternative, and that the essential values can be taken out of both the

¹ Don Benedict, "The Servant Church", Time News Magazine, December 25, 1964, p. 37.

existential and the Barthian dogmatic approaches and brought together in a sound theology that can be the foundation of a vital and robust faith for modern man. It is our thesis that one can start with a theology based on human experience and not necessarily end in describing God by "speaking of man in a loud voice"¹ or even by leaving the matter open-ended, but end in a theology of revelation that contains both an adequate doctrine of man and an adequate doctrine of God. It is our thesis that if one starts with man and human experience one does not have to follow Schleiermacher or Gregor Smith or Bultmann all the way, but that one can cross over to a theology of revelation that includes the essential revelation that Jesus is the Christ, the Saviour of the world. And our purpose in developing the argument up to this point is to propound the further thesis, namely, not only that this can be done but that in fact it has been done in the theology of D. M. Baillie. He invariably takes his starting point in human experience as we have had occasion to note several times. But he never allows this approach to lead him into the intolerable subjectivism of Schleiermacher. He could never agree with Schleiermacher that doctrines are merely "utterances regarding religious states of mind".² His is not an

¹ See above p. 40.

² See D. M. Baillie, Faith in God and its Christian Consummation (London, 1964), p. 136. First published 1927.

an introspective examination of experience as such. Rather it is a search after meaning regarding life in relationship. The underlying question that his theology seeks to answer is "what meaning has this for me?", "What meaning does it add to my life or what relevance does it have for my life?" Thus, although it is a starting point in experience, it is experience that is looking out from itself rather than looking inward into itself. It is the experience of "man in relationship".

But if the start is made from the experience of man in relationship, how can the transition be effected to a theology of revelation? The bridge that provides the connecting link, for Baillie, is the bridge of morality. But how can morality lead to faith? Here, in seeing the close connection between morality and religion, he shows the influence of Ritschl. But although this influence was a very strong one in his thinking, he does not follow Ritschl in allowing morality to dictate to revelation. Nor would he agree with him that "the immediacy of moral awareness establishes the existence of its religious foundation".¹ Nor does he follow Kant in his inferential argument that man's awareness of a moral imperative must logically imply a Moral Creator and Sovereign. Kant's association of morality and religion also had a profound influence on his thinking, but here he definitely parts company with Kant. It is not in this way that he

¹ John McIntyre, "Foreword", Faith in God, pp. 12 f.

sees morality leading to God. "Kant's conception", he writes,

can be so interpreted as to contain a great deal of truth. And yet if it is to be taken as an inferential argument from our moral convictions, as premises, to God the Moral Governor of the universe, as conclusion, it does not give us what the Christians mean by God.¹ It is difficult to state in precise logical terms faith's argument from moral reality to God...because there is really no such argument.²

On the contrary Baillie would feel more at home with existentialist thinking, namely, that man is seeking some meaning for his life, that in-born in him is a search for God that takes the form of a search for meaning, whether man is aware of the nature of his search or not. And he sees this to be specifically evident in man's innate moral awareness. Man is in possession of a capacity by which he can recognize validity in moral values, particularly the value of love, and through which God is ever "pressing in"³ with His revelation. This "germinal conviction"⁴ is present in every man. He writes:

The germ of faith in God is present even in the moral conviction. To put it somewhat dangerously: faith is what everyone knows, if only he is willing to know it. Faith is the inward voice which all can hear increasingly according to their loyalty. This is the real 'religious a priori'.⁵

This does not mean, it is important to note, that the "germ" grows inevitably into faith in God. It remains only a "germ" unless man hearkens to it and is obedient to it; and even then there is also an

¹ God was in Christ, p. 120.

² Faith in God, p. 194.

³ Ibid., p. 239.

⁴ Ibid., p. 177.

⁵ Ibid.

element of revelation in its development. Nor does it mean that if man is thoroughly obedient to every moral value that he knows he will automatically and of necessity achieve a full faith. "Faith gives us something more and other than all these values put together, and water cannot rise higher than its source."¹ But, if in his quest for meaning man is obedient to the moral values whose validity he has recognized, this will lead him to an area where a fuller revelation is more likely to take place. As Professor McIntyre comments, "while morality may be a kind of praeparatio evangelii for him, he never commits the error of confusing it with the evangelium."² And if here man encounters the human life of the Historical Jesus, he will recognize the embodiment of all that he knows to be good because it will be self-authenticating for him. This is why Baillie is concerned to retain the life and teaching of Jesus as a legitimate part of the revelation that occurred when "the Word became flesh". It is, indeed, a part of the Word.³ Thus, even

¹ Ibid.

² "Foreword", Faith in God, p. 15.

³ This is where he strongly takes issue with Barth and Bultmann regarding the relation of history and theology. He is quite prepared to recognize the validity of literary criticism. Starting from Lessing's dictum that 'contingent truths of history can never become proof of the necessary truths of reason' (Faith in God, p. 233) -- not from Kierkegaard, it is worthy of note -- he arrives at the conclusion that theological examination is necessary to determine the truth of history. That is, the facts of history must be approached in faith to determine true revelation. "No man can be a worthy historian of religious matters unless he is a religious man." (Faith in God, p. 247). Faith can see in history that which historical science cannot see. But where is the line to be drawn between truth established by faith through revelation and truth established by historical science?

although faith is more and other than all moral values put together, it is in the life and ministry of Jesus that we see the highest expression of these values. And "it is because men found in Jesus a supreme realization of these values that they recognized in Him the Incarnation of the Divine".¹ But this was not solely the consequence of man's obedience to the moral values of which he was aware and which he saw supremely embodied in Christ. In other words, this was not entirely an accomplishment of man. He writes:

The personality of Jesus gives us, we believe, a true and full and clear presentation of religious truth such as we could never conceivably have evolved for ourselves. ...when it (this religious truth) is set before us by that Personality it requires no extrinsic proof. It comes to us with the compelling power of truth, drawing out from our hearts the faith which can recognize it as true.²

It is impossible to draw any hard and fast line. They are not independent of each other nor fully dependent on each other. The guiding principle, as he sees it, must be that the truths arrived at by each must not be antithetical to the other. But this does not confine revelation to the cross and resurrection.

Related to this is Bultmann's demythologizing efforts. Here again Baillie is not entirely opposed. "It is just because God cannot fully be conceptualized, cannot be known except in the 'existential' relationship of I-and-Thou, that we must use symbolical (mythological) terms when we speak of Him, and these symbols can only be interpreted to us by the actual 'existential' encounter to which they point the way." (God was in Christ, p. 218). Thus when we say Jesus 'sitteth at the right hand of the Father', we are using symbolic language. Also when we say 'He ascended into heaven'. And in some measure, perhaps, in speaking of the resurrection. But neither on this account, nor on the grounds of literary criticism (see God was in Christ, pp. 47 f and Faith in God, pp. 240-52) can he see any reason for ruling out the authenticity of the life and ministry as part of the revelation. "Apart from the whole story of Jesus as an historical human figure, with a teaching and character and career of his own, leading up to the passion, it is difficult to see how we could hear God speaking to us through the Cross at all." (God was in Christ, p. 222).

¹ Faith in God, p. 239.

² Ibid., p. 241.

For revelation is but the other side of faith, and it is only through faith that we can see the revelation.¹

Christ elicits our faith even as faith embodies revelation. They are simultaneous. There must indeed be obedience to this "germ of faith"; there is a place for human responsibility. But this process in itself cannot lead to a full faith. A fully conscious faith is born in the awareness, that comes itself through revelation, that in Jesus Christ is revealed the righteousness of God; that this Personality is a revelation of the Divine.

But this is far from the full content of revelation and of faith. Important to an understanding of what revelation and faith hold in addition to this is the recognition of a factor of pivotal importance. This factor is that in recognizing in Jesus Christ the living embodiment of the moral ideal, the nature of moral obedience changes from obedience to a principle to obedience to a Person.² And as soon as man's relationship to it is recognized as a relation of persons, then the problems of grace and freedom of the will become acute. Man may now realize, through revelation, that love is the basic law and that the whole Christian ethic is summed up in Jesus' injunction to "love thy neighbour as thyself". But this is a far different thing from being able to do it. In attempting to do it, the Christian finds

¹ Ibid.

² See quotation top of p. 87.

through faith that

in so far as he does overcome evil and choose good, it is not his own resources that enable him. It is the grace of God that enables him; not by compelling him but by making him willing, so that he freely wills what is good.¹

Before we can have any hope of following Jesus, therefore, we must pass "beyond morality".² An ethical ideal pursued by human strength alone leads to what he calls "the paradox of moralism",³ namely, that the quest of goodness defeats itself. It either leads to failure or to self-righteous pride which is Pharisaism, "the worst failure of all".⁴ It is here that Baillie points to something in Christian experience that is of very great significance indeed. He writes:

The true saints have followed a different way. Instead of concentrating on their own characters, they have been God-centred. They have been less conscious of themselves than of God, less conscious of an ethic or of an ideal than the will of God, the love of God, which called out the response of their faith and love. Thus they have slowly and gradually come to love their neighbours in God. And, looking back, they have regularly confessed that whatever good was in their lives was not their own achievement but was due to divine grace. Not that this involved any cramping of their own personality, or destruction of their own freedom. Rather they would confess that never were they so truly free as in those moments when they were most wholly dependent on the grace of God.⁵

This change,—brought about both by man's obedience and through revelation—, from the effort to reach a moral ideal to a personal rela-

¹ D. M. Baillie, "Philosophers and Theologians on the Freedom of the Will", The Theology of the Sacraments (London, 1957), p. 133.

² Ibid., p. 135.

³ Ibid., p. 136, see also God was in Christ, pp. 120-1.

⁴ The Theology of the Sacraments, p. 136.

⁵ Ibid.

tionship to God, is of fundamental importance. It is the transition from an anthropocentric theology to a theocentric theology. Sin is now no longer a mere failure in moral endeavour, it is a violation of the love of God and of the will of God,¹ and an estrangement in a personal relationship. And it is of further importance to note that this experience of the grace of God is not merely an enabling grace. Through revelation and in his own experience man becomes aware that it is a "pre-venient" grace; that although man is always responsible, at the same time it is God who takes the initiative. This is the paradox of grace.² And it is this experience of man in his relationship to God that throws some light on Baillie's understanding of the Incarnation. For him this constituted a dynamic union of two wills,³ of two free and responsible persons. It was a "pre-venient" act of God, yet one which did not rob man of his freedom or render him irresponsible. It was the paradox of grace "taken at the absolute degree".⁴ But this is not the end of the story nor does this constitute the fulness of the revelation.

When man realizes that God was in Christ, and that his sin is a

¹ See discussion of this point and Baillie's quotation on p. 65.

² See God was in Christ, pp. 130 f.

³ For his understanding of the nature of the Incarnation see chapter 4. Sections IV & VI.

⁴ God was in Christ, p. 129.

matter of a personal relationship between himself and God, then the cross takes on an altogether new meaning. Then he realizes, by way of revelation, that "Jesus died on the Cross because it was God's will to come right into our sinful fallen human situation, and, incarnate in a man, to bear upon Himself the sin of the world."¹ As Baillie puts it,

more than the Incarnation was needed to awaken in us sinful men and women the sense of that paradox of grace. It is because the religion of the Incarnation became also the religion of the Atonement that it has been able to do this. It is because 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses'. When we receive that message and accept the forgiveness of our sins...our confession will be: Not I, but the grace of God.²

By revelation, the Christian will find in Christ not only the "Man for others", but "My Lord and My God"; not only the Sovereign of the moral universe, but the Saviour of the world. Thus Baillie starts his theology with man in his existential "situation", but in man's search for meaning through ethics develops it into a theology of revelation.

Thus we conclude it is possible to have a theology that contains the best of both worlds in the continuing dialectical struggle between the Barthian dogmatic and the existential approaches. We conclude that it is possible to speak meaningfully to modern man in his existential situation without compromising the essentials of Christian revelation.

¹ D. M. Baillie, To Whom Shall We Go? (New York, 1955), p. 129.

² God was in Christ, p. 202.

We conclude that it is possible to have a theocentric theology that also contains an adequate doctrine of man. And it is our thesis that this D. M. Baillie has done.

It must be admitted that between his earlier work Faith in God and its Christian Consummation in 1927 and his later work God was in Christ in 1948 the centre of gravity has somewhat shifted from man's responsibility to the prevenient grace of God.¹ But this does not diminish his contribution to modern theology. He never sacrifices morality to the grace of God. The strength of Christianity, he wrote, lies in its willingness to sacrifice the requirements of logical consistency rather than those of moral faith.² We will not be surprised if we find the Christian faith unable to describe God's purposes without paradox...(but) we shall not be content to solve the paradox by sacrificing anything which our moral faith demands.³

¹ In Faith in God he writes: "This is the faith which Jesus used to blame people for not having, and which even the simplest souls can have with a perfectly valid assurance for themselves, because it depends so much upon sincerity of will." pp. 177 f. And in God was in Christ he writes: "In the last analysis such human choice is never prevenient or even co-operative, but wholly dependent on the divine prevenience." p. 131.

The transition is in evidence in a series of four papers which he wrote under the title "Beyond Morality". Here the responsibility of man is not so prominent and the significance of the grace of God is emphasized. But it should not be forgotten that he always holds human responsibility and the grace of God together, even in Faith in God. Here we find him writing also: "Faith is, in the words of the Quaker Pennington, 'a gift to be waited for and obtained from God'. When it comes to a man, though it has arisen out of his 'doing the will' of God, yet somehow it comes as a gift, at which the seeker can only wonder, because he has not wrought it himself, and if he has found it at last, it has also found him. It seems clear that the authentic voice of religion has always spoken in this twofold way, as a thing that depends on ourselves, and yet does not depend altogether on ourselves in the sense of being consciously chosen." p. 161.

² Faith in God, p. 300.

³ Ibid., p. 301.

And throughout his theology he never does.

VIII

Some Criticisms of Baillie

There are at least two points where Baillie is open to criticism in this presentation of the nature of faith. The first is related to his concept of the growth of faith and has to do with the question of whether or not faith in Christ as the embodiment of the moral ideal is of the same quality as faith in Christ as Saviour. He does say that faith is more and other than all our moral values put together and that water cannot rise higher than its source. He also recognizes that a full faith "must be consciously realized, and must grow up... into an organism of beliefs",¹ an organism that includes recognition of the saving action of God in Christ. But a clear presentation of the Gospel calls for the recognition of a qualitative difference, and Baillie is not explicit about it. To this we shall return later in Chapter 3. He is explicit, however, that both the grace of God and human responsibility are included in the growth of faith, and the lack of clarity which we have pointed out does not seriously impair his contribution to modern theology.

The second point where Baillie might well come under criticism is in regard to the underlying assumption of this treatment of the nature of faith, that morality is the only pathway to faith. There is

¹ Ibid., p. 193.

an underlying assumption that this pathway represents a fixed scheme of salvation; that one must come to a saving knowledge of God by way of obedience to the moral ideal. He writes:

(We) must certainly reject any view that would make faith or the apprehension of God anything like a mere moral achievement; for it must be all of God, who saves us from our sins by His grace through faith, 'and that not of ourselves'. ...Religion gives us, indeed, something far more than the pursuit of the Ideal, for religion gives us God; and yet, only in pursuing the Ideal can we ever have any knowledge of God at all.¹

Baillie does emphasize that the Christian is a part of a community and of a tradition by way of which he becomes familiar with a developed moral awareness such as he himself could not develop in a lifetime. But must a saving faith come only through this process of moral development? Can the preaching of the cross not be by itself the means of the saving revelation of God without this process of moral development leading up to it? The experience of a great many people would indicate that it can. God is not confined to any fixed programme of salvation and to infer that this is an exclusive pattern of salvation would be wrong. Again, however, this does not impair the importance of Baillie's contribution to modern theology.

It should be made clear, as we have already noted in considering Barthian theology, that man's response to this act of God proclaimed in the preaching of the cross, is not wholly determined. It is not only an act of God, it is a reciprocal personal relationship; God speaks through conscience. Consequently, it is also a moral relation-

¹ Ibid., pp. 226-7.

ship, because man bears responsibility in response and acceptance. This Dr. P. T. Forsyth clearly saw in his insistence on the necessity of moralising dogma.

Along with Baillie he too provides a meeting ground for the objective and subjective approaches to theology in the realm of morality. But he starts with this experience of salvation, and it is not a starting point congenial to current popular thought; it is not a point where the relevance of the Christian faith is self-evident to this generation. It would seem that in our time we have to start further back, namely, with people in the moral experiences of life rather than the moral experience of salvation. We have to help them find in Christ a moral leader--which Forsyth's generation with its emphasis on "liberal" theology already knew--before they can find in Him the Saviour.

Some are of the opinion that Professor Paul Tillich provides a better bridge than Baillie between subjective and objective theology and makes a better job of retaining the essential values of both. It cannot be denied that Professor Tillich has produced a most comprehensive system of thought that includes both philosophy and theology in remarkable correlation and that he has in some measure united the subjective and objective aspects of theology. While admitting this accomplishment, however, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that when the final analysis is made this theology, in spite of what its author terms its "theocentric vision of the

meaning of reality",¹ is essentially pantheistic. And because of its pantheistic nature it can be seriously questioned whether he has left us either with an adequate doctrine of God or an adequate doctrine of man.²

As already noted, Bishop John A. T. Robinson has brought the "New Theology" to the attention of the public. He does not make the claim, however, nor does his work warrant the claim that he has contributed anything new to modern theology. He does say in regard to Dr.'s Bultmann, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer that he was thinking their thoughts after them. Even this may be somewhat presumptuous. He does not seem to see that Tillich's anxiety-ridden individual and Bonhoeffer's self-sufficient man-come-of-age are two entirely different portrayals of modern man. Moreover, he does not seem to be aware, in his effort to escape the charge of producing "a theology of mere immanence",³ that he moves out of Tillich's theological-philosophical system and appeals to Biblical affirmation. "The Biblical affirmation", he writes, "is that built into the very structure of our relationship to the ground of being is an indestructible element of personal freedom."⁴ And he goes on, "It is this freedom...which gives us the independence...to be ourselves."⁵ But, we feel impelled

¹ Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. III (London, 1964), p. 451.

² For a more adequate examination of the contribution of Paul Tillich as related to the contribution of D. M. Baillie, see Appendix, pp. 341 following.

³ Honest to God, p. 130.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 130 f.

⁵ Ibid., p. 131.

to ask, if we are appealing to the grounds of Biblical affirmation for the establishment of "an indestructible element of personal freedom", must we not, on the same grounds, claim the same independence for God and present Him as the Creator and Sovereign Lord which the Bible undoubtedly does? The Bishop seems to be unaware of his inconsistency here. Suffice it to repeat that his contribution has been to bring these new theologies to public attention rather than to contribute anything new to theological thought.

X

Conclusion

In the light of all the approaches to theology that we have examined it is the thesis of this paper, as already stated, that D. M. Baillie has an important contribution to make to modern theology. Of first importance is the fact that he retains an integral place for morality. He does not agree that there is an infinite qualitative difference between man and God. Nor can he accept any concept of God that is less than personal. He reminds both the Barthian and Existentialist trends that man's relationship to God is essentially personal and that a wholesome and balanced theology is not possible without morality. His second major contribution is in his relation of Christ and history. He retains an important place for the Jesus of History and offers the salutary warning that the Jesus of History and the Christ of faith are both parts of the same revelation and that theology must be seriously impoverished if either

side is omitted. In the third place—and, apparently, without borrowing from Kierkegaard—he saw that paradox is no passing phase of theological reflection but is endemic to the whole process of theological thought. By way of paradox he consistently retains both full human freedom and full divine sovereignty in his whole theological structure. In his doctrines of faith, of grace, of the Incarnation and of the Atonement his theology is both subjective and objective. It is anthropocentric in that it is based on human experience as a starting point and man is never made to surrender his freedom and responsibility. But it is also thoroughly theocentric in that God is Creator and always Sovereign. The inherent tendency in theology, and particularly in modern theology, to emphasize one at the cost of the other, makes this a singularly significant contribution. Finally, he not only avoids the weaknesses of both Existentialist and Barthian theology but also retains their essential strengths and, in addition, provides a bridge between them in the realm of morality. With unusual skill he demonstrates in terms of human experience and in simple and lucid manner the relevance of the great doctrines of the faith.

In order to appreciate his contribution more fully we will have to examine his theology in greater detail. It is axiomatic that in a systematic theology every part is integrally related to the whole, and that, consequently, every starting point will eventually lead to an examination of the whole theological system. In Baillie's case

the obvious starting point is an examination of his concept of the nature of faith.

CHAPTER 3

FAITH

I

Introduction

Ezekiel, as he moved in his dream along the piles of dry bones, heard himself addressed by the question "can these bones live?"¹ Modern man, passing by Christian doctrines and Christian creeds, thinks of them as belonging to another age, as piles of dry bones, now dead and useless. But the modern Christian man finds himself addressed, as was Ezekiel, by the question "can these bones live in this generation?" And if he turns to the Word of God in search of an answer he will find that the only hope lies in faith.

In the New Testament, faith is the fundamental factor in man's relationship to God. It is faith that makes religion come alive. As life and blood were identified by the ancient Israelites, so religion and faith are identified in the New Testament. Religion is faith. Paul could scarcely have emphasized it more. He could speak of the Christians as "the household of faith",² and he made clear that the most important factor of all, salvation, was by faith. One of the

¹ Ezekiel 37:3

² Galatians 6:10

most wonderful chapters in the New Testament has to do with it.¹ And even John, who might be called the apostle of love, can yet say, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith".² They all put it in the centre. Even for Christ himself it was an operative factor. In His contact with people it was the one thing for which he was looking, and He was sad and disappointed when he did not find it. In the New Testament, therefore, it is the root of the whole matter. The Christian religion has its source in faith and cannot escape becoming a pile of dry bones without it. And a man's understanding of the nature of faith is a reliable clue to the nature of his theology.

For Dr. Barth faith falls on a man like a bolt from the blue. He compares it to the ringing of a tumbler when struck from the outside. Although he lays claim to the retention of human freedom, the net result of his theology is that faith depends altogether upon an act of God.

For Dr. Bultmann faith is altogether dependent upon an act of man. It is born when man is confronted with the cross of Christ, and responds to the all-important call to decision.

For Donald Baillie it is both. It is unquestionably an act of God. But man has decisions to make also, and man carries responsibil-

¹ Hebrews 11

² 1 John 5:4

ities that must be fulfilled before faith can become a possibility for him.

It will not be possible to grasp Baillie's concept of the nature of faith until it is clear that he conceives of both God and man as living and dynamic entities. Man is not a collective category labelled "Man", as Dr. Barth tends to consider him. When Donald Baillie thinks of man he thinks of living, free, responsible individual men. And when he thinks of God he thinks not of some mysterious power that is behind the cross of Jesus Christ as does Dr. Bultmann. He thinks rather of the Creator, the living God, who is ever "pressing in" on man in the moral demands of his conscience, and who was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

Man is responsible for obedience to the unconditional demands of the good that he knows in the normal human relations of the rough and tumble of daily life. Baillie writes:

He may not know that it is God. ...He may only be conscious of that inward voice. But the more he listens to it and obeys, the clearer and fuller it becomes. It cannot really get through to those who will not receive it. But it gets through to those who do, and they will come to understand it, and so they come to know the Speaker, that is, God.¹

This serves to point up man's responsibility. This is the human side. Here a great deal seems to depend on man's obedience. And in

¹ D. M. Baillie, Pamphlet "I Believe in God" (Church of Scotland Committee on Publications, 1937).

Baillie's thinking this is true. But it is far from being the whole story. We find him writing in his lecture notes regarding faith:

it is not quite like discovery...even on the psychological side he (man) does not exactly achieve it by struggle; he does not think it out and discover it by the might of his intellect. ...it comes to him, it dawns upon him; it is revealed to him. ...The God whom Jesus gives us is a seeking God, a God eternally loving and seeking out His creatures to reveal Himself to them. We could never begin to seek Him if He were not first seeking us: We could never in any way even begin to discover Him and know Him, or even long for Him, if He were not already revealing Himself to us, pressing through into the consciousness of humanity.¹

This is the other side.

Against this background let us turn to a detailed examination of his concept of the nature of faith.

II

What is Faith?

In beginning his examination of the nature of faith Baillie uses a telling illustration. A simple, uneducated charwoman lives in a neighbourhood of people who are one with her in her economic status but do not share her deep faith. She works in the home of a learned divine who also has a faith, but who has "thought it out into all its reasons",² as she will obviously never be able to do. But when the hour of trouble comes her faith proves stronger and more secure than his. How can this be explained? What is the source of their faith

¹ Unpublished lecture notes, St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

² Faith in God, p. 84.

that would account for this? In the case of the woman it is obviously not reason. Some would explain it as purely a matter of custom or tradition. She was taught so to believe and she has grown so accustomed to such belief that it seems unquestionable. Baillie admits the influence of tradition to be strong and very important indeed, but "while the importance of tradition is great, ...the ultimate basis of all our faith is some kind of insight which every religious man possesses in a measure for himself."¹ Moreover, while the best religious thinking has always insisted on the importance of authority, it has never considered religious faith to be blindly based on authority. "Even the Reformers were clear that the Scriptures have no authority as the Word of God until faith is awakened in the heart of the individual by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit."² And even St. Thomas Aquinas, in his analysis of faith, comes in the end to rest upon such an element of inward authority.³ There is an "inner argument" which is implicitly present in the heart of even our simple religious charwoman; and it cannot be reduced to the influence of authority, custom or tradition.

It is equally obvious that her faith is not founded on reason;

¹ Ibid., p. 89.

² Ibid.

³ See P. H. Wicksteed, The Reactions between Dogma and Philosophy illustrated from the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 194. "And so, after all, at the end of the chapter, the great Catholic theologian joins the Reformers, with their ultimate appeal to the testimonium Spiritus Sancti and the Quakers with their 'inner light'." Quoted in Faith in God, p. 92.

but neither is that of the learned divine by whom she is employed. This is not the sure pathway to faith that the Schoolmen thought it to be. "Theistic philosophy in the modern world admits ...that without the fundamental venture of faith it cannot make good its argument."¹ The learned divine's faith in God cannot be based on his philosophy for his philosophy of God is based on his faith. The "germ of faith"² common to them both, therefore, is neither custom, tradition, authority nor reason. This is far from saying that custom, tradition and authority are unimportant, because they are very important indeed in the religious life. And it does not mean that faith must be irrational and be set in antithesis to reason.³ Faith is not irrational; rather it is "reason grown courageous".⁴ But if it is not reached by reason and is not based on custom, tradition, or authority, what is this way of knowing that is different from ordinary scientific knowledge? What is faith?

III

Faith is Religious Experience

After this measure of reduction he turns more hopefully to examine the claim that faith is based on religious experience, and this he examines from both the theological and psychological points

¹ Faith in God, p. 95.

² Ibid., p. 100.

³ The real antithesis of the New Testament, he notes, is Faith and Light.

⁴ See L. P. Jacks Religious Perplexities, pp. 16-25. This phrase is quoted in Faith in God, p. 102.

of view. He notes the emphasis of the Schoolmen and the Roman Catholic Church that faith must precede experience, and the reaction to the "coldness of faith" that this evolves in the insistence of those who claim that experience must precede faith. In any discussion of religious experience the name of Schleiermacher, with his correlation of faith and feeling, comes to mind. But Baillie, however great his debt to Schleiermacher, is quick to see the weakness of building faith on feeling. "If faith's certainty is to be dependent on the results of self-scrutiny, we shall simply never attain to certainty, but shall be left clinging to anxious speculation,"¹ he quotes with approval. Schleiermacher's statement that all doctrines are "utterances concerning religious states of mind" he considers to be "an absurd description... Religious doctrines are not primarily about states of the human mind, but about objective divine realities, God and His ways and His works."² Religious experience simply cannot be equated with feeling unless the latter has a cognitive element in it. And if it has, if it is feeling plus belief, then religious experience and faith are the same thing. One does not precede the other; they are simultaneous. Faith is not subservient to nor dependent upon

¹ Brunner quoting Luther, quoted in Faith in God, p. 135.

² Faith in God, p. 114.

a more ultimate reality, namely, feeling; "the belief and the experience are one".¹ And he adds, "If this inseparability of the belief and the experience were kept clearly in mind, a great deal of confusion on the whole subject would be avoided."²

But the other side of the coin teaches a lesson for which we shall ever be indebted to Schleiermacher, namely, that there can be no religious knowledge apart from religious experience. "The truths of religion are really of such a nature that they can be apprehended only in the personal experience of religion, that is, in a personal religious faith."³ It is only in the religious experience that faith takes on reality and that trust is possible. Custom, tradition, authority, doctrine or creed can only take on reality for the individual and be channels to faith for him when they have this inner affirmation of religious experience. Thus Baillie writes:

it seems quite legitimate and useful to say that doctrine must be based on religious experience, provided that we remember that doctrines are...utterances concerning divine realities which are already implicit in our faith and have simply to be made explicit—that is the sense in which they are based on the experience. In the same way...it can be said that theology must be based on religious experience. ...Thus the lesson of the experience-theology is a highly important one for us to learn, and the phrase 'religious experience' is one which has permanently enriched theological thinking, and has surely come to stay.⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 113.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 118.

⁴ Ibid.

The understanding, however, that experience is important and that faith and religious experience are one and the same thing, although it does tell us something about faith, does not answer the fundamental questions about what faith really is and about the reality on which it is based.

Turning to the psychological approach, the question arises "can faith rest on the results of an empirical psychological examination of the religious experience of many people?" Can such accumulated evidence provide the basis for religious faith? Whatever evidence may be accumulated, few psychologists would now admit the possibility of such a proof. They have means of explaining away these religious experiences in terms other than faith in God. In any case,

whatever weight this argument from religious experience to the truth of the beliefs may have, it is surely absurd to suggest that this is the ground upon which a religious man believes, or that this gives any light upon the real nature of the faith.¹

This is not "faith's own argument";² it is not the "kind of ground that these saints themselves (who were the raw material for the investigation) had for their faith".³ And it is this latter which we are concerned to discover.

IV

Faith is the Will to Believe

Baillie next turns to an examination of William James' idea of

¹ Ibid., p. 130.

² Ibid., p. 109.

³ Ibid., p. 131.

the "Will to Believe" as a basis for faith. The thesis here is that the essence of faith is a voluntary choosing to believe. This he finds, however, to be an impossibility. To counsel an honest doubter to exercise his will to believe is a futile counsel. "You cannot make yourself believe."¹ And to advise him to utilize auto-suggestion by using his will in pursuing the exercises of religion does not necessarily lead to faith either,—it may have the very opposite effect. But there is a point where the exercise of the will does enter the picture. In dealing with someone in search of faith, appeal can be made to a basic conviction that "there is a meaning and principle of good at the heart of all things."² If he confesses to such a conviction, "this is already the beginning of faith".³ Even although his moral conviction may not be as clearly thought out as this, unless he has himself destroyed it he must have some moral conviction. And if he exercises his will in being faithful to it, he will find it "gradually growing into something more explicit".⁴ This is the point that is of extreme importance to Baillie's theology and to his understanding of the nature of faith. A man cannot acquire faith by simply exercising his will, by simply willing to believe. But there is an

¹ Faith in God, p. 147.

² Ibid., p. 155.

³ Ibid., p. 156.

⁴ Ibid.

area where he can use his will; there is an area, indeed, where he bears responsibility for using it. And whether or not he does use it in this area is determinative regarding his ability to believe. The area in which this responsibility lies is the area of morality.

It is essential to an understanding of Baillie to be clear that this does not make "faith an achievement of the human will, like the voluntary choices of the moral life".¹ Indeed, "even these moral choices have this two-fold aspect; they are (to the religious man) not only his own doing, but also in a deep sense the work of God's grace".² And by way of expanding this awareness he quotes Baron von Hugel:

What constitutes religion is not simply to hold a view and try to live a life with respect to the Unseen..., but precisely that which is over and above this--the holding of this view and of this life to proceed somehow from God Himself, so as to bind my innermost mind and conscience to unhesitating assent.³

But it is equally essential to an understanding of Baillie to be clear that at the same time "faith has a close connection with the will, with the moral life".⁴ He neatly sums it all up as follows:

Perhaps we might say that the error of this doctrine of the will to believe lies in forgetting the truth we have learned--that

¹ Ibid., p. 162.

² Ibid.

³ The Mystical Element of Religion Vol. I., p. 46, quoted in Faith in God, p. 163.

⁴ Faith in God, p. 163.

faith is an 'experience'; while the merit of this doctrine is to correct the error exposed in our last chapter (regarding experience)—the error of thinking that such an experience can be a purely 'given' thing, without any activity of the mind or will. Faith at least, we have now learned, is not an experience which arises in vacuo and unconditioned: it has a close connection with the will, because with the moral life.¹

This idea he proceeds to develop.

V

Faith and Morality

Closely associated with the will as an important factor in faith is Baillie's appreciation of the importance of morality. His conviction about it first comes to light in his examination of William James' concept of the "Will to Believe". James claims: "The question of having moral beliefs at all or not having them is decided by our will".² Baillie could not more heartily disagree. "In actual life and practice", he writes, "every doubter worth considering knows that in some quite inescapable sense the noble is better than the base and has an absolute claim upon him."³ Moral reality is not the product of the will nor of human reason; it is a basic reality. And as the doubter is driven back from one position that seemed to be based on reality to another, he cannot be driven back beyond this. He encounters this

¹ Ibid.

² The Will to Believe, pp. 226, quoted in Faith in God, p. 160.

³ Faith in God, p. 160.

reality, not in theory nor by way of deduction, but in the moral demands that lay their claim upon him in the daily rounds of his normal life. And if he is obedient to these demands he will discover "that faith is somehow based on moral realities, so that the more loyal a man is to these realities, the more he comes to be convinced of the religious reality too".¹ This was the discovery of Frederick W. Robertson of Brighton and of many others in the nineteenth century when faith so often had its back to the wall fighting for its life. And this Baillie articulates as his own position:

Religious faith is essentially the conviction that our highest values must and do count in the whole scheme of things, that they are not simply our little dream, but reveal the very meaning and purpose of the universe, that love is at the heart of all things, ...that our highest values 'are the answer of man's heart to something, to someone, that is not himself, and yet is like himself in the love of righteousness, truth and beauty'. ...And whence comes this conviction? On what is it based? Not on any demonstration that the universe is being thus governed, but rather on the assurance, given through our moral consciousness, that it must be so. ...We may not have any theory about it, but in actual practice we cannot doubt it. Now the truer we are in practice to these moral convictions, ...the more firmly do we come to grasp them, and the more deeply do we come to understand them; for in these matters it is not by mere theoretical thinking, but by practical fidelity, that the deepest understanding comes. And the more deeply we thus come to understand them, the more do we become assured that they mean something more than 'mere morality': they are revelations of a divine Purpose. Thus 'Conscience' begins² to sound as the voice of God. ...This is the germ of faith in God.

¹ Ibid., p. 166.

² Ibid., pp. 176 f.

VI

Criticisms

There are two closely-related points in this exposition of the nature of faith where Baillie is open to misunderstanding and even attack, and he is not insensitive to them. The first has to do with conscience. How can conscience "begin to sound as the voice of God" if it is socially conditioned and, moreover, seems to have its origin in the mores of the particular society in which it has evolved? Or does he regard it as "a faculty of a unique order which we can only believe to have been implanted by a special divine act?"¹ The latter would be an untenable position. "Conscience", he writes,

is not (we are all now agreed) a separate and mysterious faculty in the individual, giving clear and uniform utterances out of its own unaided resources, and requiring a supernatural cause for its explanation, but a gradual result of social evolution, largely conditioned in its utterances by social tradition and environment.²

But, "however Conscience may have grown, we do believe in its voice."³ The real question, therefore, is not its development, but whether "its utterances have objective validity, and whether this can be given any meaning apart from the idea of God."⁴ And he claims that, ulti-

¹ Words used by Professor Wm. McDougall in description of an antiquated view of Conscience, Hibbert Journal, XIX, p. 282, quoted in Faith in God, p. 178.

² Faith in God, p. 178.

³ Ibid., p. 180.

⁴ Ibid., p. 179.

mately, it cannot:

Our moral convictions, our absolute values, the utterances of our Conscience, which remain indubitable to us in actual life, ...cannot in the last analysis, be given a meaning without the introduction of the idea of God.¹ Our moral consciousness, when taken in earnest, involves us in a whole realm of religious truth.²

With this conclusion many modern philosophers would disagree and to this consideration we shall return in examining the relationship between religion and morality. Let us follow him, meanwhile, as he considers the second area where he is open to misunderstanding and attack, namely, this closely related matter of the nature of the relationship between religion and morals.

What, then, is his concept of the nature of this relationship? In the first place,—and this is very important—, faith is not "a mere postulate or inference from morality".³ He speaks appreciatively of Kant's great contribution in restoring the awareness that religious faith is not a matter of "speculative proof"⁴ but of "practical conviction"⁵, thus restoring the relation of religion and morality. With Kant's contention that through our moral life and experience we have a deeper insight into the nature of ultimate reality than we can obtain through ordinary experience, he heartily agrees. But the argument that the moral imperative involves us in a realm of ends which is unthinkable

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 181.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

without God, he cannot accept. "We cannot but feel that Kant's argument is thoroughly unsatisfying as an account of faith, chiefly perhaps because it seems to reduce faith to a mere inference."¹ As Professor Robinson has succinctly and aptly put it, "God is posited, not present."²

Nor can Baillie accept Ritschl's position that it is through the knowledge of moral reality, of which we are immediately certain, that we can establish the existence of its religious foundation. "Surely", he says, "the realm of religious reality is given us in, or with, our moral consciousness in a much more direct way than that."³ Indeed, "faith in God is a very part of our moral consciousness, without which the latter becomes meaningless".⁴ As John Baillie has put it: "it is not merely that through our values we reach God or that from them we infer Him, but rather that in them we find Him."⁵ The relationship is as direct as that. "This is not to reduce religion to 'mere morality'", Donald points out, "but rather to abolish 'mere morality'

¹ Ibid.

² N. H. G. Robinson, Christ and Conscience, p. 204. Professor Robinson's judgement regarding Kant's theory of the relation of morality to religion is that it "classifies itself as a special case of rationalism". Ibid.

³ Faith in God, p. 182.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God (Oxford Paperback, 1963), p. 131. First published 1939.

as an abortion, and to set morality in the heart of religion, where alone it has a meaning."¹ And in regard to those who would object to this relationship between religion and morality he writes: "Either our moral values tell us something about the nature and purpose of reality...or they are subjective and therefore meaningless."²

Thus, to sum up, God speaks to us through our moral convictions. Faith is not reached by inference or deduction from moral reality, but we become aware of it through loyalty to our moral convictions in our daily associations with people. Strictly speaking, we should not say that faith is "based on"³ our moral convictions. Experience does not precede faith. "The germ of faith in God is present even in the moral conviction."⁴ At this stage it is really only a "germ" of faith, it is an "unconscious faith",⁵ as it may not yet be recognized to be a faith in God. It is the "elemental sense of the Divine".⁶ It finds expression in all our values, "though not completely in any of them or in all of them put together"⁷ because, "faith give us something more and other than all these values put together, and water

¹ Faith in God, p. 182.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 194.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 193.

⁶ Ibid., p. 194.

⁷ Ibid.

cannot rise higher than its source".¹ This "germ", however, will not grow naturally and inevitably and by itself into faith. It requires obedience to the highest that one knows. And, it is important to note, this highest is not something that we would ever "have developed in a short lifetime by ourselves; the tradition we have inherited draws forth our faith".² Yet, even although faith is dependent upon man's obedience to the highest that he knows, it is at the same time a gift of God, "Why should it be any less His gift", Baillie asks, "because it comes through conscience, which is His voice, and comes only to those who hearken to that voice?"³

This, however, is not all. "Religion is more than morality and can never express itself fully in the moral life alone."⁴ Faith still gives us something "more and other than all our moral values put together". He writes, "At the same time, this moral life, this life of ideals, cannot be content with itself, but points us to something beyond, or perhaps underneath and behind it, yet quite inseparable from it and even inclusive of it..."⁵ In other words, it points to God:

God is what we dimly know, even in apprehending our duty in the common-place details of practice. But the more we live ourselves

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 195.

³ Ibid., p. 222.

⁴ Ibid., p. 193.

⁵ Ibid., p. 227.

into the ideal, in a daily life of duty and love, the clearer becomes our conscious knowledge of God, in which alone we can rest, and which alone, in its turn, can empower us to realize¹ the ideal. And this is more than morality: this is religion.

And this becomes a personal relationship:

We do not know the method of the Divine Love in any detail. But we know whom we have trusted, and are persuaded that He is able to keep what we have committed to Him. This is the kind of knowledge that is called faith.²

This faith finds its "consummation" in Christ and this process of development is true both in the development of the Christian faith historically and in the development of the Christian faith in individual men. "What Christians believe," he writes, "is that both of these processes, God's quest of man and man's quest of God, reached their consummation in Jesus Christ."³ It is in contact with Him that faith reaches its fulfilment; for faith and revelation are really two sides of the same coin. "Revelation," he writes, "is but the other side of faith, and it is only through faith that we can see the revelation."⁴ In His voice we hear the voice of God, and it is self-authenticating. When we see the love of Christ displayed on the cross, we know too that this is the love of God.⁵ And here we find ourselves judged and

¹ Ibid., p. 228.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 239.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ He writes, "Not only should we, looking at such faith, be able through its eyes to see something of its God: we should also become aware of God looking out through its eyes at us, coming into the very heart of our humanity to seek us out with His love. For the other side of man's quest of God is always God's quest of man." Ibid., p. 290.

forgiven. "Only such a forgiveness can enable a man to forgive himself; a justification which lifts a man above 'mere morality' into the ultimate reconciliation of religion, 'the righteousness which is of God by faith'."¹

It is in regard to this idea of the growth of faith that Baillie is not entirely clear. He is quite definite that this "germ" only grows by obedience to the highest that man knows. He is equally definite that this is not the only condition of growth. It is not as though God planted it there in the beginning and left man to cultivate it as best he could. His concept of God's relationship to man is much too dynamic for that. It grows also by God "pressing in", by the voice of God speaking to him through conscience and moral conviction and by the grace of God empowering him to obey. God and man are both actively involved in the process. "God's quest of man was also man's quest of God". And the consummation of man's quest is in the revelation of Christ. Even if, however, we recognize our relationship to Christ to be a personal relationship, there is more to it than finding in it a great Comrade and Leader. There is, in Christ, not only the self-authenticating embodiment of the moral ideal, there is also the revelation—and therefore the faith—that this is the Saviour. Speaking of the Cross in God was in Christ, he writes:

on the deepest interpretation, this was not only an offering made by a man to God, but also a sacrifice made by God Himself. ...And

¹ Ibid., p. 292.

it is an expiatory sacrifice, because sin is a dreadfully real thing which love cannot tolerate or lightly pass over, and it is only out of the suffering of such inexorable love that true forgiveness, as distinct from indulgent amnesty, could ever come. That is the objective process of atonement that goes on in the very life of God.¹

And near the end of Faith in God he writes:

there is faith in the forgiveness of sins, in an atonement which is in the very heart of God; and it is this which has always, more than anything else, given Christians moral victory.²

It is quite clear, therefore, that this growth in faith is not intrinsic nor merely a human achievement. But the area where Baillie is not clear is the point at which this germ becomes full or saving faith. As Professor N. H. G. Robinson points out, "morality in the broadest possible sense occurs within or accrues from the relationship between persons".³ And Baillie sees God as "pressing in" in the voice of conscience and moral conviction throughout the process of this "germ" becoming faith. A man may be unconscious of the nature of this personal relationship and Baillie speaks of "unconscious faith". But is there not a qualitative difference between faith in God before the "Christian consummation" and faith afterwards? Professor Robinson claims that "when faith is born we are born...faith is not involved in the choices which lead up to it".⁴ But Donald Baillie would not

¹ God was in Christ, p. 198.

² Faith in God, p. 293.

³ Christ and Conscience, p. 50.

⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

agree. John Baillie claims that faith is "apprehension through commitment",¹ although at the same time there can be no commitment without apprehension. Donald would agree, but he would feel that this apprehension can amount to faith in God outside of a conscious knowledge of Jesus Christ, and that even within such knowledge a further differentiation would be needed. It would be needed because this apprehension could amount to a more "conscious" faith in God in the recognition of the personification of the moral ideal in Christ without yet recognizing the Saviour in that personification. Only does faith in God reach fulness or maturity or its consummation when it apprehends that Christ is Saviour and makes a commensurate commitment.

It is important to realize that in Baillie's thinking the "pressing in" of God is also the "pressing in" of the supra-historical, the eternal Christ. He writes, "He (God) is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the Son and the Spirit are consubstantial with the Father."² And again, "it was the eternal Word, the eternal Son, very God of very God, that was incarnate in Jesus."³ There is some apprehension, then,

¹ John Baillie, The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 90.

² God was in Christ, p. 123.

³ Ibid., p. 151. He further writes, "The divine is always prevenient. And so from the human life of Jesus on earth we are, paradoxically, but inevitably, led back to its divine origin...in heaven on which it all depended. 'When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son', and He...lived as He did because He was the Son of God. In that sense it is impossible to do justice to the truth of the Incarnation without speaking of it as the coming into history of the eternally pre-existent Son of God. Ibid., p. 150.

of the eternal Christ in the claim of moral consciousness, an apprehension that grows through obedience to this claim, in which very obedience the grace of God is also active. At this stage it is "unconscious" faith, because the personal nature of the relationship is not yet recognized.¹ This apprehension takes a great forward step in its development when it recognizes the personification of the moral ideal in Jesus of Nazareth—a recognition that is self-authenticating—when the personal nature of the relationship becomes conscious, and Jesus is regarded as Leader, Comrade and Helper. But it does not reach its "consummation" until it recognizes, through revelation, that this Christ is Saviour. Speaking of mere morality Baillie says, "the endeavour is sure to defeat itself because it is self-centred instead of God-centred, which is the very root of evil."² And again, "(we) must certainly reject any view that would make faith or the apprehension of God anything like a mere moral achievement; for it must be all of God who saves us from our sins by His grace through faith, 'and that not of ourselves'."³ This apprehension does not reach its fullness, therefore, until it recognizes that God was in Christ, until there is penitence leading to forgiveness and recon-

¹ Baillie writes, "Religion is, indeed, more than morality, and the life of faith is more than the life of ideals. Yet true faith—or the true knowledge of God—can only realize itself in us as we follow these ideals. It is in them, as in a glass darkly, that we can see the God whose presence in us created them for us and inspired us to seek them as the images of Himself." Faith in God, p. 226.

² God was in Christ, p. 164.

³ Faith in God, p. 226.

ciliation and a change of centre from man to God. All of this is included in his concept of the development of faith. But it seems that in this development a qualitative distinction in the nature of faith is called for when the nature of sin becomes apparent, Christ is revealed as Saviour and the centre of man's world changes from self to God.¹ It would seem that Baillie's thinking is that a quantitative difference in apprehension amounts to a different kind of faith. This becomes apparent in his dealing with revelation to which we shall shortly return. For a clear presentation of the gospel, however, this difference is important; as P. T. Forsyth has written "for the religion of to-day there is no hope till...we restore repentance to the foundation of faith".² This difference, although it is implicit to Baillie's presentation, is not made explicit. As has already been noted in chapter 2, there does seem to be a shift of emphasis between his earlier book Faith in God and his later book God was in Christ from man's responsibility to God's prevenient grace. The latter book accordingly, has a greater emphasis on sin and salvation and the saving work of Christ. But the qualitative difference between faith in Christ as moral Leader in a man-centred understanding of life and

¹ Professor N. H. G. Robinson elucidates, "In the light, then, of God's Word which He speaks to us we see that our earlier...understanding was also misunderstanding and, more than that, that our misunderstanding was sin!" Christ and Conscience, p. 179.

² P. T. Forsyth, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 55. (London, 1961). First published 1909.

faith in Christ as Saviour in a God-centred understanding of life, is not made explicit. Although the transition is provided,--and it is, as we have seen, a very important transition indeed--, the point of change from a man-centred view of life to a God-centred understanding of life is not set out in the clarity that a fully effective presentation of the gospel would require.

Meanwhile, let us return to the criticism of the way in which he relates religion and morality. As mentioned in chapter 1, his conception of this relationship is, by many, no longer considered acceptable. In the Foreword to the 1964 edition of Faith in God Professor John McIntyre writes:

Neo-Conservative suspicion of natural reason and natural law, combined with its fear of the revival of a doctrine of justification by works, has made it almost impossible for Protestantism in this period to place any great reliance upon morality as a way to faith.¹

He also mentions the "external circumstances"² of the revival of humanism which "insisted that morality was not the sole sphere of religion" and "the sharp attacks of positivist and linguistic philosophers upon the supposedly religious or metaphysical implications of morality".³ These, he claims, have shaken confidence in the moral argument for divine existence and generally made religious philosophers reluctant to draw any deductions from morality that might be of sig-

¹ Faith in God, p. 26.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

nificance for theology. "In fact", he writes,

what has tended to happen has been that Christian ethics has been made into a discipline dependent upon Christian dogmatics, and a question mark placed against anything that might claim to be ethics 'simpliciter'.¹

In the first place, then, need modern theology be hesitant about emphasizing the relation between religion and morality because of the "external circumstances" of the revival of humanism and the "sharp attacks of linguistic and positivist philosophies"? John Baillie takes up this issue in his Gifford Lectures 1961-62. Reality, he insists, is not confined to the corporeal world of physical matter. "The test of reality", he writes, "is the resistance it offers to the otherwise uninhibited course of my thinking, desiring and acting."² This he finds, of course, in the physical world. But he also finds it in his relations with other persons. As Dr. Martin Buber expressed it, "others are the real world".³ And the reality lies not merely in their physical existence—because they can be treated as things—, but in their rights. "My relations with my fellows", Baillie writes, "have the significance of reality for me only because and in so far as they mediate to me this great reality."⁴ But from where does this

¹ Ibid.

² The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 33.

³ Martin Buber, I and Thou, p. 18, quoted in The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 34.

⁴ The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 36.

greater reality—these "rights"—come? Jean Paul Sartre and the existentialists would say that men invent their own values, that they decide what could be the summum bonum for society. Bertrand Russell states, "It is we who create value";¹ "outside human desires there is no moral standard".² And to the reductionists man is a natural product and that is the whole truth about him. But John Baillie insists that,

where I find myself in the most assured contact with reality is in the relation with God that is mediated to me through my relation with my fellows and in relation with my fellows that is mediated to me through my relation with God.³

And he quotes Paul Tillich:

the unity of the personal and the unconditional, or of the ethical and the religious, is the manifestation of the really real, for it resists absolutely any attempt to be dissolved into subjectivity.⁴

Furthermore, Baillie claims, it has always been so; the burden of proof lies with those who would disclaim it.

Modern empiricist philosophers, however, believe that all veridical knowledge derives from our experience and must be checked by reference to it. And they confine this experience to experience of the corporeal world as revealed to us by our bodily senses. But, Baillie asks, is there no knowledge save that which can be verified by

¹ Bertrand Russell, What I Believe, p. 246, quoted in The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 30.

² Ibid., p. 40, quoted Ibid., p. 30.

³ The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 39.

⁴ Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era, pp. 255 f, quoted in The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 39.

methods proper to natural science? He insists that there is, and points to the martyrs of science. They did not die in defence of their scientific theories, but in defence of liberty of thought, freedom of research and the right of free speech. They knew this to be right, and it was a type of knowledge not verifiable by methods proper to natural science. He writes, "The naïveté of the demand of the positivist philosophers that the deliverances of faith should be verifiable by reference to ordinary sense perception has often made me wonder."¹ To demand verification of experience is proper, but to demand verification by sense experience is purely arbitrary. This is a different category of knowledge and of reality and verification can only be established by reference to its own type of reality. Such restriction on the part of empiricist-positivist philosophy arises out of a naturalistic bias and not out of logic or reason. Thus, he concludes,

Because they have already decided that there is no objective reality but matter in motion, they are forced to believe that our ethical judgements are merely² statements concerning our own subjective desires and intentions.

This should make it clear that we need not be bound by the bias of positivist philosophers, and that we need not exclude morality on

¹ The Sense of the Presence of God, pp. 75 f.

² Ibid., p. 57.

this account.¹

The intuitionists do admit this area of reality. They admit the objective reality of moral values beyond a subjective source in human desire or intention. Professor H. D. Lewis has written,

a responsible person is one whose actions may be good or bad in a moral sense. And the nature of these distinctions is not capable of exhaustive analysis but must itself be apprehended by moral intuition.²

But, again, what is the source of this moral "intuition"? Is it merely the product of social conditioning? Professor Robinson writes:

Even the twentieth-century intuitionists who seek to do justice to the personal claim involved in morality find themselves compelled, when they try to understand the system of such claims, to look for the criterion of duty in something as impersonal as the tendency of an act to be right, the tendency of what they call a prima facie duty to be a duty.³

Even this seems to be a shaky criterion of value.⁴ We return, without

¹ Any unbiased examination will reveal that there is reality outside of what can be verified by reference to ordinary sense perception. For example, the reality of a sense of humour or honour or proportion or style or duty or the reality of a sensitive conscience, all of which go beyond the bodily senses. They may be gained through the bodily senses, but they carry us far beyond them.)

² H. D. Lewis, "Freedom and Responsibility", Question, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 118, quoted in Christ and Conscience, p. 48.

³ Christ and Conscience, p. 184.

⁴ It is interesting to find Lord Russell changing from his earlier position. In 1954 he wrote re: whether oysters are good or not viz-a-viz whether it was bad to torture the Jews: 'we do not feel as if it were merely expressing a matter of taste. ...I think this feeling, though not decisive, deserves respect, and should make us reluctant to accept at all readily the view that ethical judgements are wholly subjective.' Human Society in Ethics and Politics, 1954, pp. 4 f; quoted in The Sense of the Presence of God, pp. 78 f.

apology, to Donald Baillie's statement: "conscience, in the last analysis, cannot be given a meaning without the introduction of the idea of God". We cannot agree, therefore, with Professor McIntyre that the "external circumstances" of the revival of humanism and the "sharp attack" levelled by positivist and linguistic philosophers need make religious philosophers reluctant to draw deductions from morality that might be of significance to theology. And certainly we cannot agree that they need offer sufficient deterrent to exclude morality from modern theology.

Turning now to theology itself, neither can we agree with Professor McIntyre that "it is almost impossible for Protestantism in this period to place any great reliance upon morality as a way to faith".¹ On the contrary, morality would seem to be one of the most hopeful points of contact in demonstrating to modern man the relevance of the Christian faith. In any case, from the point of view of theology itself, the question is most pertinent whether modern theology has not lost something of intrinsic worth in its abandonment of morality. In seeking to overcome the weaknesses of liberalism, has it not left out something that is essential to its own wholeness? A healthy theology needs both an adequate doctrine of God and an adequate doctrine of man. It needs to see man, not as a category, but as individual, living, responsible, dynamic men. And it needs to see God, not as an ineffable mystery, but as the living, personal God, the Father

¹ See above p. 124.

of our Lord Jesus Christ. An adequate recognition of the importance of morality would go far to strengthen modern theology on both of these necessary segments of its content.

This deficiency has been ably analysed by Professor Robinson in his book Christ and Conscience to which we have already referred. He points to the fact that at the centre of the Christian faith there has always been not a doctrine nor a proposition, but a personal encounter. It was to this that Luther turned when he wanted to silhouette the essence of "that which makes a man a Christian",¹ and even behind the elaborate system of the thought and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas as we have previously noted, this was there. It is not the acceptance of a doctrine or a creed that gives birth to faith; rather it is the entry into a personal relationship. Faith in God is a personal relationship.² And by the very fact that it is a personal relationship it must be a moral relationship; and an adequate theology simply must take account of this fact. If faith is not only given by grace, but as Dr. Barth claims, its response is also wholly determined by grace, then "all that the word 'faith' can connote on the human side is...

¹ Christ and Conscience, p. 4.

² P. T. Forsyth defines dogma as "the science of religion as a moral relation, a living and historic relation between two personalities, two consciences". The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 216.

John Baillie in The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought (London, 1956) quotes Dr. Temple and Dr. Tillich agreeing that "the fullness of revelation can be given only in the life of a person" (p. 80). And

an empty space, a blank page, a pure receptivity".¹ Man would be placed on the same passive category as is wax when it is impressed and indented by the stamp.² Dr. Barth claims to retain human freedom but also insists that faith is completely determined by grace. But it is difficult to see how there can be a personal relationship at all if faith is so completely determined. "The truth is", Professor Robinson writes,

that faith as conviction, as trust, as loyalty, as obedience, as love, cannot be completely determined; there is an ineradicable element of personal spontaneity, without which the conviction, loyalty and love would not be mine—or anyone's—and would not therefore be conviction, loyalty and love.³

It is quite true that faith in Christ is the gift of God's grace, as Donald Baillie so readily agrees. But he consistently insists that the element of human freedom and responsibility must be safeguarded or it is something less than a personal relationship, it is something less than a moral relationship, and man is something less than man.

Dr. Temple elucidates: "because 1. We who are ourselves persons can fully understand only what is personal. 2. God, who is a personal being, cannot adequately reveal Himself in anything other than personality". Nature, Man and God, p. 319. Donald Baillie writes: "obviously the only complete expression of faith is in personality: ...Nothing else could transmit the revelation." Faith in God, p. 236. John Dickie writes: "Christianity has always lived and functioned in the world...as a felt personal relationship to God." The Organism of Christian Truth (London, 1930), p. 13.

¹ Christ and Conscience, p. 167.

² See Christ and Conscience, pp. 88 f.

³ Ibid., p. 167.

Brunner recognizes this deficiency and seeks to correct it by claiming that only the content and not the form of the imago dei was destroyed in the Fall and that because the form remains a point of contact for general revelation also remains. This general revelation, however, has no saving value. Therefore, in Brunner's thinking, a distinction must be made between sustaining grace and saving grace. Although his reasons for doing this are clear enough, the results are unsatisfactory. The rigid division between form and content in the imago dei indicates that he is still thinking of it in static terms rather than in truly dynamic terms. And the distinction between general revelation and special revelation, and sustaining grace and saving grace, involves him in error and contradiction, as Dr. Barth was quick to point out.¹ The truth would seem to be, as Professor Robinson explains it,

that God is present to us at every point of human life and experience, present in the created world around us and in the claim of morality upon us, above all present in Christ His Son.²

God is always "pressing in" to make Himself known. But man must respond before the revelation becomes faith. Professor Robinson makes the interesting suggestion that we could arrive at a better understanding if we abandon Brunner's rigid divisions and seek to understand the situation in terms of the distinction between a

¹ See Karl Barth, Nein or 'No', Natural Theology (London, 1946).

² Christ and Conscience, p. 181.

narrative and a clamant understanding. God is present to us in creation and morality as well as in Christ, and the language of creation and morality is accordingly a clamant language; but apart from Christ our understanding of it is a merely narrative understanding.¹ It is still a "system of human life in which man is at the centre and God, if He is acknowledged to be there at all, is at the fringe".² It is thoroughly sinful, and it only moves beyond this when, through Christ, God becomes God and His claims are recognized as total. In this light there is no need to make rigid divisions between general revelation and special revelation, and between sustaining grace and saving grace. As Professor Robinson asks,

Is it not the one God who is revealed in both, and is not the revelation in Christ the fulfilment of the other? And, therefore, is not the general revelation a saving one in the sense that it leads men to Christ, prepares them for Him in whose name only there is salvation?³

John Baillie has something of the same idea when he quotes Heinrich Frick; "when we designate the non-Christian religions as general revelation, we are applying our knowledge of the gospel."⁴ That is, it is by hind-sight, so-to-speak, that we are able to see the difference. Only then are we able to grasp the true nature of sin, and only then is our life changed from a man-centred understanding of life to a

¹ Ibid., see p. 182.

² Ibid., p. 183.

³ Ibid., p. 186.

⁴ The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 201.

God-centred understanding of life. And Baillie goes on to say,

I should not myself care to speak of any saving power 'apart from Christ', but should rather insist that the Eternal Christ who was made flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, and the Eternal Atonement which was made event on Calvary, were and are the source of every 'saving process'.¹

That is, without reducing the importance of the historic event, the saving work of Christ is not confined to the earthly event of the cross, nor even to the brief period of His earthly life. Speaking regarding men of the Old Testament he writes:

Such knowledge of God and such acceptance with Him as was enjoyed by the men of the Old Testament were mediated through the Eternal Son of God, though he had not yet been made flesh and none could yet call upon his name.²

Donald Baillie shares this idea and is also chary about using the terms "general" and "special" revelation. It is all God -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- "pressing in" with His revelation of Himself. In writing about revelation in his lecture notes³ he makes one most significant suggestion when he asks: "can't a difference in degree become so great that for all practical purposes it becomes a difference in kind?" And if this is so, since faith is but the other side of revelation, it would seem that the revelation in Jesus of Nazareth which, on this theory, amounts to a difference in kind, would elicit a faith that would also be different in kind. The revelation is that "God Himself

¹ Ibid., pp. 201 f.

² Ibid., p. 193.

³ Unpublished lecture notes.

was incarnate in Jesus Christ and bore the sin of the world for our salvation".¹ And the response of faith is the total commitment of the whole person. As Isaac Watts expresses it in his famous hymn, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all".²

Donald Baillie, therefore, is quite clear that in the voice of conscience men hear the voice of God. And Professor Robinson writes: "short of Christ Himself, it is in morality that God speaks most clearly to us".³ We cannot agree with Professor McIntyre that it is "almost impossible for Protestantism in this period to place any great reliance upon morality as a way to faith". On the contrary it is our contention that the Barthian strain of dogmatic theology must return morality to its rightful place, it must "moralize dogma" and fully restore the interpersonal relationship of faith, before it can become a healthy and balanced theology.

At the opposite extreme of the swing of the pendulum from Barthian theology, as we have seen, is existentialist theology. Here the problem in the personal relationship of man and God is not that of making man less than a person, but of making God less than a person. It pushes God into the realm of ineffable mystery and makes a personal relation-

¹ Donald Baillie, To Whom Shall We Go?, p. 29.

² Isaac Watts, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", The United Church of Canada Hymnary, #86.

³ Christ and Conscience, p. 183.

ship impossible. The antidote for this, in order to restore a healthy and balanced theology, is to include revelation. "It is in the light of revelation alone that the centre of the moral order is seen to be in God".¹ This theology also needs to recognize the relationship between religion and morality. And here it seems that Donald Baillie's concept of the approach to faith provides the blueprint for both the existentialist and Barthian theologies. The answer to man's search for meaning in his "human situation" of intersubjectivity, of relation with his fellows in society, is to be found in obedience to the dictates of his moral convictions. And the embodiment of these he will not find in the common denominator of what is agreed to be the summum bonum for society, but in Jesus Christ. Morality will lead him to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to revelation and to God. If existentialist theology must find a place for revelation -- and it must in order to be whole --this can be for it a bridge to such a theology. Here Baillie stresses what seems to be the most hopeful point of contact with modern man, namely, Christian ethics. And this could well be the means of enabling this generation to find again that faith in God is relevant in the last half of the twentieth century. Once again, therefore, and this time in relation to existentialist theology, we seriously question whether it is "almost impossible for Protestantism in this period to place any great reliance on morality as a way to faith". On the con-

¹ Christ and Conscience, p. 216.

trary, it would seem that modern theology must do this, not only for the sake of its own health and wholeness, but also in the interests of demonstrating the relevance of the Christian faith to modern man.

VII

Conclusion

From our consideration in section VI, it seems clear that a wholesome theology requires a dynamic concept of both God and man. Faith includes both human responsibility and the grace of God. Faith is a gift; its establishment is brought about by an act of God. And yet at the same time man is never robbed of responsibility. It is a paradox, and we cannot surrender either side and retain the full truth of our faith. Moreover, Baillie intimates, we should not be surprised if we find further encounter with paradox in working out our theology.

But

above all we shall not be content to solve the paradox by sacrificing anything that our moral faith demands: that would be to attain a shallow simplicity by forgetting all that we have learned as to what faith is and how it finds its last entrenchment in the intimations of our moral consciousness.¹

If, therefore, God's quest of man and man's quest of God culminate in Jesus Christ, an adequate theology must have an adequate Christology, and to that we now turn.

¹ Faith in God, p. 301.

CHAPTER 4

CHRISTOLOGY

I

Christology at the Crossroads

Jesus Christ is a fact of history. Few would now attempt to deny it. And the Christian faith centres around this historic figure. But the crucial question has always been, "Who was he and what significance does his appearance in history hold for faith?"

In pre-Pauline days the Primitive Church considered the coming of Christ to be the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and promise regarding the coming of a Great Deliverer. Paul writes: "for I delivered unto you that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."¹ It is generally agreed that Paul also took over from the early Church the title of "Lord",² and he used it as a name for Jesus more than any other name. One of the prac-

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:3

² Some New Testament scholars, such as Bousset and Bultmann, think that this term and most of its content of meaning was borrowed from the Greek mystery cults. Aramaic Christianity, however, confessed Jesus as Lord, and Vincent Taylor thinks that the theory "suffers shipwreck" on this fact. Bousset, in defending his theory, has put forward the thesis that Aramaic-speaking Christians of Antioch adopted the title in imitation of their Greek-speaking brethren. A. E. J. Rawlinson considers this inadequate as an explanation and observes "the phrase 'Marana tha' is in fact the Achilles heel of the theory of Bousset." See Vincent Taylor, The Names of Jesus (London, 1953), p. 48. Bultmann claims that

tices of preachers and missionaries in the early days of the Church was that of using "testimony" texts and passages from the Old Testament to show not only that their message was rooted in the Old Testament but that it was indeed the fulfilment of its prophecy and promise. And so we find Paul writing in Romans 10:13; "for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." He was quoting Joel, who was, of course, referring to "The Lord" of the Old Testament, meaning God. But Paul can use the quotation and substitute Jesus of Nazareth as "Lord" and feel quite right in doing so. Luke, in Acts 2:36, using the same "testimony" practice, quotes Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Then he adds, "therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus..., both Lord and Christ," The risen Lord is exalted to the right hand of God where He exercises the authority of God and performs the functions of God. He is not identical with God -- "The Lord said unto my Lord --", but the New Testament Lord takes on the authority and functions of the Old Testament Lord. Peter, in Acts 4:10-12 speaks of "Jesus Christ the Nazarene" and says "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be

the title "The Lord" cannot have come from an early Aramaic origin because the Aramaic language, not having a definite article, couldn't say "The Lord" at all. It is generally agreed, however, that the title and most of its content of meaning had its origin in Hellenistic Judaism. For Paul most of the content of meaning arose in his own experience of conversion. Baillie writes: "I am not at all concerned to deny that St. Paul may have been conscious that he was using certain language which would through the Mysteries be familiar to many of his Greek hearers, and was even content to present his Gospel as the true mystery-religion. (But) it seems futile to try to explain St. Paul's Christology by the Mysteries." Unpublished lecture notes.

saved." This was the place that the New Testament writers gave to Jesus Christ.

Paul was not a systematic theologian. This was not his purpose. So he does not, -- nor do any of the New Testament writers --, give us a worked-out Christology. On the one hand he believed that Jesus was a man. In Philippians 2:8 he writes: "being found in fashion as a man"; and in Romans 1:3, "born of the seed of David according to the flesh". Moreover, as we have already noted,¹ it is altogether likely that Paul knew of the life and teaching of Jesus. But at the same time he believed that Christ was divine. He never places Christ on an equality with God; in his thinking Christ is always subordinate to the Father. He writes: "God sent forth His Son",² and "the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God".³ Yet, in quoting Old Testament passages as we have just noted, he freely substitutes Christ for God, in Romans 8:35, 37 he writes of the love of Christ and the love of God as being the same thing and in Acts 16:6, 7 he uses the terms "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of Jesus" interchangeably.⁴ Here are the roots of Trinitarian thought. But about the relation of the one God in whom he believed to this Son of God he does not elaborate, and he does not work out a Christology of the relation of the divine Son of God to the man Jesus. His purpose was to tell what Christ had done

¹ See above p. 13.

² Galatians 4:4.

³ 1 Corinthians 11:3.

⁴ See also Romans 8:9-11.

for him and what He could do for others. The question of the nature of the paradoxical relation of the divine and the human in one man he left unanswered.

The various heresies of the early centuries were successive attempts to solve this conundrum and to make the Incarnation more easily understood. They either overemphasized the divine at the cost of the human, the more common heresy, or vice versa. It became evident that essential truth was in danger of being sacrificed to simplicity, and the great Christological controversies followed. These in turn resulted in the calling of Church Councils, and Creeds were established in the attempt to give form to the true faith and thus to protect it from heresy. The Council of Chalcedon, for example, stated that Christ was "consubstantial with the Father" and "consubstantial with us, ...the distinction of the two natures being in no way taken away because of union", and the two coming together in such fashion as to make one person. Christ is both wholly human and wholly divine, yet one person. It simply states the faith without attempting a solution to the Christological problem. The thought is conceived in static terms of "substance", and by such an approach no solution seems possible. Moreover, this approach was destined to lose in philosophical abstraction the warm reality of the personality of Jesus of Nazareth.

This "static" approach to Christology held sway for centuries until its dominance was broken by the teaching of Luther and the Reformers. Although they did not carry their thought through to the

formulation of a Christology and theology adequate to contain their new insights, they did see that salvation was based on a personal relation between God and man through Christ rather than on the intellectual acceptance of a static revealed truth. Although the Church had consistently insisted on the full humanity of Jesus, and spoke of Him as two natures in one person, it still was not a living human person of whom they thought. As Baillie puts it:

it was continually haunted by a docetism which made His human nature very different from ours and indeed largely explained it away as a matter of simulation or 'seeming' rather than reality.¹

Now the awareness came to the Reformers that Jesus was really a living Person. Baillie writes: "As a matter of fact, it was the thought of Martin Luther that largely helped towards this new realization, though later Lutheranism lost it."² As we have already noted³ it was not until the nineteenth century that a new theological structure began to emerge that was adequate to contain the new insight. It came to be recognized that the revelation contained in scripture was not the unveiling of static truths about the work of Christ which had to be intellectually accepted. Rather it was the revelation of a living, human person. The thought of Socinus did much to pioneer this new emphasis on the real humanity of Jesus, and Jesus began to emerge as a living person. The fact that the scriptures were now open to every man and that approach

¹ God was in Christ, p. 11.

² Unpublished lecture notes.

³ See above pp. 23 f.

could be made to them unhampered by dogmatic prejudice and unobscured by creedal formulations, speeded up the emergence. And a sound basis was provided for it by the entrance of empiricism into the field of theology by way of literary criticism of the texts of scripture.¹

As has already been noted,² this emergence of the "Jesus of History" from the mists of metaphysics held, for many thousands of people, all the wonder of a new revelation. Jesus came to be known as a real person, and because He was He provided an understandable revelation of God; the Christian faith became immediately relevant to life. This provided a whole new approach to Christology. Never again could theology minimize or fail to recognize the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ.³ Every Christology must now include the realization that Christ's human nature is "homo-ousios" with our own -- "essentially the same as ours".⁴ It must now include the awareness that Jesus was a man, "living", as Baillie writes, "His whole life within the conditions and limitations of humanity."⁵

But the "Jesus of History" movement soon developed some major problems.⁶ For one thing, the rash of the "Lives of Jesus" that were forthcoming, designed to display the personality of this great Leader and Example, were often contradictory. Indeed, so contradictory were they that it was difficult to tell what He really was like. Another important factor was the further development of literary criticism.

¹ See above pp. 30 f.

³ See above p. 31.

⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

² See above pp. 30 f.

⁴ God was in Christ, p. 10.

⁶ See above pp. 32 f.

Not only had it allowed the "Jesus of History" to emerge from the obscurity of metaphysics, but Form Criticism had gone on to cast serious doubts on the reliability of the evidence of scripture regarding His life and teaching. This left theology in a very unstable position. To build on the life and teaching of Jesus when the records of it were in question left its position intolerably insecure.¹

The reaction has been to attempt to build a Christology and a theology on a basis of revelation in such fashion as to be largely independent of the historical scientist. Revelation, this theology holds, exists primarily in the cross and resurrection. It fully agrees that the true revelation lies in the Person of Christ rather than in static truths about Him. But, it points out, this Person is more than a human person, and the real revelation lies, not in what this Person was like or in what He did through His teaching and ministry -- not, in other words, in the supreme moral and religious authority and example provided by Jesus but rather in the significance of the cross and resurrection. This latter "work of Christ" alone holds the key to the meaning and significance of the revelation; this is the true meaning of the invasion of the "Word of God" into history, and any other approach amounts to a misunderstanding of the Christian

¹ Dr. Emil Brunner sums it up as follows: "Dependence on history as a science leads to a state of hopeless uncertainty. Therefore, when a thoughtful person refuses to build his relationship to the eternal on anything so unsafe as historical science, he is acting rightly; for such building is indeed a glaring example of building one's house upon the sand." The Mediator, pp. 155 f. See above p. 33.

faith. In this connection we find Dr. Emil Brunner writing:

The personality of Jesus, even when it is interpreted in a very interior and spiritual way, with all due regard for the moral and religious importance of this question, is, in this statement of the problem, always the 'Christ after the flesh', who, as such, stands outside the sphere of faith and its interests.¹

In this way there is no need to know anything about the "Jesus of History" beyond the fact that the crucifixion and resurrection took place, and the theologian is thus rendered largely independent of the historical scientist.²

It is at this point that Baillie enters the debate in the development of his Christology. He calls the situation "Christology at the Crossroads". But he does not think that the choice of roads ahead in Christology need be confined to the two we have been discussing. He thinks that there is a third alternative, a "middle road", that would retain the essential values of both of the other roads and would at the same time avoid some of the extreme positions to which their approach leads them. It is with the development of this third approach that he is chiefly concerned. "If we refuse to be led down either of the side roads, because each of them represents a false simplification of the problem," he writes, "we shall then have to rethink the old problem

¹ The Mediator, p. 75.

² Although independence from the historical scientist may not have been the only motive in the development of the "theology of the Word" it is difficult to escape the conviction that it was a most important factor.

of the Person and work of Christ as they present themselves to theology in this twentieth century."¹ He then proceeds to examine the "two side-roads" to determine what must be retained and what discarded in these "oversimplifications" in order to help us re-think the old problem.

First he admits the undoubted appeal of the "Jesus of History" approach:

'Put aside for the moment', it ventured to suggest, 'your perplexities about dogma, and begin with the historical Jesus ... that must be a safe starting point. If the original disciples came to regard Jesus as Messiah and Lord and Son of God, it must have been primarily because His human life and personality had made such an impression on them...'. You can make the same beginning if you will humbly and honestly study the Gospel story with the help of modern criticism. You also will "see Jesus" as He really was in the days of His flesh on earth, and you will be constrained to follow Him. And as you do, you will begin to understand the dogmas about Him.'²

In keeping with the temper of the times there was a place for human initiative and responsibility, and faith came alive for great numbers of people with a vitality the like of which they had never known before. "This is the Christian Way, this is the road to God", was the convincing cry; encourage people to travel on it, right enough, but why confuse them by introducing Christological mysteries, why not let this suffice?

The reaction to which we have already referred came about. This approach through the Jesus of History, it claimed, is "based on a wrong way of using the Gospels, and, indeed, on a misunderstanding of the

¹ God was in Christ, p. 29.

² Ibid., pp. 31 f.

Christian religion".¹ Dr. Brunner writes: "This view springs from a conception of Jesus, and of our relationship to Him, which cannot really be combined with the Christian faith in Christ."² And he goes on, "Faith presupposes, as a matter of course, a priori, that the Jesus of History is not the same as the Christ of faith."³ Dr. Karl Barth finds no revelation of God in the personality and teaching of Jesus. Not only because he thinks it impossible to discover what Jesus was like as a human personality from a study of the Gospels, but also because, even if we could, it would not be a revelation but only a "veiling" of God.⁴ Dr. Rudolf Bultmann not only thinks that we can know almost nothing of the Jesus of History, but he is not interested because he feels that it is "of no particular significance".⁵ And Dr. Edwyn Bevan, according to Baillie, thinks that "unless we begin with the dogmas, we cannot see anything particularly notable or divine in that life and personality at all."⁶ If these few representative theologians represent the point of view of the reaction, what may we learn from it and what must we resist in it? First of all, we can learn that the attempt to write "biographies" of Jesus in the proper sense is, as Baillie terms it, "delusive".⁷ Secondly, we must admit that the "Jesus

¹ Ibid., p. 34.

² The Mediator, p. 172.

⁴ See above p. 42.

⁶ God was in Christ, p. 39.

³ Ibid., p. 184.

⁵ See above p. 54.

⁷ Ibid., p. 40.

of History" is not enough if it be made into a "Jesus-cult", and the following of the Man of Nazareth become a substitute for Christianity. Neither can we agree with those elements in the "Jesus of History" movement which are impatient of all Christological thought and seek to substitute for it the historical reconstruction. Without a Christology, Baillie claims, we cannot have an adequate doctrine of God, and the mere reconstruction of the Jesus of History not only fails to give us an adequate doctrine of God but does not even give us an adequate understanding of history. He agrees that the "Jesus of History" approach is not enough in itself; we definitely do need a Christology.

Finally he deals with the most important point of all, namely, the claim made by the "theology of the Word" that the modern interest in the historical personality of Jesus is something quite alien to the true meaning of the Christian religion and amounts to a "wrong reading of the Gospels". "From this point of view", Baillie writes,

it is maintained that the genuine Christian interest in the Person of Christ has never had anything in common with the modern humanistic and biographical interest in the 'personality' of Jesus.¹

An adequate understanding of Christ is not simply a case of man finding a person -- even if that person be given by God -- who can be followed as the supreme moral and religious authority; this still leaves man at the centre. An adequate understanding rather makes clear that in this Person God has done something decisively for man that man could not do

¹ Ibid., p. 43.

for himself; it is God who is at the centre. This school of thought claims that St. Paul and the evangelists were not interested in the human personality of Jesus, which would have been "knowing Christ after the flesh";¹ rather they were interested in what significance the Christ in the flesh held for them. In other words, "their interest was in a divine drama, not a human personality; in supernatural happenings, not in the charm of a gracious Galilean."²

Baillie is quick to admit that there is a certain amount of truth in the consideration outlined in this last paragraph. He admits that:

Concentration on the development of personality or the cultivation of character does not really produce a soundly integrated character, and certainly does not produce the Christian character. The good man, in the Christian sense, is not centred upon himself, but on God. All of this is very true and very important.³

But he goes on to plead, "surely this does not exclude all contemplation of the Christian character as an ideal."⁴ He admits that it does exclude the "humanistic" and "Pelagian" attitude to human personality, "but not the attitude in which we look through and beyond the will of man to the grace of God."⁵ As already noted he admits that these considerations do exclude the approach that leads to a mere Jesus-cult. But he denies that they exclude the approach by which man is directed through the human Christ to God in Christ. And, he

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:16.

² God was in Christ, pp. 43 f.

³ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

argues, it is "absurd to suggest" that the New Testament "knows nothing of that sort of interest"" in the character and personality of Jesus Christ."¹ The early Christians may not have had any interest in history or biography as such, but they did have this type of interest in the human Jesus. "Otherwise", he asks, "what is the meaning of that important strain of New Testament teaching which sets Jesus before us as the prototype of the Christian character, as the example of how human life ought to be lived?"² It is "idle to maintain", he claims, "that Paul had no interest in the human character of Jesus."³ Luke certainly had. And in regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews he writes, "can it be doubted that in the Epistle to the Hebrews we find a deep interest in the human character and indeed the moral struggle of Jesus, which leads us to something beyond the human and which is very near the heart of the Gospel?"⁴ The New Testament is interested in the character and personality of Jesus Christ as an approach by which man per hominem Christum tendis ad deum Christum. He goes on to maintain that "it is false to suggest that interest in the historical Jesus"" is a merely 'historical' and not a truly religious or Christian interest."⁵ He thinks that too sharp a division has been drawn between "faith" and "history". Consequently he suggests that in referring to the human Jesus we might say "Jesus as He really was in His life on

¹ God was in Christ, p. 45.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. See the discussion of this on pp. 13 f.

⁴ God was in Christ, p. 45.

⁵ Ibid., p. 46.

earth", rather than using the term "Jesus of History". A true picture of the human Jesus, he points out, needs more than the "photographic" presentation of the historical facts, as Brunner seems to suggest, but also requires the sympathy and insight of faith. Without this, he claims, "it would be bad history. It would not give us Jesus as He really was." And he concludes:

When we have understood this, we have disposed of the argument that the interest in the historical personality of Jesus is a kind of interest which is alien to the world of the New Testament and to the world of Christian faith.²

This conclusion is most important to Baillie's theology and to modern theology. He maintains that we can not dispense with an interest in Jesus as He really was in His life on earth without losing something that is essential to an adequate theology. He insists that this approach to faith is not a "wrong reading of the Gospels" nor does it necessarily lead to a misunderstanding of the true meaning of the Christian religion. He cannot agree with the point of view, to which Kierkegaard gave expression, that it would be more than enough to know that it was the belief of the contemporary generation that God had appeared in the form of a servant, that He had lived and taught in their community and finally died. And he warns, "there will be grave danger of our giving a sub-Christian and magical account of this salvation unless we remember that God saves us by revealing Himself to us";³ and not simply in the revelation of the fact that

¹ Ibid., p. 48.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 49.

God became man. We must maintain the awareness that man's relationship to God is a personal and moral relationship; so he asks, "If we cannot validly find any revelation of God in the portrait of Jesus as an historical person, how are we ever to reach and accept the dogmas about Him?"¹ The rediscovered Jesus of history, of course, offers no proof of the Incarnation; that comes, as it came to Peter, by revelation. But "the revelation came to Peter as an inward witness to the Jesus whom he knew in the flesh, and", Baillie points out, "it comes to us as a witness to the Jesus whom we know as an historical personality through the Gospel story."² Barthian theology, of course, repudiates all interest in the life, teaching and personality of the historical Jesus and Baillie suggests that, because it does, "it does not take the Incarnation quite seriously."³ It is so thoroughly a theology of the Word that it falls short of being a theology of "the Word-made-flesh". To hold that the Jesus of history is not the same

¹ Ibid., p. 50. In this regard John Baillie writes, "We know that if we ourselves were ignorant of the narrative of the four Gospels, we should have found it impossible to accept the theology and Christology of the Epistles." The Sense of the Presence of God, p. 211.

² God Was in Christ, p. 51. Baillie is aware, of course, that there is more involved than 'the impression made upon the individual soul by the inner life of Jesus', as Herrmann taught. There is the whole Christian story of redemption, the preaching of the kerygma and the witness of the Church to which, through the working of the Holy Spirit, the individual gives assent and is enabled to believe. But "equally indispensable, surely, is the actual portrait of the historical Jesus, connecting these claims firmly with historical reality." God Was in Christ, p. 52.

³ Ibid., p. 53.

as the Christ of faith, "cannot be a stable position for theology; ...it would ultimately stultify the whole doctrine of the Incarnation".¹ We cannot, Baillie believes, dispense with the Jesus of history and retain an adequate theology.

But now we must face the question as to whether or not we can be sure that we can any longer know the historical Jesus. Some Form Critics, as we have noted, would claim that we cannot. Baillie, however, does not think that their report should be taken as the last word. Form Criticism suggests that much of what the student normally finds in the Gospels is the result of reading his own views and interests into the ancient documents, and they claim that their method is much more objective and scientific. They try to think themselves back into the situation and interests of the early church which produced the Gospels, and thus interpret them more accurately. But, as Baillie suggests, it is an open question as to whether or not they are in fact really more objective. They too come to the Gospels with a particular point of view, and many of their initial assumptions are "not only far-reaching but far from self-evident".² Moreover, they do not seem to recognize that a story may have been handed on "simply or primarily because it was true".³ Undoubtedly there would be a strong selective influence, and the main purpose of the evangelists was admittedly missionary and not historical nor biographical. Yet

¹ God was in Christ, p. 54.

² Ibid., p. 56.

³ Ibid., p. 57.

the tradition did pass on details, such as Christ's reference to Himself as the Son of Man, which it apparently did not fully understand but which it included simply because they were part of a true story. In support of his claim that the Form Critics ought not to be given the last word, Baillie points to the significant work done by Professor C. H. Dodd where he sets side by side nine separate passages from the Gospels, thoroughly diverse in respect to their "forms" and the immediate motives of their inclusion in the tradition. And Professor Dodd found that "all of them in their different ways exhibit Jesus as an historical personality distinguished from other religious personalities of His time by His friendly attitude to the outcasts of society".¹ "In such ways," Baillie claims, "the historical personality of Jesus comes to stand out unmistakably."² And so he concludes:

I cannot believe that there is any good reason for the defeatism of those who give up all hope of penetrating the tradition and reaching an assured knowledge of the historical personality of Jesus.³

The claim, however, that we cannot afford to dispense with the Jesus of history does not automatically mean that we can afford to dispense with a Christology. It might be simpler just to accept the Jesus of history as the way to the Eternal God and not bother with the baffling mysteries of a Christology. But it would be a simpli-

¹ C. H. Dodd, History and the Gospel, quoted Ibid., p. 58.

² God was in Christ, p. 58.

³ Ibid.

fication achieved at the cost of an adequate understanding of God and at the cost of sacrificing something of the very essence of the Christian faith. Because the real Christological question, as Baillie points out, is "fundamentally a question about the nature and activity of God".¹

Here we come to a very important point, not only in understanding Baillie's Christology but in being able to appreciate the significance of its contribution to modern theology. First of all it is essential to him, as we have just seen, to retain the Jesus of history as a revelation of God. Here is not only embodied the moral ideal, but here also is revealed the nature of God and the will of God. And man is not only drawn through the human Christ to the divine Christ, but he is ever responsible for making endless decisions in obedience to this will. This, however, is far from the whole truth. God is not one who is satisfied to have made His will known and then to sit back and let man fight it out by himself. God is seeking man more than man is seeking God; God is also active. The relationship of man and God is the relationship of living, responsible, individual, searching men and a living, active, prevenient, searching God; it is a double search. And this is the nature of the relationship, not only in the case of individual men but also in the Incarnation. It is not a substantive relationship of two natures, but a relationship of the wills of two living and dynamic persons.

¹ Ibid., p. 63.

It is essential that this be understood, so at this point he turns to consider the relationship of Christology and the nature of God. The God whom he presents is "a God who takes the initiative, a God who is always beforehand with men, a 'prevenient' God who seeks His creatures before they seek Him."¹ Jesus' presentation of God as the Divine Shepherd seeking the lost sheep, "not merely receiving those who turn to Him, but taking the initiative in seeking those who have not turned to Him",² is typical of Baillie's understanding of God's relationship to men. If Jesus was right about this -- and the whole gospel story confirms that He was -- then "we are involved in saying something more about Jesus Himself and His relation to God, and we must pass beyond words like 'discovery' and even 'revelation' to words like 'incarnation'."³ Pringle-Pattison has written, "In order to give us authentic tidings of the character of God, Jesus did not require actually to be God."⁴ But the God represented by the Good Shepherd was one who Himself went to look for the lost sheep; there is something more involved in Jesus' coming than the coming of a messenger; there is something vital to an understanding of Jesus and something vital to an understanding of God; there is something Christological. This may seem, at first sight, to involve us in unnecessary mystery. But thought of objectively, it is the only way in which the "Christian

¹ God was in Christ, p. 63.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 64.

⁴ A. S. Pringle-Pattison, Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, p. 252, quoted God was in Christ, p. 61.

conception of God becomes credible or even expressible".¹ The revelation is the revelation of a living God. It is not the revelation of a static truth about God, or of something that would enable men to arrive at some deduction about the existence of God or even the nature of God. It is the revelation of God in action for man's salvation. Rather than involving us in greater mystery, it reveals to us the mystery of God in a measure of fulness that could not be achieved in any other way.² We could never arrive at this by the accumulation of information about God. The late Dean Inge came close to expressing this when he wrote:

The controversy about the divinity of Christ has been habitually conducted along wrong lines. We assume that we know what the attributes of God are, and we collect them from any source rather than the revelation of God in Christ. But surely Christ came to earth to reveal to us not that He was like God, but that God was like Himself.³

This is true as far as it goes, but, as Baillie comments:

to take it as the whole truth would be to fall into a common-sense simplification such as makes for heresy. There is a sense in which it may be truly said that God cannot be like anyone else and that no one can be quite like God except God Himself.⁴ A true

¹ God was in Christ, p. 65.

² H. R. MacIntosh has written, "Elsewhere God is utterly incomprehensible but comprehensible in the flesh of Christ alone." The Person of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh, 1912), p. 231. And John Dickie has written "The permanent and unchanging in Christianity is neither an inerrant book, nor an infallible institution, nor a closed conceptual system, but a self-communication of God to us in the Person of His Incarnate Son." The Organism of Christian Truth, preface. See also above pp. 129 following.

³ W. R. Inge, Outspoken Essays (Second Series) 1922, p. 49, quoted God was in Christ, p. 66.

⁴ God was in Christ, p. 66.

Christology will tell us not simply that God is like Christ, but that God was in Christ. Thus it will tell us not only about the nature of God, but about His activity, about what He has done, coming the whole way for our salvation in Jesus Christ; and there is no other way in which the Christian truth about God can be expressed."¹

The New Testament may not give us a worked-out Christology, but it is not lacking in what Baillie calls a "practical"² Christology. As far as the New Testament is concerned its understanding of the situation is that whatever Jesus was or did -- including His life and teaching as well as His death, resurrection and ascension -- is really God acting in Jesus. Thus an adequate doctrine of God requires a Christology. As Baillie puts it:

Christology is bound up with the whole Christian apprehension of God, and to leave it out, would be to sink, perhaps unawares, to a sub-Christian theology.³

An adequate Christology is as essential to an adequate theology as is the retention of the Jesus of history.

Briefly, in relation to the Christological question, Baillie turns to a consideration of the relation of the Christian faith to history, and of this we must take note. Many have been apprehensive because the Christian faith seemed subject to the historical scientist in that the coming of God in Christ took place in history and is open to historical investigation. The modern Christian understanding of the relationship, however, is that the shoe is really on the other foot; instead of the Christian faith standing at the bar of historical

¹ God was in Christ, pp. 66 f.

² Ibid., p. 69.

³ Ibid., p. 71.

science, the truth of the matter is that historical science stands at the bar of the Christian faith. It has come to realize that the Incarnation is really the centre of history and that it stands in judgement on all history. History is more than a catalogue of events; there must be a relationship to something that will give meaning to the events. And the Incarnation is the central point of reference that gives meaning to all the rest. The whole story of history is not only a record of human development, it is a "story with a plot",¹ it is the story of God's eternal plan; and the Incarnation is the key to the meaning of the whole. To drop Christology, therefore, would not only be to drop the Christian view of God but also to drop the Christian view of history, because they are really inseparable, and it would leave us with very much less than a full Christian faith.

Baillie expresses appreciation of the notable work done by Professor Paul Tillich in bringing this realization of the historical importance of the Incarnation to the fore in defence of the Christian faith. But he thinks that Professor Tillich overreaches himself when he goes on to say:

The old Christological struggle has been transformed into a struggle about a Christian or a semi-pagan interpretation of history². These questions replace the old question as to the relationship of the two natures in Christ.

¹ God was in Christ, p. 78.

² Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History, p. 261, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 74.

His comment is:

I cannot think that Tillich is right when he says that the old Christological battle about the relationship of the two natures in Christ has been simply transferred into a battle between the Christian and a semi-pagan interpretation of history. "Christology does stand for a Christian interpretation of history, but it can stand for that only because it stands for the conviction that God became man in the historical person of Jesus. We must have a Christology in that sense, or we have no Christology at all, and we cannot escape from its traditional problems by turning it into a symbolical philosophy of history."¹

We must still face the problem of working out a satisfactory Christology if we have any hope of establishing a satisfactory theology.

Baillie's conclusion, therefore, is that the life and teaching of the historical Jesus constitute part of the revelation and cannot be ignored, that through the human Jesus men are led to the divine Christ, and that it is important to retain the realization that man is responsible for obedience to whatever measure of the revelation is his. But this is far from the full content of the Christian faith. The revelation of Jesus Christ is primarily not the revelation of truths about God, or even about the nature of God, nor about God's instructions concerning the Christian Way; it is a revelation of God Himself in action for the redemption of mankind. Consequently, an adequate theology simply must have an adequate Christology.

Briefly he reviews the old heresies, and then restates the problem -- what is the meaning of the Christian conviction that God was incarnate in Jesus; that Jesus is both God and Man? Through the great Creeds

¹ God was in Christ, pp. 78-9.

the Church has "enshrined the mystery without explaining it".¹ In this the Church did better than it knew. But we can never be content to leave it there; this "does not relieve successive ages of the task of thinking out the meaning of the mystery".² Its depths never will be fully plumbed and no Christology will ever be final, but each age must apply its own insights, and reinterpret its meaning in language and concepts meaningful to its time. So, in full recognition that an adequate Christology must include both the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, that it must include a place for human self-determination as well as the grace of God, he addresses himself to the task.

II

Critique of Modern Christologies

Before proceeding with the development of his own solution to the Christological problem, Baillie pauses to examine several modern Christologies with a view to determining whether or not they prove adequate to theology's present needs and thus obviate the necessity of further effort. These he divides into three groups: those based on "Anhypostasia", the Kenotic theories and the "very distinctive" Christology of Karl Heim.

The "Anhypostasia" trend of thinking seeks to make acceptable in modern terms the old idea that Christ was not a human person, but

¹ God was in Christ, p. 83.

² Ibid., p. 85.

"a divine Person who assumed human nature without assuming human personality".¹ According to this theory the Incarnation is not a union of two persons; rather it is the Second Person of the Trinity embodied in human "nature". Few theologians, as has been already noted, would now hesitate to speak of Jesus as a human person. Yet some of them continue to think of Him as representative Man. Professor R. C. Moberly, for example, wrote: "Human nature which is not personal is not human nature."² But he also wrote concerning Jesus: "He was not generically but inclusively, man."³ And Baillie comments, "it is nonsense to say that He is 'Man' unless we mean that He is a man."⁴ The view of Professor Hodgson is as follows:

We should...think of the Incarnation as the entry by One who is divine upon an experience of life under certain conditions, namely, those which are involved in being the subject of experiences mediated through a body in this world of space and time; for to be subject to such experiences is to be human.⁵

Baillie, while recognizing the value of replacing the philosophy of "substance" by a sound modern philosophy of the self as a "subject", goes on to say;

¹ Ibid.

² R. C. Moberley, Atonement and Personality, p. 92, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 86.

³ Atonement and Personality, p. 86, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 86.

⁴ God was in Christ, p. 87.

⁵ Leonard Hodgson, Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, p. 383, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 87.

if Jesus was not a man at all, but simply the divine Son of God having experience through a human body so that the only 'subject' of the experience was God the Son, there seems to be no room left for what we surely find in the Gospel story: Jesus as a man having experience of God in faith and prayer.¹

Next he turns to examine Dr. Emil Brunner's interpretation of the "Anhypostasia". Interestingly, Dr. Brunner attacks Dr. Bultmann for separating the Person and the Message.² Yet he himself separates the Person and the human personality. He writes:

The personality of Jesus, even when it is interpreted in a very interior and spiritual way, with all due regard for the moral and religious importance of this question, is, in this statement of the problem, always the 'Christ after the flesh', who, as such, stands outside the sphere of faith and its interests.³ A growing interest in this Christ 'after the flesh' coincides with a decreasing understanding of the 'Christ in the flesh'.⁴

The human personality is historical and purely human; the Person is supra-historical and divine; and a study of the human personality can reveal nothing about the divine Person. Baillie explains that Dr. Brunner means that in every man there is this distinction between the inner mystery of the "person", the ultimate subject, on the one hand,

¹ God was in Christ, p. 88.

² See The Mediator, p. 157 footnote 1: "Bultmann certainly means this 'teaching' to be conceived in a non-Rationalistic way, as a 'Word' in a concrete situation. He is not successful in the use of this distinction, because the concreteness (which he means) of the prophetic Word in contrast to the rational idea, is connected precisely with the Person of the Bearer (of the Word), with the prophetic commission."

³ The Mediator, p. 75.

⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

and on the other hand the historical "personality". And he comments:

But then it must be sheer nonsense to maintain that in the case of Jesus the one was divine while the other was human. For...(they) are not distinct entities at all, but the two sides of the same entity, the ego observed from without as object and the ego lived from within as subject. Each is a sheer abstraction when separated from the other, for man is one ego, not two.¹

Thus, for Dr. Brunner, there is no revelation of the divine Person in the human personality, and it is hard to see that the revelation is really in a man; it does not seem to be a real Incarnation. All of these theories are unsatisfactory, from Baillie's point of view, because they do not safeguard the fact that Jesus was a human being with a human centre of consciousness.

Of much greater interest to him is the Christology of Dr. H. M. Relton. Dr. Relton recognizes that while "impersonal humanity" is a meaningless phrase, the humanity of Christ can be rightly described as not having independent personality. That is, "without God human personality is incomplete, and He alone can supply it with that which alone can help it to its full realization."² Baillie fully agrees, but cannot go along with expressing this truth in terms of "enhypos-tasia". In fact, he does not think that we need to think in terms of anhypostasia or enhypostasia at all in formulating a Christology. For one thing, if the term "hypostasis" does not mean just what we mean by "person", it is difficult to be clear on what we mean when we think of

¹ God was in Christ, p. 89.

² H. M. Relton, A Study in Christology, quoted God was in Christ, p. 90.

one "hypostasis" or "persona" of the Trinity taking the place of a human centre of consciousness in a human life. But more important is the fact that he does not think that this does justice to the full meaning of the Incarnation. He understands the Incarnation as a union of two centres of consciousness, not conceived substantively -- for such a union would be an impossibility --, but conceived morally and dynamically. He writes, "we have to reckon with a life that was wholly human and wholly divine, neither side limiting the other at all."¹

And he holds that if

we maintain that Jesus was in every sense a human person with a human centre of consciousness, while being also the Incarnation of the divine Word, the second persona of the Trinity, there is no reason why that should be taken as implying the Nestorian heresy of dividing Christ into two persons.²

Such a union is understandable, he later endeavours to show, in the light of the paradox of grace. The only "anhypostasia" in the case, he believes, lies not in the denial of personality, but in the denial of independence, which is a very different thing; because "man is never so truly and fully personal as when he is living in complete dependence upon God."³

Briefly Baillie refers to the "distinctive" Christology of Professor Karl Heim. Heim conceives of Christ in terms of the Greek concept of "Kyrios" in which the leader commands absolute obedience. It is an I-Thou type of relationship in which the Leader chooses the person and not vice-versa. Blind obedience to this Leader will lead us to God. Baillie cannot accept this Christology, but it is of interest to note

¹ God was in Christ, p. 93.

² Ibid., p. 91.

³ Ibid., p. 93.

the nature of his criticism. First he objects to the interpretation that obedience to Christ as Leader is of the nature of a blind and unquestioning obedience. He points out that although Christ spoke with authority, He sought to show the inherent value of his teaching so that men might decide to be obedient to it on its own merits and by their free choice. In other words, the compulsion of Christ's authority lay in the inherent and recognizable truth of what He taught rather than in the requirement of blind obedience simply because He taught it. Although the Leader does choose us rather than vice versa, He nevertheless compels us with a moral compulsion, and this, rather than compelled blind obedience, is the nature of our obedience. This understanding is very important to Baillie's concept of the nature of the relationship between man and Christ, both contemporaneously and in the Incarnation. He is also critical of Heim's concept of the relation of Jesus to God. According to Heim, God appointed this man to be our Leader. But how is He our Leader? Is it His personality in the human sense that makes Him our Leader, or is it the Person of Christ in the transcendent sense? The only answer is that God appointed Him as Leader, and Baillie rejects the theory as really not answering the Christological question at all.

Even more briefly he refers to the Kenotic Theory of the Incarnation. After pointing out that it is a distinctively modern theory, he bypasses dealing with any particular interpretation of it and proceeds to deal with its central idea. This he interprets as being:

that the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity...laid aside His distinctively divine attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence) and lived for a period on earth within the limitations of humanity.¹

On the face of it, he points out, this seems a most attractive explanation of the Incarnation, because it retains a full faith in the deity of Jesus Christ while at the same time offering a theory that shows his life on earth to be the life of a man, subject to the conditions and limitations of humanity. While admitting "that the kenosis of which Paul speaks is a reality to which a place must be given in Christian thought",² he does not think that the idea will bear examination as an explanation of the Incarnation. And he lists three criticisms. The first is the question asked by the late Archbishop of Canterbury: "What was happening to the rest of the universe during the period of our Lord's earthly life?"³ Baillie does not allow the plea that this presupposes a crude and false separation of the Persons of the Trinity, because he claims that the theory itself presupposes such a separation. The second criticism is that the theory appears to offer the story of a "temporary theophany",⁴ that is, that He who was God changed Himself temporarily into man and then became God again. His argument is that

¹ God was in Christ, pp. 94 f.

² Ibid., p. 95.

³ William Temple, Christus Veritas, pp. 142 f, quoted God was in Christ, p. 96.

⁴ God was in Christ, p. 96.

though the Son of God thus keeps His personal identity in becoming the subject of the human attributes which He assumes, He has divested Himself of the distinctively divine attributes; which would imply, if language means anything, that in becoming human He ceased to be divine.¹

This, he claims, is not the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, which does affirm that the Godhead was "veiled in flesh", but not changed into² humanity. His third criticism is that this theory seems to involve itself in saying that the union of God and man only lasted during the days of His flesh on earth. "The presupposition of the theory is", he writes,

that the distinctive divine attributes (of omniscience etc.) and the distinctive human attributes (of finitude) cannot be united simultaneously in one life: that is why the Incarnation is explained as a kenosis.³

Thus, when His earthly existence is ended, the kenosis ends and so does His humanity. This, he claims, would make nonsense of the Incarnation.

In a way that is really out of character Baillie generalizes the idea of kenosis in such fashion as to be less than fair to some interpretations of it, and then in rather cavalier manner, dismisses the whole thing. The theory, however, deserves more attention than he gives to it.

In the first place, in regard to textual criticism, Baillie writes: "the Kenotic Theory...can hardly claim the direct support of that lyrical Pauline passage or mistake its poetry for theological theory."⁴ A textual critic of the stature of Dr. Vincent Taylor, however, while admitting that the passage is not a precise work of Christology, suggests

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 97.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 94.

that a doctrine of kenosis in no way violates the text.¹ And Dr. Donald

G. Dawe writes of it:

The Philippian hymn represents a stage of doctrinal development... -- a transitional period in the growth of New Testament Christology. Here there is the attempt to reconcile the adoptionism of the earlier Christologies to the growing belief in the pre-existent Christ.²

In the second place he generalizes the theory in a fashion that is hardly fair to some of the modern interpretations of it. It would not serve our present purpose to seek out the exact origin of the theory nor to trace its historical development. Suffice it to point out that it is comparatively modern and had its origin in a desire to realign the orthodox conception of Christ as one person with two natures, with a newly-emerging conception of personality where a person is now thought of as a centre of self-consciousness. Even more important was the necessity of facing up to the realization of what full humanity involved -- stimulated by the emergence of the Historical Jesus --, particularly as it revealed His limitation of knowledge. How could this be conceived if the conception of Jesus' person was the Logos, which by definition is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipotent? Moreover, there was, among some theologians, a felt need to lay greater emphasis on the pre-existence of Christ as over against Adoptionist Christologies, and kenoticism seems an effective means of accomplishing this. A number of theologians, first in Germany and later in England, took up the theory.

¹ Vincent Taylor, The Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching (London, 1958), p. 78.

² "A Fresh Look at Kenotic Christologies", Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 15, No. 4, December 1962, p. 340.

Thomasius of Erlangen interpreted it in the light of a distinction which he drew between the various attributes of God. Certain ones -- omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence -- he characterized as relational, while others -- truth, holiness, love -- he characterized as immanent. The former are expressions of God's relationship to the world. The immanent attributes express the essence of the divine life. The relational attributes are incompatible with a true human nature because they go beyond the bounds of finitude. But the immanent attributes can be expressed in and through a human personality. Against this background Thomasius explained the kenosis as the laying aside of the relational attributes which makes the Incarnation possible without sacrificing divinity. The exaltation at the end of the earthly life was simply the assumption again of the relational attributes and the return to the glory of the Godhead.¹ And it seems to be in the light of this rather crude interpretation, without adequate consideration of modern refinements, that Baillie generalizes the theory. In writers like P. T. Forsyth and H. R. Mackintosh the theory is stated in a much more refined form. Professor Mackintosh rejects Thomasius' division of attributes and abandonment of this or that attribute by the Eternal Son and holds rather that "attributes may become transposed and may come to function in new ways."² Dr. P. T. Forsyth's

¹ See Sydney Cave, The Doctrine of the Person of Christ (London, 1925), p. 175.

² The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, p. 477.

line of thinking follows much the same course. He thinks it misleading to think of a nature as if it were an entity or the two natures -- divine and human -- as two entities, but rather we would get closer to truth if we thought of them as modes of being. "Instead of speaking of certain attributes as renounced", he suggests,

may we not speak of a new mode of their being? The Son, by an act of love's omnipotence, set aside the style of a God, and took the style of a servant, the mental manner₁ of a man, and the mode of moral action that marks human nature.

And he elaborates further:

Here we have not so much the renunciation of attributes, nor their conscious possession and concealment, as the retraction of their modes of being from actual to potential. The stress falls on the mode of existence of these qualities, and not on their presence or absence.²

God's omnipotence, therefore, in Holy Love, can do whatever Holy Love requires, including limiting Himself for the sake of man's redemption. The two-nature theory of Chalcedon he rejects as unreal: "There could not be two wills or two consciousnesses, in the same personality, by any psychological possibility now credible."³ But how could God become man in this way? He freely admits that it is a mystery and a miracle and we do not know. "If we ask", he writes, "how Eternal God-head could make the actual condition of human nature His own, we must answer that we do not know."⁴ But if we know that God did, in fact,

¹ P. T. Forsyth, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 307.

² Ibid., p. 308.

³ Ibid., p. 319.

⁴ Ibid., p. 320.

become man for our redemption, the knowledge of how He did it can wait. This examination of the modern version of the theory will put us in a better position to evaluate Baillie's criticisms.

The first criticism, as already noted, was the question: "what was happening to the rest of the universe during the period of our Lord's earthly life?". And if this infers too radical a separation of the Persons of the Trinity, the kenotic theory itself requires such a separation. In regard to the first part of this criticism Vincent Taylor takes up the cudgels in pointing out that the New Testament does not teach that the universe was created by the Son, but rather by God through the Son as agent or medium of creation. It does not follow then that kenosis would result in cosmic chaos. And in countering the reductio ad absurdum argument, Taylor comments with a trace of sarcasm, "one might suppose that the resources of the Trinity would be equal to the situation."¹ He tackles Baillie and Temple on the charge of unduly separating the Persons of the Trinity. He admits that if Thomasius' old division of attributes were maintained, then their charge would be clearly justified. But he insists that the charge must be assessed in the light of interpretations like that of P. T. Forsyth and H. R. Mackintosh, who do not retain these old divisions. Certainly we can agree with Dr. Taylor that these new interpretations should be taken into consideration. Even if we do, however, they would still seem to make attributes like omniscience,

¹ The Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching, p. 267.

omnipotence and omnipresence something other than that of which we think when we attribute them to God, and we are therefore still saying that, in some sense, divinity did empty itself of these attributes. It must be admitted that Baillie's criticism here is cavalier and somewhat unfair in not taking adequately into account the modern modifications of the theory. Nevertheless, his criticism cannot be ignored, even although it does not carry the weight it might appear to carry, because the Kenotic theory does involve a clearer separation of the Persons of the Trinity than many theologies would care to endorse.¹ The greater danger in this separation of the Persons of the Trinity does not so much lie in any damage to structural technicalities of Trinitarian doctrine that might result, but rather in reducing our realization that God was fully in Christ; that the person who suffered on the cross was not a reduced version of God, but was wholly God. And, moreover, that this was not a suffering that God in any measure delegated to someone else but rather one that He bore fully Himself.

The second objection, also one raised by Dr. Temple, is that the kenotic theory has a "mythological appearance". And Baillie, as noted above, puts the objection more strongly when he says that it appears to him to

give us a story of a temporary theophany in which He who formerly was God changed Himself temporarily into man, or exchanged His divinity for humanity.²

¹ For example, Barthian Theology.

² God was in Christ, p. 96.

Here also, we can now see, Baillie's treatment is not a little cavalier in that again he does not adequately differentiate between the different forms of the theory. His criticism would be clearly true of the earlier forms. But neither Dr. Forsyth nor Dr. Mackintosh suggest that while in the flesh the historic Christ was not divine -- that He surrendered the divine attributes. Nevertheless, the criticism still holds in large degree because the divine attributes must be retracted, -- however self-retracted, however the retraction is morally rather than substantively conceived, and however mysteriously the retraction is accomplished --, and the Incarnate God, although not merely a man, still seems something less than wholly God. The charge regarding mysteriousness the kenoticists do not attempt to deny. They freely admit that the method of the divine "reduction" is purely mysterious. Dr. Forsyth suggests that as long as we are sure of the religious truth of it, the "scientific" explanation of the "how" of it can wait. And Professor Geddes MacGregor writes: "Kenosis is not to be explained but rather to be acclaimed."¹ It would seem, therefore, that if the kenotic principle is to be regarded as inherent in the divine nature -- and there is truth in this -- its manifestations must be as mysterious as God Himself. In the light of the above modifications, however, the conclusion can fairly be reached that Baillie's criticisms are not such as would lead to the total rejection of the theory, and they make it much less unsatisfactory than he would indicate.

¹ "The Kenosis", Anglican Theological Review, Vol. XLV, No. 1, January, 1963, p. 83.

The third criticism takes the form of asking the question, "Was the kenosis merely temporary and does it leave any room for the traditional doctrine of the permanence of the Incarnation — of the manhood of Christ?". Does our Advocate with the Father plead only from memory — does He know human experience only from memory? Baillie claims that if the Incarnation ends with the earthly life, then "the theorist did not regard Jesus Christ as a real man at all".¹ Professor MacGregor points out that we simply cannot know in via what is the nature of the life in patria which is our Christian hope, so how should we in via know the life that Jesus has in patria. However true this may be, it is hardly a satisfactory answer. We are none the less concerned to know that the Jesus to whom we pray is still "one of us", and is able to understand, as only one who has been there and is of the same nature can understand, what we are talking about.

The most serious criticism, however, is not mentioned by Baillie. It has to do with this last consideration, that the theory does not adequately safeguard the humanity of Christ. This criticism may at first appear strange because this is one of the things which the theory is particularly concerned to do. But surely the essence of the problem in man's relationship to God is man's inner inborn urge to selfishness and, consequently, his temptation to disobey God. According to Dr. Forsyth, however, this matter of obedience in the relation of the Eternal Son and the

¹ God was in Christ, p. 98.

Father was settled in the pre-incarnate state. He claims:

His obedience, however impressive, does not take divine magnitude if it first rose upon earth, "...His obedience as man was but the detail of the supreme obedience which made him man."¹

In fact, His relation to the Father of which complete obedience is a part, is constitutive of the personality of the pre-existent Christ.

"For this relation", Forsyth writes,

constituted His personality "... He was not a person who became a son "... The relation made the personality. "... Destroy His sonship and you destroy his personality."²

If this is so, it is very difficult indeed to understand, even with full acknowledgement of the dynamic rather than static-entity nature of attributes, and with full acknowledgement of the mystery of how the kenosis is accomplished, how any temptation to do wrong and to be disobedient to God can be real. Temptability requires a human ego and a human centre of self-consciousness and no amount of kenosis, however mysteriously conceived, can accomplish this while at the same time retaining a single centre of self-consciousness that is divine. It would seem that only the inclusion of a human centre of self-consciousness and a human will and, consequently, only some concept of the union of two natures within the Incarnation, can make temptation real. No matter how the Eternal Son may voluntarily "reduce" Himself to the conditions of humanity or place Himself within the conditions of humanity, it is inconceivable that He be possessed of an urge to exalt self and disobey God. And if He is not possessed of such an

¹ The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 271.

² Ibid., p. 285.

urge, temptability cannot be genuine and He cannot, therefore, be fully human.

Dr. Forsyth, while so ably and helpfully presenting the theory of the Eternal Self-conscious Son voluntarily exercising self-reduction to the point of being able to so enter the human situation as to encounter life wholly as a man even while remaining a divine self-conscious personality, yet admits that there is a problem in relation to sin and temptation. However self-reduced, this divine personality obviously could not sin, because, as noted, His complete obedience to the Father is constitutive of His being and sin would be an impossibility. Sin, however, is not a necessary constitutive element of humanity; it is temptation that is the sine qua non of being truly human. And Dr. Forsyth lays great weight upon the claim that the kenosis extended to the degree that although Christ admittedly could not sin, He did not know that He could not sin. And because He did not know that He could not sin, He was, therefore, temptable. But even if this degree of kenosis be granted, are the conditions of real moral conflict still present? Dr. Forsyth himself is aware that this answer is not fully satisfactory. He writes:

I am, however, well aware how relevant and how effective is the question whether even then, whether if that foregone immunity were there, known or unknown, the battle could have been moral conflict like our₁ own; whether he could have been tempted in every respect like us.¹

He casts about for an analogy that would illustrate and support his

¹ The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 301.

thesis, but neither of the ones he uses is convincing. The one he seems to favour is an analogy drawn from the experience of the church: "Work for the Kingdom; for it is the God, who has already secured the Kingdom, that worketh in you",¹ he quotes. Here we see an assured victory and yet a necessary conflict and struggle, an analogy helpful, he thinks, to understanding a sinless yet genuinely tempted life. Professor N. H. G. Robinson has commented, however:

Had he given the matter more consideration he might well have seen that this too does not really help his argument. In the life of the Church we have more than the combination of an assured hope of victory and genuine conflict -- we also have persistent failure and repeated calls to repentance and we have them because here more than God's² will is at work; there is also man's will and so a duality of will.

Had he courageously followed this through, Dr. Forsyth might well have been led to an open acknowledgement of the weakness of his theory, namely, that without some union with a human ego and a human will genuine temptability is not possible and that, consequently, the Kenotic Theory does not provide the whole answer to the Christological problem. Surely, as has already been claimed, the essence of human temptation is the activity of the human ego, tempting the human individual to exercise his will in defiance of God. Morality, we have been affirming,³

¹ Ibid., p. 302.

² In a lecture at St. Mary's College, St. Andrews University, St. Andrews, Scotland, delivered March 5th, 1965.

³ See chapter 3 above.

only ultimately takes on meaning in relation to God, so temptation must, in the last analysis, be temptation to sin against God, and without some union with a human centre of consciousness this would not be possible. Dr. Forsyth never does satisfactorily answer the problem of Jesus' temptability. His suggestion that Jesus' temptation took the form, not of defying the will of God but of seeking less worthy means of effecting it, is really not temptation at all but lack of knowledge. He does not solve the problem and contents himself by insisting that tempted Jesus was. No satisfactory solution that would safeguard both the full humanity and the full divinity of the Incarnate Christ seems possible without in some measure recognizing the paradoxical union of an omnipotent divine will and a free human will in the Incarnation.

It must be admitted that Baillie dismisses the Kenotic Theory in a cavalier fashion that is hardly fair. Certainly this theory has valuable light to throw on the Christological problem. Undoubtedly there is truth in the concept of the pre-existent divine Second Person of the trinity voluntarily humbling Himself to live as a man and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. If we are to avoid an adoptionist Christology this truth must be safeguarded. But, as an explanation of the Incarnation, it becomes error if it is claimed to be the whole truth, because it does not do justice to the full humanity of the Incarnate Christ. The effort to interpret the Incarnation in terms of one divine centre of self-consciousness, laudable as this may

be by way of making it credible to modern psychology, does not safeguard the full humanity of the Incarnate Son. In order to conserve this aspect of truth it would seem that we have to retain the paradoxical concept of the meeting of a human and a divine will in the Incarnation; and it may be that the mystery involved is no greater a mystery than the one that would be required to maintain the insistence that the divine personality of the pre-existent Incarnate Christ, without union with a human personality, was temptable. Within the paradox of grace, however, the kenotic theory could well lead to a deeper understanding of the Incarnation than the paradox itself can provide. Moreover, if so used the permanence of the manhood of Christ could be safeguarded; a facet of Christian truth for which the kenotic theory by itself does not adequately provide.

The Incarnation contains the meaning of our salvation; it is the revelation of the nature of the relationship between God and man. Man knows in his own experience that God, through His Holy Spirit, not only comes to dwell in him but also transforms him in the depths of his being; that it is a meeting of wills and that in the meeting man's will is not destroyed nor simply coerced, but transformed. But this relation of two wills, this relation of two personalities, which is fundamental to an understanding of man's relationship to God, the Kenotic Theory of the Incarnation, by its exclusion of a human centre of self-consciousness, cannot contain. Yet this understanding of the nature of the relationship is important to an understanding of atonement and salvation.

Undoubtedly man's salvation is an achievement of God, it is totally an act of God; and yet we are enjoined by Paul to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling". The Chalcedonian insight that there are two natures in one Person cannot be abandoned without loss to Christology.

III

Paradox

Having examined several modern christologies and failed to find any of them fully satisfactory, Baillie addresses himself to the old problem, "what do we mean by saying that God was incarnate in Jesus?; in what sense was Jesus both God and Man?; how could that one life be both completely human and completely divine?"¹

At the outset let us again emphasize that it is essential to our understanding of Baillie's concept of the Incarnation and of the nature of the relationship between God and man to realize that he thinks of both in dynamic rather than substantive terms. A man is more than the chemical components of his physical being. He is more than the psychological components of his mental being, and, however much we emphasize that he is a psycho-somatic being, he is more than these two elements of his being added together. He is a person. We can only really know him in an I-Thou relationship, and if we try to fully con-

¹ God was in Christ, p. 106.

ceptualize the knowledge that we have of him through that relationship, we are bound to have some distortion. Much more is this true of our knowledge of God. We cannot know about God by a process of deduction or inferential reasoning from the natural phenomena of the material world. We cannot prove the existence of God from other facts. There is a discontinuity here that the mind of man cannot bridge; only faith can leap over the gulf. Indeed, we cannot know and must not think of God in substantive terms at all. As John Baillie writes in Our knowledge of God, "He is not something we find ourselves speaking about, but Some One we find speaking to us and whom we then, in our turn, find ourselves speaking to",¹ and Donald writes: "God can be known only in a direct personal relationship, an 'I-and-Thou' intercourse, in which He addresses us and we respond to Him... God cannot legitimately be 'objectified'."² "God is the Being", the distinguished Jewish scholar, Martin Buber, writes, "that may properly only be addressed, not expressed."³

Not only, however, does a personal relationship constitute the nature of our knowledge of God, but there is also the fact that God belongs to a different, supernatural order of being. God is transcendent; He is of an order of being about which we can have no knowledge except through this personal relationship. And because God is

¹ John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p. 220.

² God was in Christ, p. 108.

³ I and Thou, pp. 80 f. quoted God was in Christ, p. 108, footnote #1.

of a different order of being we cannot adequately describe Him nor His actions in terms of our own experience. "All words and concepts drawn for our own experience are inadequate", Baillie said to his students "because of the otherness of God."¹ Consequently, when we attempt to "objectify" our knowledge of God we can only use analogies from our own order of being. Of necessity these are inadequate; they are, at best, half-truths; and when we use them our knowledge of God becomes diffracted and distorted. The result is that when we attempt to correlate the "objective" concepts that we have thus formed it seems impossible to reconcile them with each other. If, however, we are going to have any theology at all, or even corporate worship, we are forced to attempt to conceptualize God and to speak of Him in the third person. As a consequence, we are inevitably involved in paradox. "Ultimately", he said, "all our theology ends in paradox."² In God was in Christ he summarizes the situation as follows:

How then can we have any theology, since theology is bound to objectify God, to speak of Him in the third person, with human words and the categories of finite minds? The answer is that we must do these things if we are going to have any theology at all, and we must have theology; but we shall have to pay the price -- it will always be a theology of paradox.³

What, then, exactly is paradox? Using the word "antinomy" in-

¹ Doctrine of God. Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² Ibid.

³ God was in Christ, p. 108.

stead of the word "paradox", Father Sergius Bulgakov describes it as follows:

an antinomy simultaneously admits the truth of two contradictory, logically incompatible, but ontologically equally necessary assertions. An antinomy testifies to the existence of a mystery beyond which the human reason cannot penetrate. This mystery nevertheless is actualized and lived in human experience.¹

And Baillie comments:

Father Bulgakov goes to the root of the matter when he says that while the mystery cannot be stated in words without contradiction, it is actualized and lived in religious experience, that is, in the direct faith-relationship towards God.²

In an effort to throw further light on the nature of paradox Baillie uses the ingenious illustration of the cartographer's problem in attempting to draw a map of the world on a flat surface; of attempting, in other words, to represent a three-dimensional reality on a two-dimensional surface. In order to do this he uses two different maps of the world -- one containing the two hemispheres and the other based on the oblong Mercator's projection -- which must be used in relation to each other to get a true picture. Each one, although true as far as it has capacity to represent truth, when taken by itself becomes a distortion of the truth; only when taken together do they correct each other. To anyone ignorant of the fact that they represent the surface of a sphere, they would be only mystifying. But for someone who in his own experience knows that they represent the round earth, they can

¹ Sergius Bulgakov, The Wisdom of God, p. 116 note, quoted in God was in Christ, pp. 108 f.

² God was in Christ, p. 109.

serve a useful purpose. So it is, he claims, with the paradoxes of faith:

They are inevitable, not because the divine reality is self-contradictory, but because when we 'objectify' it all our judgements are in some measure falsified, and the higher truth which reconciles them cannot be fully expressed in words, though it is experienced and lived in the 'I-and-Thou' relationship of faith towards God.¹

Although this is an ingenious illustration, it has some weaknesses. Professor N. H. G. Robinson has pointed out that ideas and concepts are much more flexible than maps and charts.² That is, the correlation of "three-dimensional" ideas and concepts is a much more flexible circumstance than the attempt to interpret a three-dimensional physical situation in the terms of a two-dimensional physical situation. The illustration does throw light on the nature of the problem, but it makes the contradiction appear much more inflexible than it really is. Consequently, the apparent contradiction of the opposing sides of a paradox is much less rigid and final than the illustration would indicate. And, as we hope to be able to point out, this very weakness in the illustration is a weakness in Baillie's interpretation of the Incarnation. Even although we do admit that it is a paradox, it does not necessarily follow that the paradox is so completely opaque that it is useless to attempt any further effort to make it even a little bit more translucent. Baillie does point out that, "there should al-

¹ God was in Christ, p. 109.

² In a lecture at St. Mary's College, St. Andrews University, Candlemas term, 1965.

ways be a sense of tension between the two opposite sides of our paradoxes, driving us back to their source in our actual religious experience of faith."¹ But some further light might be thrown, not on the tension itself, not on the fact that God became man in Christ, not on the fact that Christ was very God and very Man, but on how God was able to become fully human, even within the concept of paradox. That is, even if it be agreed that human freedom and responsibility must be fully safeguarded while at the same time full scope must be given to the prevenient grace of God, and even if it be granted that this can only be done within the concept of paradox and within the concept of the relation of two dynamic personalities, can some further examination not be made, within these preconditions, of how God became man? Even within the concept of paradox based on the analogy of the paradox of grace, must not God, in some sense, limit Himself in order to fully live and act in "a human way"? In other words, even although we agree that the concept of paradox offers most hope in enabling us to understand the Incarnation, this does not mean that further consideration of the matter must cease; it does not mean that we have necessarily come to the end of a dead-end street and must content ourselves to leave the matter there forever. There is a sense in which God did stoop down and limit Himself, which the paradox simply stated does not fully capture, and through which we might penetrate a little fur-

¹ God was in Christ, pp. 109 f.

ther into an understanding of the Incarnation. The Christian feels constrained to seek further light and deeper understanding even within the paradox and not allow it to set fixed limits to his thinking. Donald Baillie would almost certainly be willing to agree. In the preface to God was in Christ he writes: "the discerning reader will perceive that at many points the person with whom I am arguing is myself, and I am far from thinking that I have completed that great argument and answered all my questions."¹ And on the concluding page of Faith in God he quotes Miss Lily Dougall as follows:

a paradox is not a cushion on which to rest our mental indolence; it is the pledge of further vision, the promise that by practicing both sides of the truth we shall² solve what we cannot solve if we content ourselves with one side.

Nevertheless, the "closed" and opaque quality of the paradox of grace which we will shortly be considering as the key to our understanding of the Incarnation -- most helpful as the paradox itself is -- is a weakness in his christology as it stands.

Professor Robinson, in the same lecture,³ goes on to criticize Baillie's explanation of the need for the use of paradox. Baillie, as noted above, sees the use of paradox arising out of the impossibility of adequately expressing in finite objective ideas and concepts that which is infinite and only knowable in a subjective way in an 'I-and-Thou' relationship. The use of such ideas and concepts results

¹ God was in Christ, p. 8.

² L. Dougall, Christian Doctrine of Health, p. 197, quoted in Faith in God, p. 301.

³ See footnote 2, p. 185.

inevitably in distortion, and the attempt to correlate these distortions ends in paradox. Professor Robinson points out that:

one of the main features of modern theology is the refusal to objectify God in spite of speaking of Him in the third person--that is, as an object. And yet it is some₁ of this modern theology that lays so great stress on paradox.¹

He concludes therefore, that the explanation of this emphasis must be found elsewhere; perhaps in the intellectual atmosphere of our age which greatly distrusts human reason. But is it altogether true that the explanation for this emphasis must be found elsewhere? While granting that the intellectual atmosphere of our age does distrust human reason and that this factor may be influential in promoting the use of paradox, and while granting that one of the main features of modern theology is its refusal to objectify God as an object, it is nevertheless true that the modern 'theology of the Word' does consider God to have objective reality; He is not merely the product of subjective imagining even although He can only be subjectively known. Any attempt to give expression to this reality which can only be subjectively known, must, therefore, be made through the attempt to transfer subjective knowledge of the infinite into finite concepts and ideas. The moment that this attempt is made some distortion is inevitable. We can agree, however, with the latter part of Professor Robinson's statement when he says that "it seems wrong to speak as though there were fixed paradoxes and corresponding to them fixed limits to our thinking."²

¹ Candlemas Term 1965.

² Ibid.

Baillie is not insensitive to the dangers of using paradox and is aware of how easily it can be used to cover up intellectual indolence and obscurantism. This is why he is not only insistent that the two sides of a paradox must be kept in constant tension, but also that Christian theology must never rest contentedly in paradox. "Though the paradox cannot be removed," he said, "there is a sense in which we should always be uneasy about it, and always trying to remove it by thinking out the matter further."¹ He would not disagree with Dr. P. T. Forsyth when the latter wrote concerning the Incarnation, "the effort to adjust the great paradox could only cease with the paralysis of thought."² That is why further efforts to resolve the paradox of grace would not seem to be out of keeping with Baillie's thinking. Nevertheless, he insists that paradox is an integral part

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 72: It is most interesting to find Dr. Forsyth writing on the same page regarding the Incarnation: "as the kind of greatness grows on us which exists in Christ's person, we grow also to feel that the categories of critical thought which are so useful below are no more competent there than feet for the air. To express this greatness we need not two truths lying in a third, but two great powers at least, two personal movements, and these in a surmounted collision within a person. We need man and God, and we need them in a Godman and in a cross". Theory indeed we must prosecute. The effort to adjust the great paradox could only cease with the paralysis of thought. But we shall theorize more successfully and modestly on our living and justifying faith if we realize that our theories are but 'thrown out'. They are but projected at the reality from our experiences of it". After all the centuries of toil upon this doctrine, even with our kenotic efforts, we sometimes ask, have we really done what was not done at Chalcedon, where the two sides were stated against their heresies but not adjusted, and left lying parallel but not organized?"

of Christian thought,¹ and that we can never eliminate it from the Incarnation without losing the Incarnation itself.²

In order to properly assess the place of paradox in contributing to an understanding of the Incarnation we must realize two things: first, that paradox is no new feature of Christian faith; and second, that, as already intimated, it is not peculiar to the Incarnation. Regarding the first consideration Baillie points out that although the recognition of the place of paradox in Christian faith may be especially characteristic of modern times, the general truth of it has always been recognized in religious thought. In the Old Testament the most confident and intimate trust in God is found, the glad assurance that it is possible to know Him; and yet there is the recumbent recognition that His thoughts are not as our thoughts nor His ways as our ways.³ In the New Testament the glad confidence in God's revelation is plainer than ever; God has revealed Himself in Christ. And yet here also is the recognition of the transcendent mystery and "otherness" of God. "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and how inscrutable His ways!"⁴

¹ See H. R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 266: "Paradox is no accident in Christian theology; it belongs in some sort to the staple of Christian thinking."

² See God was in Christ, p. 106.

³ See unpublished Lecture Notes.

⁴ Romans 11:33, R. S. V.

Augustine could write, "Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt."¹ That God should command something of us and then supply it Himself sounds like sheer paradox and contradiction. But note that Augustine also wrote, "That which thou canst comprehend is not God."² Calvinism could stress on the one hand unconditional predestination, irresistible grace, faith as wholly the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, and on the other hand could stress the existence of evil, man's ability to choose and his responsibility for sin. And Baillie comments:

Surely the reason why Calvinism was content to leave these apparent irreconcilables alongside of each other in glaring contradiction was because of its implicit realization that all of these things belong to a realm to which our words and conceptions are not³ adequate, and therefore our theology is bound to pass into paradox.

In more recent times the otherness of God, the consequent necessary limitation of our knowledge of Him, the impossibility of treating God as an ordinary object of knowledge because He is only knowable in faith, and the resulting paradoxical element in theology, has not only been incorporated in the theology of the Word, but is well known throughout the theological world.

In the second place, not only is paradox no new feature in Chris-

¹ Confessions X, 29, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 115.

² Quoted in Unpublished Lecture Notes.

³ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

tian faith, but, and this needs to be re-emphasized, it is not peculiar to the Incarnation. "Christian faith", Baillie writes, "when thought out, conceptualized, and put into human language, runs into paradox at every vital point."¹ And if we try to isolate the paradox of the Incarnation from the all-around paradox of our Christian faith,

we shall end by having...a mystery which is not a religious mystery at all and has no bearing on our religious life. The mistake is not to assert paradox in the doctrine of the Incarnation, but to miss the paradox everywhere else.² The mystery of the Incarnation is the climax of all Christian paradoxes. They all point to it, they all have an organic connection with it, and indeed they are all revealed by it.³

Consequently, it cannot properly be understood except in the light of the paradoxical element in all Christian faith, and at the same time, Christian faith receives a new light of revelation in the light of the paradox of the Incarnation.

By way of illustration Baillie chooses three examples. The first is the doctrine of Creation. Here, in our endeavour to think out the doctrine of the Incarnation the Christian mind has been led to develop the doctrine that God created all things out of nothing. This, in Baillie's estimation, is highly paradoxical. God did not create all things out of Himself because this would not really be creation and would lead to a wrong attitude of man both to God and to the world:

¹ God was in Christ, p. 110.

² Ibid., p. 107.

³ Ibid., p. 110.

an attitude seen to be wrong in the light of the Incarnation. Nor did God create all things out of material already existing; this would lead to a conception of matter as inherently evil and to an unworthy conception of God and both of these are contrary to the revelation of the Incarnation. Thus it has come about that "in the endeavour to think out the religion of the Incarnation the human mind has been led...to the peculiarly Christian and wholly paradoxical doctrine of creatio ex nihilo."¹

The second example which he chooses is the doctrine of Providence. On the "horizontal" level all events, both psychological and material, are naturally caused; they are part of a vast and intricate network of cause and effect. Yet Christians also believe that everything which comes to them comes also from God by divine appointment and through God's providence. According to the Christian faith all events are both naturally and divinely caused; and the divine causation lies not in the sense that God created the world and is now letting it operate according to its own inherent laws, but that all things come to the individual directly from God. This is surely highly paradoxical; but it arises out of actual Christian experience and is known by the humblest Christian. The paradox is supremely evident in the crucifixion of Christ. Undoubtedly this was the most godless thing ever done in this wicked world by the sin of men. Yet it was also the best thing

¹ Ibid., p. 111.

that ever happened in the providence of God.¹ And Baillie comments,

Here again, as in the case of creation, we may say that it is in the endeavour to think out the religion of the Incarnation that the human mind has been driven to the paradox.²

Turning aside momentarily from Baillie's development of the place of paradox in contributing to an understanding of the Incarnation, it is worth noting that this doctrine of Providence seems to be the source of Baillie's awareness of the prevailing presence of paradox in Christian thought. And it is highly interesting to note that, like so much of his theology, this awareness almost certainly arose, not in the consideration of a dogma nor in the thought of other theologians, but in his own experience. Poor health was a constant companion and the problem of suffering a source of bafflement to his faith; in fact, it involved him in some of his deepest struggles. Indeed, a consideration of the problem of suffering constitutes the climax of his book on the nature of faith and its Christian consummation.³ Through this struggle in his own experience and assisted by the thinking of Baron von Hugel⁴ he came to recognize the paradox of

¹ See D. M. Baillie, To Whom Shall We Go? pp. 84 f.

² God was in Christ, p. 112.

³ See Faith in God, pp. 280-301.

⁴ "Jesus", says Baron von Hugel, "cures pain and disease as though they could not be utilized, whilst Jesus also trains and empowers souls to utilize their sufferings as though they were incurable." Essays and Addresses, 2nd series, p. 200, quoted in Faith in God, p. 285.

suffering. This involves the paradox of providence, and from there, in Faith in God¹ he goes on to examine the paradox of moral responsibility vis-a-vis divine forgiveness (developed as the paradox of grace in God was in Christ), the paradox of the kingdom of God,² the paradox of prayer and the paradox of the crucifixion. Thus he is led to the conclusion that paradox is not only present in one or two features of theological thought, but is a characteristic of the whole process. And this is so because

when we think out religion in human terms we find ourselves involved in hopeless contradictions; which indicates that ... our terms are but symbolic of an ineffable reality which can only be apprehended in the actual experience of religious faith.³

Thus, by 1927, without having derived the notion from Kierkegaard to whom many modern theologians are so deeply indebted, he had already indicated the central place which paradox holds in Christian faith and theological expression. Two things about this are noteworthy. The first is, as just noted, that he seems to have reached this awareness largely within his own thought and experience. The second is that no one seems to have noticed the central place that he gave to paradox until after the publication of God was in Christ some 21 years later.

¹ Faith in God, pp. 293-298.

² This he describes as "the 'polarity' between the campaign for the establishment of the Kingdom, with all its defeats and uncertainties, and the eternal reality and victory of the Kingdom." Faith in God, p. 293.

³ Ibid., p. 236.

Taking up the main theme of Baillie's thought again, he claims that these two paradoxes -- creation and providence, and especially the latter -- point towards an understanding of the Incarnation. In the paradox of providence events are both naturally and divinely caused. On the vertical plane they are divinely caused; yet on the horizontal plane they are at the same time naturally caused. If our Christology were concerned only to demonstrate that Christ is the "Centre of history" and not concerned to say anything about His Person, the paradox of Providence would suffice in helping us to understand the Incarnation. It would demonstrate the vertical incursion of God into the horizontal pattern of natural causation. But the Incarnation represents God incarnate in a particular human life; in Baillie's understanding of it, it is a union of persons. And so the paradox of Providence can only give us the general idea of the incursion of the word of God into the natural world, but does not give us the Word made flesh. Consequently, it can only "point from afar" to an understanding of the Incarnation.

Is there any other paradox in our Christian experience that can bring us closer to our understanding of the Incarnation? Baillie thinks that there is. It is the paradox of grace.

IV

The Paradox of Grace

At the very centre of the Christian life is the paradox of grace. Baillie describes it as follows:

Its essence lies in the conviction which a Christian man possesses, that every good thing in him, every good thing he does, is somehow not wrought by himself but by God. This is a highly paradoxical conviction, for in ascribing all to God it does not abrogate human personality nor disclaim personal responsibility. Never is human action more truly and fully personal, never does the agent feel more perfectly free, than in those moments of which he can say as a Christian that whatever good was in them was not his but God's.¹

This is the central paradox. St. Paul recognized it. "By the grace of God I am what I am", he writes,

and His grace towards me was not in vain. On the contrary I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me.²

Its presence is evident in the Christian literature of every age. It lies at the very heart of the Christian life and its recognition is of supreme importance to Baillie's theology. It is this that carries his theology beyond morality and enables him to write,

in a sense Christianity transcends morality altogether and there is no such thing as a Christian ethic.³ The truth is that in the last analysis a Christian does not live by practicing any ethic or moulding himself on any ideal, but by a faith in God which finally ascribes all good to Him. To detach the ethic from the whole context of the Christian secret is to make it irrelevant because it is impossible. The main function of the impossible ethic is to drive us away from ourselves to God: and then there grows that peculiar kind of goodness which can never be achieved by mere moral endeavour, the Christian kind, which is all unconscious of itself and gives all the glory to God.⁴

The importance of this understanding of the nature of grace both to Baillie's theology and to modern theology can hardly be overempha-

¹ God was in Christ, p. 114.

² 1 Cor. 15:10, R. S. V.

³ God was in Christ, p. 115.

⁴ Ibid., p. 116. (Italics mine).

sized. Herein is the bridge between an anthropocentric and a theocentric theology. Man recognizes the moral ideal in the Christian ethic. But he cannot live by it in his own strength; it is impossible. And "the main function of the impossible ethic is to drive us away from ourselves to God." This change of centre, however, does not mean that human responsibility is abrogated nor that human freedom is denied. "No one knows better than the Christian that he is free to choose and that in a sense everything depends upon his choice."¹ And he is never more free than when he is fully obedient to God. Yet the peculiar thing about it is that although he feels fully responsible when he does wrong, he feels no self-congratulation when he does right because he feels that it was really God's accomplishment and not his own. So Baillie concludes:

While there is a human side to every good action, so that it is genuinely the free choice of a person with a will, yet somehow the Christian feels that the other side of it, the divine side, is logically prior. The grace of God is prevenient...That comes first, and in a sense that even covers the whole.²

Baillie warns that it is false to the paradox to try and set a boundary between the area of divine action and the area of human action.

"It is not as if we could divide the honours", he writes,

between God and ourselves, God doing His part and we doing ours. It cannot even be expressed in terms of divine initiative and human co-operation. It is false to this paradox to think of the area of God's action and the area of our action being delimited each by the other, and distinguished from each other by a boundary, so that the more of God's grace there is in an action, the less is it my own personal action.³

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

In this sense the paradox is completely opaque. The limits of our responsibility or the limits of God's influence simply cannot be set. The important thing is that full recognition is given to human responsibility and freedom and full scope is maintained for not only the grace of God, but for the prevenient grace of God.

This, Baillie claims, "is the deepest paradox of our whole Christian experience."¹ It is "woven into its very texture."² And it brings him to the climax of his examination of the place of paradox in Christian faith-experience. "What I wish to suggest", he writes,

is that this paradox of grace points the way more clearly and makes a better approach than anything else in our experience to the mystery of the Incarnation itself; that this paradox in its fragmentary form in our Christian lives is a reflection of that perfect union of God and man in the Incarnation on which our whole Christian life depends, and may therefore be our best clue to the understanding of it. In the New Testament we see the man in whom God was incarnate surpassing all other men in refusing to claim anything for Himself independently and ascribing all goodness to God. We see Him also desiring to take up other men into His own close union with God, that they might be as He was. And if these men, entering in some small measure through Him into that union, experience the paradox of grace for themselves in fragmentary ways, and are constrained to say, 'It was not I but God', may not this be a clue to the understanding of that perfect life in which the paradox is complete and absolute, that life of Jesus which, being the perfection of humanity, is also, and even in a deeper and prior sense, the very life of God Himself? If the paradox is a reality in our poor imperfect lives at all, so far as there is any good in them, does not the same or a similar paradox, taken at the perfect and absolute pitch, appear as the mystery of the Incarnation?³

It is helpful in attempting to understand the nature of the paradox to examine Baillie's concept of the nature of grace itself. In his

¹ Ibid., p. 117.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., pp. 117 f.

understanding it is not a power or a force exerted on man from the outside by God. If this were true, if it were thought of as a quasi-mechanical reality, it would mean that divine grace would be irresistible -- God being omnipotent --, and man's freedom would be totally destroyed. Such a concept would make it sub-personal, unethical and mechanical and gives rise to the apparently insoluble problems about the irresistibility of grace, the relation of divine grace to human freedom and the relation of grace to faith. The Reformers regained in large measure the Pauline conception of a personal relationship with a loving personal God, but somehow detached the act from the Person and lost the reality of the personal relationship. In their concern to replace the mechanical ex opere operato sacramental conception of grace they insisted that salvation is by faith alone. But in sharing the mediaeval desire to ascribe all to God they made faith totally a gift of God. By leaving man with nothing to do because God does everything, by making man as clay in the hands of the potter, the process of grace becomes as irresistible, as mechanical, and as unethical as it was before. The ultra-Calvinist idea of irresistible grace came to be something very different from the spiritual influence of a loving personal God upon a free personal human being. In the twentieth century, however, there has been a notable advance and development in the conception of grace. This Baillie whole-heartedly welcomes and describes as follows:

we have come to see more clearly that grace must not be conceived

as anything like an impersonal force or substance or quantity, impinging upon the human¹ soul or poured into it, but wholly as a personal relationship.

This the late Principal John Oman has called "a gracious personal relationship",² to be thought of on the analogy of the influence of a father upon his child, and Dr. Oscar Hardmann has described as,

the power of the Personality of the Creator working upon the personality of each of His creatures by the means which we commonly describe as personal influence.³

This is something very different from Professor Paul Tillich's understanding of the nature of grace which he describes as being "accepted by that which is greater than you are, and the name of which you do not know";⁴ an acceptance by the power of Being-itself which "transcends both mysticism and personal encounter."⁵ And it also differs from Professor Karl Barth's concept of the grace of God as

¹ To Whom shall We Go?, p. 161.

² Quoted in The Theology of the Sacraments, p. 52. Principal Oman further wrote: "Augustinianisms have all started out, from the beginning, on the wrong road. Attention is fixed on grace as a gift merely given, and on works as human resolves merely carried through, with no attention paid to the gracious relation of the Father to His children which does away with all that hard contrast between tasks and gifts. How utter is the failure would appear in this alone, that grace is conceived as irresistible, precisely because it is not conceived as gracious." John Oman, Grace and Personality (Cambridge, 1919), pp. 86 f.

³ Oscar Hardmann, The Christian Doctrine of Grace, p. 98, quoted in Unpublished Lecture Notes.

⁴ Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations (New York, 1953), p. 162.

⁵ Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (Fontana Paperback, London, 1962), p. 179, first published Nisbet, 1952.

something which descends on the individual like a bolt from the blue, so completely determining his response that it is difficult to see where there is any room left for human freedom.¹ This is rather a gracious personal relationship which is fully ethical because it does give the human individual genuine freedom of choice. When we thus think of the influence of grace as a personal relationship rather than an impersonal force impinging on man's will, when we think of it as simply God's loving relation to man, then, although the paradox remains and the mystery of the working of grace is still a mystery, the problems regarding the relation of human free will and the grace of God are greatly reduced. As Baillie said to his students,

Then we can whole-heartedly speak of God's grace as prevenient, because it would simply mean that God first loved us before we could begin to love Him, and that even when by free choice we accept His love, it is His love that has led us to do it. We can even perhaps speak of God's grace as irresistible, because love conquers all when it goes far enough, and God's love is an everlasting love that will not give us up or let us go. But we can also speak of God's love as co-operative -- not in the sense that He does so much and we do so much, but in the sense that this loving personal relationship enables us of our own free will to do what we could not otherwise do.²

¹ In Barth's thought there is a place for human freedom but it is 'overlapped' by the grace of God. He asserts that man's freedom, though 'overlapped' is still real, even although we cannot penetrate the mystery beyond affirming it. There is a similarity here to Baillie's idea of prevenience in the paradox of grace. But in the working out of Barth's theology the freedom claimed for man is really non-existent. It is really more in the nature of a lip-service than a constituent part of his theological system.

² Unpublished Lecture Notes.

The individual is never more free nor more fully personal than when, in this loving personal relationship, he has surrendered all to God.

The paradox of grace cannot be understood if grace is conceived in any mechanical way or thought of as the external pressure of the will and power of God coercing the will of man. Rather grace must be understood as a gracious personal relationship in which both God and man are free, in which the power of love is the coercive force and in which man finds freedom and personal fulfilment in proportion as he surrenders himself to this power. This too, in Baillie's view, is the nature of the Incarnation. It is not a union of two persons in any substantive sense; from this approach it is completely beyond understanding. It is rather the union of two persons in a totally dynamic sense, a gracious personal relationship in which the power of love holds complete sway and man's voluntary response in surrender and obedience is complete in such measure that divinity fully dwelt in Christ and this amounted to the incarnation of the Eternal God.

In order to grasp this it is necessary to have a conception of God that is as accurate as possible, and to this consideration we must now turn.

V

The God Who was Incarnate

What do we mean when we use the word "God"; what concept does it represent for us? Donald Baillie was often heard to say, "It is

astonishing that people should so lightly assume that they know what the word 'God' means".¹ Many people are confident that they know, but become vague when pressed to be specific. There is good reason for this. As noted already in dealing with paradox, God is subject, not object. God can only be known through faith; our relationship is an 'I-and-Thou' relationship. Consequently, when we try to objectify that which is essentially subjective we must use human analogies and we end in distortion and contradiction. God simply cannot be captured in a concept nor fully conceptualized. The constant danger, in regard to which existential theologians are ever warning us, is that we assume our idea of God to equate with the reality that is God. And we end up with a distortion that is inevitably too limited and too small to represent God. Bearing this in mind, however, we can nevertheless give some expression to our knowledge of God. What, then, do we find revealed in the Incarnation?

One of the basic aspects of the revelation of the Incarnation, and basic to our understanding of the Incarnation, is the revelation that God is love. Baillie does not specifically state this at this particular point in the development of his Christology in God was in Christ. It would seem that this can only be because he accepts it as a basic assumption, because it is of essential importance to an understanding of the Incarnation and it is a fundamental facet of his con-

¹ Quoted by Alan Richardson in Four Anchors From the Stern (London, 1963), p. 5.

cept of God. In a lecture to his students he said;

The New Testament is dominated by 'the love of God'. It tells us that God is love. Moreover, that simple statement that God is love properly understood in all its implications, contains the whole of theology and the whole of the Gospel. "... If our whole course of Dogmatics is going to be at all sound, it will at every point be working out the meaning of the assertion that God is love: that at the heart of the Universe, governing all that happens, maintaining us in existence and seeking us out to redeem us, is infinite eternal love. "... It is not easy to believe it. It is so difficult that nothing but the Incarnation and the Cross could persuade us to believe it in the Christian sense at all.¹

And in a sermon he wrote:

What does the word 'God' mean to those who as Christians believe in Him? Not a remote and solitary monad, whose existence we establish at the conclusion of a train of speculative argument, but the infinite love which is at the heart of the universe, the source and aim of our existence ... our Heavenly Father.²

It is the love of God that provides the motivation for the Incarnation. Consequently, it is of pivotal importance to an understanding of the Incarnation.

Correlative with this and as indicated in the description of grace as a "gracious personal relationship", is the revelation that the word "God" is a proper name. Man's relationship to God is a personal relationship. This is of equally basic importance to an understanding of the Incarnation.

Having said this much is there anything further that the Incarna-

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² "Does Belief in God Matter?", preached in 1940, manuscript unnumbered and located in sermon file at St. Mary's College, St. Andrews University, Scotland.

tion enables us to add to the concept represented by the word "God"? It must be constantly kept in mind that our real knowledge of persons comes by meeting them, not by having someone describe them to us as objects, and that this is the nature of our knowledge of God. The word "God" does possess connotation; but the connotation can never be explained in a concept because the nature of the knowledge is such as we have just described. When we attempt to capture the connotation in a concept we encounter paradox. Bearing this in mind, let us ask again whether there is anything more that the Incarnation enables us to add to the concept represented by the word "God". It enables us to believe that God is Creator of all things, although not by way of inferential and deductive arguments from nature. It enables us to believe that God is the Source and Guardian of the moral law, although not by way of inference from our moral convictions, as premisses, to God the Moral Governor of the universe as conclusion. The Christian approach is different as we have just pointed out, and the word "God" means much more than such approaches indicate. It means a much deeper mystery. What then does it mean? According to Baillie it means:

something so paradoxical that it is difficult to express in a few words. It means the One who at the same time makes absolute demands upon us and offers freely to give us all that He demands. It means the One who requires of us unlimited obedience and then supplies the obedience Himself. It means the One who calls us to work out our own salvation on the ground that 'it is He Himself who works both the willing and the working' in our hearts and lives. "... This is the Creator-God who made us to be free personalities, and we know that we are most free and personal when He

is most in possession of us. This is the God of the moral order who calls us every moment to exercise our free and responsible choice; but He also comes to dwell in us in such a way that we are raised altogether above the moral order into the liberty of the sons of God. "... It is God's very nature to give Himself in that way: to dwell in man in such a manner that man, by his own will choosing to do God's will (and in a sense it must depend on man's own choice) nevertheless is constrained to confess that it was 'all of God'. Such is the Christian conception of God.¹

This conception sees in the Incarnation the action of a personal loving God working towards, and providing for, the redemption of His children while all the time respecting their freedom and self-determination.

Baillie, anticipating the objection that the peculiarly Christian conception of God is the conception worked out in the doctrine of the Trinity, claims that the conception just presented is essentially the same thing. The doctrine of the Trinity presents a God whose very nature it is,

not only to create finite persons whom He could love, and to reveal and impart Himself to them, even to the point of incarnation (through His eternal Word) but also to extend this indwelling to those men who fail to obey Him, doing in them what they could not do themselves, supplying to them the obedience which He requires them to render (through His Holy Spirit).²

All of this, in Baillie's view, is affirmed by the Trinity to be of the eternal nature and essence of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Son and the Spirit being consubstantial with the Father. And he claims that this doctrine is "the objective expression of the same great paradox which finds its subjective expression in the confession:

¹ God was in Christ, pp. 121 f.

² Ibid., pp. 122 f.

"Not I, but the grace of God".¹ It is a matter of concern whether this interpretation of the Trinity does full justice to Christ as Saviour, if in the Incarnation God only "revealed and imparted Himself", and whether it leaves room for the unique divinity of Jesus as the "coming down" or the incarnation of the pre-existent Christ. Baillie has been criticized on these points, but an evaluation of the criticisms will have to await his fuller consideration of the Trinity and his examination of "pre-existence" later in the chapter.

If, however, this personal living and loving God, who deals with His children as above indicated in "seeking us out to redeem us", is the God of Christian conception, then, when we ask how God could become man or what it means, we are far along the way towards an answer. As Professor Karl Barth wrote;

while God's becoming man is not a matter of course, yet it can be justly considered as the most natural of all natural occurrences, because it was God who became man in Jesus Christ.²

God's love is seeking the redemption of His children through a gracious personal relationship; and this is the nature of the relationship involved in the Incarnation.

With the objection that this explanation of the Incarnation amounts to arguing in circles, Baillie fully concurs. These concepts themselves do grow out of the Incarnation. But the circle is broken and the Incarnation is lifted out of the category of meaningless mys-

¹ Ibid., p. 123.

² Karl Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, p. 72, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 124.

tery and made truly the mysterium Christi by the fact that in our own Christian experience we know something of the nature of the paradoxical working of the grace of God.

VI

The Incarnation

Both through the approach of the paradox of grace and through the approach of our examination of the Christian concept of God, the conclusion has been reached that the nature of God's relationship to man is a gracious personal relationship motivated by the love of God and designed to effect the redemption of His children. Within this relationship the Christian knows from experience that all is of God, and yet at the same time he also knows from experience that he is a free and responsible person and, moreover, that he is never more free nor more a person than when he has surrendered all to God. This Baillie considers to be a clue to our understanding of the Incarnation. It is his suggestion that the most hopeful prospect of a key to unlock the mystery of the Incarnation is the Christian's faith-experience of the paradox of grace.

The next step, therefore, is to examine more carefully the connection between the paradox of grace and the paradox of the Incarnation. By way of doing this Baillie turns to the witness of the New Testament where he finds that "both the very highest claims for the divine revelation in Jesus and the very frankest recognition that He was a man"¹

¹ God was in Christ, p. 125.

are to be found. This is particularly true of the Fourth Gospel, which contains the highest Christology of any of the Gospels. Here we have Jesus making the very highest claims; yet at the same time he has to make human choices, even although he gives all the credit to God ('I ... yet not I, but the Father'). His human choices are essential;

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it again;.¹

Yet at the same time all His teaching and all His choices depended upon God: "I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me."² "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me..."³; "Do you not believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works."⁴ And Baillie's comment is;

In these remarkable passages we find Jesus making the very highest claims; but they are made in such a way that they sound rather like disclaimers. The higher they become, the more do they refer themselves to God, giving God all the glory. Though it is a real man that is speaking, they are not human claims at all: they do not claim anything for the human achievement, but ascribe all to God.⁵

Thus he claims that if, in any sense, the incarnate Christ can be re-

¹ Jn 10:17, 18. R. S. V.

² Jn 5:30, R. S. V.

³ Jn 7:16, R. S. V.

⁴ Jn 14:10, R. S. V.

⁵ God was in Christ, p. 127.

garded as a prototype of the Christian life, then we may find in the human experience of the paradox of grace something of an analogue of the Incarnation. If in our Christian experience, Baillie asks, we are aware that our achievements are truly human achievements, yet at the same time and in a deeper and prior sense not human achievements solely, but accomplishments actually wrought by God, is this not "the same type of paradox, taken at the absolute degree,"¹ which we find in the Incarnation? We believe the Incarnation to be the life of a man and yet also, "in a deeper and prior sense, the very life of God incarnate."² Thus Baillie suggests that the paradox of grace provides an analogy in our own faith-experience that enables us to understand something of the nature of the Incarnation.

By way of adding further support to this suggestion he points out that it is the presence of paradox in the Incarnation that explains the ease with which Christologies can slip into error. The great heresies had their birth in the understandable desire to reduce the tension of the paradox and to express the Incarnation in a more simple way. But in the effort to simplify the apparent contradiction they emphasized either the divine or the human side at the respective cost of the other and ended up by sacrificing truth rather than achieving it. The two sides of the paradox must ever be held in tension in order to correct each other. Although this cannot be regarded as in any sense

¹ Ibid., p. 129.

² Ibid.

a "proof", it does add strength to this understanding of the nature of the Incarnation.

Quite apart from theological correctness for its own sake, it is also of tremendous practical importance in the living of the Christian life to have a proper understanding of the Incarnation. It is important to be convinced that Jesus was a real man. It is important to be convinced that He faced life just as everyone else has to face it; that He was subject to the conditions and limitations of humanity, with limited human knowledge and with a human will that had to make its continual choices in the face of life's temptations in the same way that we have to do. If He did not face life as we have to face it, then the practicality of His teaching must be immediately discounted and certainly His influence must be tremendously reduced; He could no longer be our Moral Ideal and Leader. If He belongs entirely to a different order of being, then we have simply no hope of following Him; it would be such an obviously hopeless endeavour that we might as well give up at the beginning. But He did say "follow me", and Baillie believes that His life and teaching are a part of the revelation. For many people it is in seeking to follow Jesus as the embodiment of the Moral Ideal that they discover something much more. The Jesus of history has led many people to the Christ of faith. We are inherently able to recognize Him as the human embodiment of the moral ideal and this recognition has not only led many people to a full faith but has helped others to keep their faith strong. The Christian's

faith-experience insists that it is important to believe that Jesus was a real man.

But at the same time faith-experience insists that it is also important to believe that He was God Incarnate. No created being could elicit our worship as He does nor could such be our Saviour as God alone can be. The Christian who knows the experience of salvation can never surrender the conviction that Christ was God Incarnate.

The practical necessities of the health of the Christian faith, therefore, also require that both of these beliefs must be held together and with equal conviction. It is our belief that during Jesus' earthly life all depended on his human choices from moment to moment. But, as Baillie puts it,

as soon as we have said that, we must inevitably turn around and say something apparently opposite, remembering that in the last analysis such human choice is never preventive or even co-operative, but wholly dependent on the divine preventence. We must say that in the perfect life of Him who was 'always doing the things that are pleasing to God,' this divine preventence was nothing short of Incarnation, and He lived as He did because He was God incarnate.¹

The Incarnation is a paradox. But the Christian's faith-experience demands that he retain both sides of it as essential parts of truth. And his experience of the paradox of grace provides a clue to an understanding of its meaning. This dynamic union of two persons, even when in no sense substantively conceived, will always remain the mysterium Christi. But it is an "understandable mystery" in the light of the Christian experience of the paradox of grace.

¹ God was in Christ, p. 131.

Baillie's suggestion that the paradox of grace may provide a key to unlocking at least the outer chamber of the mystery of the Incarnation is of very great significance to Christological thought and to twentieth century Christianity. True to his general approach to theology he uses the human experience to throw light on the divine mystery, and for many Christians his suggestion has proved to be most illuminating. Providing a handle in human experience as it does, it has enabled many to grasp an understanding of the meaning and nature of the Incarnation. Moreover, the illumination has not all been in one direction. This new understanding of the nature of the Incarnation has also deepened our understanding of the nature of the paradox of grace. Even these considerations, however, do not comprise the total contribution that this suggestion has made. In circles of Christological thought it has not only unlocked the outer chamber of the mystery of the Incarnation, but provided a new arena -- the arena of the paradox of the Incarnation -- within which the boundaries of the mystery may be pushed back further still.

There are, however, criticisms of Baillie's interpretation. Some of them are profound, and one or two he has anticipated. The first is the question, "does this mean that any man who lived a perfect life would be thereby God Incarnate?" This, of course, would never be acceptable and it is important to point out that this is not what he is saying. This would make the human side of the achievement prevenient and determinative, and that is just what he has throughout vehemently

denied. With great emphasis and almost wearisome repetition he insists as forcibly as language can communicate that the divine is always prevenient. As has just been quoted, "human choice is never prevenient or even co-operative, but wholly dependent on the divine prevenience."¹ Every good thing in man, every right decision that he makes, every noble thing that he does, is due to the prevenient grace of God — "I,... yet not I, but God". It is this insistence, of course, that saves Baillie's theology from humanism. But it is absolutely essential to his theology all the way through, even although more prominent in God was in Christ than in Faith in God. God is always taking the initiative, God is always "pressing in" with His revelation; man's search for God is ever inspired by God's search for man; even man's right decisions would not be possible without God's prevenient action. The divine action is always prevenient; and when this is fully understood the possibility of man ever reaching divinity through his own achievement ceases to exist.

Granting the priority of the divine action, however, much more serious criticisms arise when we pursue the matter further to ask, "is Christ only the first Christian, is He only primus inter pares, or is He in some unique sense divine -- the divine Son of God?" And if He is uniquely divine can His experience of His relationship to God possibly be the same as ours; have we the right to approach His

¹ Ibid., p. 131. (Italics mine).

experience through ours or can there be any analogy between His experience and ours? If He is uniquely divine can we speak of the grace of God coming to Him as it comes to us? If he is only a man, however filled with the Spirit of God, is he worthy of our worship and can he be the divine Saviour? These are most important considerations and must be dealt with. A full assessment of them, however, involves Baillie's concept of the nature of the Trinity and his understanding of the meaning of pre-existence and will have to be deferred until these matters have been examined.

VII

The Meaning of the Trinity

Baillie begins his examination of the meaning of the Trinity by asking the question which we have just had under consideration, namely, "what is the relation of his interpretation of the Incarnation to a belief in the pre-existent Christ as the eternal Son of God?" He is not only interested in the antecedents of the Incarnation, however, but also in the consequences; so he asks further, "what is the relation of this interpretation to the continued ministry of Christ and His presence with His people in every age through the Holy Spirit?". In other words, what do we mean by the distinction between the Father and the Son and then by the further distinction between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; what is the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity?

With the comparatively new insistence on the importance of dogma in modern theological thinking — that is, following the "Liberal" era — there has arisen also a new emphasis on the importance of the Trinity. But Trinitarian thought has developed in different and almost opposite directions. One trend, of which the outspoken spokesman is Professor Karl Barth, emphasizes the modalistic aspect of the Trinity and speaks of three "modes of being" in the Godhead rather than of three Persons. The other trend, mostly among Anglican theologians, seeks a sharper distinction between the Persons of the Trinity and thinks of the union more in terms of a social union than a fully organic union. In developing his concept Dr. Barth points, with relief, to the fact that the term persona, though accepted by Western Christendom, was never considered to be fully satisfactory. He notes Augustine's admission that the term was used out of "necessity" and in a "manner of speaking" because some term had to be used and this was better than saying nothing at all. But it did not mean, he emphasizes, the same thing as we mean by personality. Even the concept of individual rational beings presents difficulties, but when you add the attribute of self-consciousness, then the idea of three distinct centres of consciousness comes close to Tritheism. So, rather than go back to the term persona with accompanying explanations of how the medieval concept of persona differs from the modern concept of personality, he considers it more satisfactory to speak of three "modes of being" in God. "It is to the one single essence of God", he writes,

which is not to be tripled by the doctrine of the Trinity, but emphatically to be recognized in its unity, that there also belongs what we call to-day the "personality" of God.¹

The supporters of the other trend, however, consider that the term persona meant to ancient and medieval thinkers much the same as the term "person" does to-day and this leads them to the conclusion that it is historically unorthodox to speak of God as a Person. Orthodoxy, they claim, spoke of personality in God rather than the personality of God. Thus it conceives of God as a unity of three personalities, and the Divine Personality might better be conceived as "analogous to the Personality of a nation or state".² This provides ample room for the belief that mutual love exists eternally in the Godhead apart from the existence of any created beings, and thus makes God independent of their existence. In this view created beings are not necessary in order that His love may find expression. They also see this view as supporting the belief that Christianity can never be a merely individual gospel but must have its social message too. Thus one trend prefers to speak of one Person in three modes of being and the other of three Persons in the highest kind of personal and social unity.

Baillie points out that the difference between the points of view is not as great as it might seem. Dr. Barth also believes that

¹ The Doctrine of the Word of God, p. 403 quoted in God was in Christ, p. 136.

² C. V. Webb, Divine Personality and Human Life (1920), p. 157 quoted in God was in Christ, p. 139.

God is not dependent on human creatures for the expression of His love; he speaks of the love of the Father to the Son and vice versa, and says, "This eternal love in God Himself is the Holy Spirit."¹

And Professor Leonard Hodgson, a spokesman for the other trend, frankly admits that the "personlity" of a society cannot be anything like an adequate analogy of the divine unity; it is such a high kind of unity that it constitutes a mystery beyond our understanding.² Baillie does not wholly support either development, but his own point of view begins to emerge in his criticism of the "social organism" trend. "If we regard the three personae of the Trinity as quite distinct persons or personalities in the full modern sense," he writes,

we seem to imply that they are parts of God, and it is difficult to remedy this by going on to speak of their being united in the highest conceivable type of unity.³

Moreover, three distinct Persons would seem to limit each other and, therefore, of necessity be finite Persons. And if it be claimed that all three are infinite Persons it is hard to conceive of three infinite

¹ Credo, p. 136, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 141.

² See Leonard Hodgson, The Doctrine of the Trinity, Croall Lectures 1943 (Cambridge, 1943). There are, of course, many within this trend who hold more extreme views than that of Professor Hodgson. Principal John Dickie in his book The Organism of Christian Truth writes, "I myself once heard an Anglican Chaplain, who would have been horror-stricken at the faintest suspicion of heresy in himself, declare in a Trinity Sunday sermon that 'there are always two persons of the Blessed Trinity at Home in Heaven while the third is here on earth'." (p. 210).

³ God was in Christ, p. 141.

Persons of the same essence co-existing with each other as distinct entities. He believes that "The idea of God consisting of three distinct persons in the modern sense, one of whom could be simply identified with Jesus of Nazareth,"¹ is an over-simplification; the "reality is a much deeper mystery."²

What, then, is his own position? He believes that God is "always and wholly and in every respect personal. God is the only perfectly personal Being."³

His Word is personal. His Spirit is personal. When Christians speak of any one of the personae of God, Father, Son or Holy Spirit, they do not say 'It', but 'He' and 'Him'. Yet when they speak of the triune God, they do not say 'They' and 'Them'. God is three 'Persons', but He is also the infinite and universal Person, in three 'modes of existence'. Both ways of expression are needed.⁴

The three "Persons" of the Trinity are personal, but not distinctive personalities in the modern sense. The idea of a

symmetrical triad of three distinct personalities in the modern sense co-existing in a higher unity ... appears to me to be an over-simplification of a mystery, or an over-rationalization of a paradox.⁵

Thus the Incarnation throws light on the meaning of the Trinity and vice versa. They both present the distinctively Christian conception of God. The Trinity is the formal expression of what was revealed in the Incarnation. In the Incarnation we see revealed a Personal God who is holy and loving, merciful and redemptive beyond measure, who

¹ Ibid., p. 142.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 143.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 143 f.

⁵ Ibid., p. 144.

takes the initiative in seeking men before they seek Him. We believe this God to be Creator and Lawgiver and the wise and righteous Moral Governor. But in our own experience we find that He is also One who gives what He demands and provides the obedience He requires, so that in all our accomplishments we can ascribe all glory to God; yet at the same time we know ourselves to be still free and responsible persons. In fact, we are never more free nor more fully personal than when we have surrendered all to God. This experience of the paradox of grace provides a clue to the nature of the Incarnation. As God thus lives and acts in a measure in us, He lived and acted without measure in Christ, so that His life was the very life of God Himself, and yet was at the same time in the fullest sense the life of a man. Once more Baillie sums it up neatly, giving even greater emphasis to the prevenience of God:

He lived His life in such a way that it was the life of God incarnate; but also, since the initiative is always with God, He lived it as He did because it was the life of God incarnate.¹

Jesus Christ brought a new revelation of God because He was God incarnate.

But the end of Christ's earthly life was not the end of His influence. His followers felt the divine Presence even closer and in more powerful fashion than when Jesus was with them in the flesh. They found it in a way, as Baillie puts it, "that was independent of His

¹ Ibid., p. 145.

actual presence in the flesh, though not independent of His having lived on earth in the flesh."¹ Now they seemed to share "something of that union with God which had been His secret";² a union into which He had drawn them. Moreover, they found that this experiences of theirs -- of the power of His presence, of being united with God in such fashion as to give God all the glory for all human achievement -- could come to anybody anywhere through the story of Jesus and their witness to its meaning. "This was something new in mankind's knowledge of God which could not have come if Jesus had not died",³ Baillie wrote. This was the action of the Holy Spirit, "giving us the presence of Christ in a new and greater way, to dwell in our hearts and to do in us and for us what we could not do ourselves."⁴ So, thereafter, concerning any good thing in their lives they could say: "Not I, but the grace of God that was with me," or "Not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me," or "It is not we that speak, but the Spirit of our Father that speaketh in us."⁵

Thus the paradoxical Christian knowledge of God came to find formal expression in the doctrine of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three in one. "Not", Baillie elaborates,

in the sense of three successive parts played by God, or three successive phases of His being ... nor in the sense of a symmetrical triad of Persons with quite separable functions. We do not exhaust the truth of the matter by saying that while God the Father reigns eternally on high, God the Son was incarnate in Jesus on earth, and

¹ Ibid., p. 145.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 146.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

God the Holy Spirit dwells in us. The New Testament can also speak of God the Father dwelling in Christ, and of the Holy Spirit being given to Christ; and it can speak of God the Father dwelling in us and we in Him, and of Christ dwelling in us and we in Him. All of this seems impossible to systematize, and indeed it does not make sense until we remember the historical facts and experiences out of which it arose, and attempt to relate them to the Eternal God. When we do that the doctrine of the Trinity sums up the Gospel by telling us that the God of grace, who was revealed through the Incarnation and Pentecost as the One who paradoxically works in us what He demands of us, is the same from all eternity and for ever more.¹

Baillie is now free to return to the question that led to this examination of the Trinity, namely, "what is the relation of Jesus of Nazareth to the eternally existent Son of God?" "When we confess", he asks,

'one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds ... who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was made flesh and was made man,' what are we asserting?

And if we are asserting that God thus acted to save men in this great drama of which the Bible tells, then the subsequent question arises, "if He loves them so, why did He not do it sooner?" Dealing with the second question first, the answer must be because God was in search of sons, not slaves; in Biblical history He could not use Israel as His slave but only as His son. Consequently, the full revelation could only come when man was ready to receive it. "Thus", as Baillie puts it,

we may say that God was continually pressing through into human life in every age, so far as man would allow, and the reason why the Incarnation did not take place earlier is because man was not sufficiently receptive. There is a sense in which God cannot go faster with His revelation than man will let Him.³

¹ Ibid., pp. 146 f.

² Ibid., p. 147.

³ Ibid., p. 148.

Then appeared a Man who was perfectly receptive. The Incarnation "depended in a sense upon His free human choice from moment to moment."¹ As the Gospel writer reports; "For this cause the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again."² The daring assertion of such a thought leaves one speechless and lost in startled wonder. As Professor Leonard Hodgson has commented:

There is no getting away from the plain meaning of the verse. It represents the Father's love for the Son as conditional on His fulfilling His vocation. But the thought of the love of the Father for the Son as being in any sense conditional is beyond Christian imagination. Only, in silent and wondering reverence, can we listen to the words as spoken by our Lord.³

Yet there it is stated as plainly as can be. It seems inescapable that in seeking to understand man's relationship to God human responsibility cannot be omitted if we are to retain the whole truth of New Testament revelation.

But this cannot be the whole truth. The awareness must constantly be retained that the divine is always prevenient. And so from the human life we are "paradoxically but inevitably" driven back to its divine origin. Thus driven back Baillie is in a position to state his concept of pre-existence:

In that sense it is impossible to do justice to the truth of the Incarnation without speaking of it as the coming into history of the eternally pre-existent Son of God. This does not mean, it need hardly

¹ Ibid., p. 149.

² Jn 10:17, R. S. V.

³ Leonard Hodgson, And was made Man, p. 200, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 149.

be said, anything like a conscious continuity of life and memory between Jesus of Nazareth and the pre-existent Son. Nor are we to think of the human personality of Jesus of Nazareth as having had any heavenly and eternal pre-existence. The Church has never taught that the human element in Jesus, His manhood, is consubstantial or co-eternal with God, but that it is consubstantial with ourselves and belongs to the order of created things. But it was the eternal Word, the eternal Son, very God of very God, that was incarnate in Jesus.¹

It is of this eternal background, he claims, that Paul is thinking when he writes, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor,"²; and again in the famous passage in the letter to the Philippians, where he thus speaks of Christ, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."³

Here much light is thrown on Baillie's thinking when he writes:

These verses deal with the relation between the temporal and the eternal, the relation of the historical Incarnation on earth to its eternal and heavenly antecedents, and therefore they are obviously figurative and symbolic in their expressions. But we are bound to use such expressions in order to do justice to the divine priority and initiative and condescension, and even sacrifice, in the Incarnation.⁴

"Thus", he most significantly concludes, "the doctrine of the Trinity, which inevitably arose out of the historical Incarnation, gives us its eternal background in the only possible terms."⁵

¹ God was in Christ, p. 150.

² 2 Cor. 8:9, R. S. V.

³ Phil. 2:6, 7 R. S. V.

⁴ God was in Christ, pp. 150 f.

⁵ Ibid., p. 151.

Christianity, however, has always had much more to say about the resurrected Christ than the pre-existent Christ. How are we to think of Him? Are we to think that His humanity ended with His earthly life in the flesh? Baillie claims that the Chalcedonian insistence on the recognition of two natures in Christ had its origin in a concern to safeguard the humanity of Christ. Theologians found it difficult to believe in the real humanity of the Christ in the flesh, and almost impossible to believe that He was still human after the days of His flesh were over. They tended to think of the Incarnation as a mere theophany; that Christ was never really human except in the sense of inhabiting a human body.¹ And for all its refinements, these are the problems which kenotic theories have not quite overcome. As noted above² they have difficulty in providing for the real humanity of Christ -- that He was temptable like other men. And they have greater difficulty with the belief which the church has always held, that His humanity continued after the days of His flesh were over. Baillie holds that, "If we believe in the Incarnation, we cannot possibly say that Jesus ceased to be human when He departed from this world."³ When we go on to ask about the sense in which He is still a man and how He is now related to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, "we have obviously entered a region in which many questions can be asked which

¹ See Ibid., p. 152.

² See pp. 175 f.

³ God was in Christ, p. 152.

cannot be answered."¹ Perhaps the only ones that can be answered, he suggests, are the practical rather than theoretical ones, the ones that have to do with the life of faith, questions about "the relationships that are possible in the actual present between Christ and ourselves."² When we turn to these questions we find that we are at no disadvantage as compared with those who knew Him in the flesh. The divine Presence which He brought into the world still becomes a reality in the experience of people through the Holy Spirit. There was a doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament it is much more important. This new thing, God manifest in the flesh, is now available to "everybody, everywhere and in every age",³ through the Holy Spirit. This is our experience. And Baillie points out that if we go on to probe the experience on a theoretical plane and ask,

whether there is any difference between having God's presence with us, having Christ dwelling in us, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, we are bound to answer that the New Testament makes no clear distinction.⁴

and he goes on to elaborate,

It is not that no distinction is made between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but all three came at every point into the full Christian experience of God. It is not a case of three separate experiences; it is all one.⁵

So he sums it all up as follows:

The Incarnation of God in Christ made a permanent difference in man's

¹ Ibid., p. 153.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 153 f.

knowledge of God, and we know God now as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet our knowledge of God is not the same as His. Ours is dependent on His. And not merely dependent as a pupil depends on his teacher. Nor again in the sense that our knowledge of God is at second hand. For the Holy Spirit who from Pentecost onwards showed the disciples the real meaning of what Christ had been and said, and thus led them into the new knowledge of God for themselves, does the like for us. Or, to put it otherwise, the God who was incarnate in Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit; and that is the secret of the Christian life.¹

The doctrine of the Trinity expresses it in the only possible terms. He concludes:

I do not see how this doctrine, with its symbolical expressions, can be fully rationalized and conceptualized and worked out into a philosophical theology. But it seems to me to be an indispensable summing-up of the Christian Gospel for the life of worship.²

VIII

Criticisms of Baillie's Christology

It would be to play the part of the ostrich with his head in the sand to attempt to prove that there are no valid criticisms of D. M. Baillie's Christology. Were it accepted as beyond criticism then this would mark the end of Christological investigation and that occasion is not likely ever to arrive. The mysterium Christi contains a depth that will never be plumbed by human effort. But many of the criticisms do not carry the weight that they might appear to carry.

The most serious criticism of Baillie's Christology, to which reference has been made,³ is that the presentation of Christ as

¹ Ibid., p. 154.

² Ibid., p. 155.

³ See above pp. 215 f.

differing from man only in degree of prevenient grace does not contain the full truth of the Incarnation. In order to do this, the criticism holds, Christ must differ from man not only in degree but in kind.

Does Baillie's Christology, therefore, present Christ as merely the First Christian, primus inter pares, or does it present Him as being in some unique sense divine? Does Christ, according to this presentation, differ from us in stature only, or is He different in status also; is He filled with the Spirit of God as other Christian men are filled with the Spirit of God only more so, or is He of a different order of being? And if Jesus is only a man, however filled with the Spirit of God, is he worthy of our worship and can he be the divine Saviour? It was on the basis of this distinction of degree versus kind that Baillie's Christology was criticized by Professor J. H. Hick in The Scottish Journal of Theology,¹ as being Adoptionist. It was also in relation to this distinction that Professor J. L. M. Haire has criticized it in the same Journal² as being ambiguous. Moreover, in relation to this basic criticism, other critical questions arise. If Christ is uniquely divine, can His experience of His relationship to God possibly be the same as ours? If He is uniquely divine can we rightfully speak of the grace of God as coming to Him as it

¹ J. H. Hick, "The Christology of D. M. Baillie," Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 11, 1958, pp. 1 f.

² J. L. M. Haire, "An Unresolved Tension in the Christology of D. M. Baillie," Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 17, 1964, pp. 303 f.

comes to us? These are criticisms and considerations of major importance and cannot be ignored.

Baillie freely acknowledges that "the New Testament is conscious of a great gulf between what Christ is and what we are even when we are His people."¹ And yet he insists that the life of Jesus, like ours, was a real human life involving human struggle and choice.

Perhaps the best initial approach to providing Baillie's answer to these criticisms would be to consider first the question of whether, if Christ is uniquely divine, we are on sound ground in thinking of the grace of God as coming to Him as it comes to us. There is a sense to the meaning of grace, as already noted, in which grace is regarded as a gracious personal relationship through which God lives and acts in man. In this sense, in Baillie's view, Jesus was the recipient of the grace of God. Indeed, this constituted His divinity. God lived and acted in Jesus without measure, and so Jesus "lived as He did because He was God incarnate."² Consequently, to say that Jesus was "full of grace and truth", Baillie held,

is to say that God who had always been revealing Himself in a measure to mankind, was as fully manifested in Jesus as God can be in the conditions of real human life on earth, which is the very meaning of Incarnation.³

¹ God was in Christ, p. 127.

² Ibid., p. 431.

³ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

In this sense the human Jesus was the recipient of the grace of God the same as we are. Many theologians would part company with Baillie here, but he can be held to be still on sound ground. There is another sense, however, in which Jesus could not have been the recipient of the grace of God. In lecturing to his students Baillie pointed out that

in the New Testament Grace always carries with it something of the idea of mercy to sinners, favour shown by God to undeserving men, giving them, as it were, a new beginning and so enabling them to be and do things of which in themselves they were quite unworthy.¹

Obviously, the grace of God could not come to Christ in this sense.

Here we humans are different and never can be the same.

This points up Baillie's insistence on the priority of God's action in the Incarnation, and the importance of this insistence can hardly be overestimated. There is not any point where the divine "came into" the life of Jesus for the first time. By the preventient action of God Jesus was sinless from birth and had no need of a new beginning. The Incarnation, this surely underlines, came about first and foremost by the choice and decision of God and not by human achievement. It was not a case of man becoming God, but of God becoming man.

"God always comes first," he said,

the divine initiative is always prior to everything human. So, in a sense, we may say that the life of Jesus was divine before it was human; God before it was man. In that sense we may even say that it was the divinity of it that accounted for the human perfection of it.²

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

Referring to the Incarnation elsewhere he said,

It had to go right back to the life of the Eternal God Himself; and it had to exhibit the matter in such a way as to exhibit the divine condescension, and self-emptying and sacrifice.¹

Thus the Incarnation was the result of a decision taken by a Person --- God; and the priority of this decision and action adds a strong element of predestination to it. Surely this points to the "coming down" of a divine Eternal Person. The centre of consciousness that lived and acted without measure in common with the human consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth, controlling it yet not destroying it, was divine. This would indicate something of much greater significance to our thinking than what is normally thought of when one speaks of a created man filled with some impersonal power called the Spirit of God. This leads us to refer to Baillie's concept of the Trinity and of the nature of pre-existence.

When he speaks of God, it will be recalled, he is speaking of a Person. He considers it most important to emphasize that God is "always and wholly and in every respect personal."² But at the same time when he speaks of God he does not mean the Father only, but the Father, the pre-existent Son, and the Holy Spirit. In his concept of the Trinity, as already noted, these are not separate persons, as we consider persons, but are of the nature of an organic rather than a social union; they are really one. Speaking in regard to pre-existence he said,

It will somewhat relieve our difficulties in this matter if we re-

¹ Ibid.

² God was in Christ, p. 143.

member...that the Christian doctrine of Three Persons in the God-head does not mean three distinct personalities in our ordinary modern use of the word.¹

He thinks of God as a Person. But the "modes of existence" of God are also personal. "God is three 'Persons'", he writes, "but He is also the infinite and universal Person in three "modes of existence".² In Baillie's view therefore, when we speak of the incarnate Son we really mean that, although personal, this was a "mode of existence" of God; we really mean that God Himself was incarnate. In speaking of this he wrote,

the Christian doctrine endeavours to trace the Incarnation back to something in the very life of the Eternal God Himself--and something personal--without sacrificing the unity of the Godhead.³

When we speak of the eternally pre-existent Son of God, therefore, we are not to think of the human personality of Jesus of Nazareth as having had any eternal and heavenly pre-existence, "it was the eternal Word, the eternal Son, very God of very God, that was incarnate in Jesus."⁴ The Incarnation was a "mode of existence" of God; the personal divine Presence in the Incarnation was God Himself. This is sufficient for the practical needs of the Christian life. This fulfills my need as a Christian for the confidence that it was God who

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² God was in Christ, p. 144.

³ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

⁴ God was in Christ, p. 150.

lived and acted in Christ; that it is by God in Christ that I am judged and redeemed; that it is the love of God that I see in the cross of Christ -- a love so amazing, so divine, that it demands my life, my soul, my all.

But having said all this, we must return to Baillie's contention that this is only part of the truth, if we would present a true picture of his Christology. It is also true that "in a sense and in a measure"¹ our relationship to God is the same as that of Christ. He writes, "We see Him also desiring to take up other men into His own close union with God, that they might be as He was."² He points out that St. Paul can write regarding God's purpose, "those whom he foreknew he also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren."³ He also points to the fact that the writer to the Hebrews lays strong emphasis on the analogy between Christ's human experience and the experience of the men whom He saves. "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren."⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 128.

² Ibid., p. 117.

³ Romans 8:29, R. S. V.

⁴ Hebrews 2:11, R. S. V. See also F. F. Bruce, "Hebrews", Peake's Commentary on the Bible (London, 1962), p. 1010; "He has given Christ to be the 'pioneer' who opens up the way by which his people find salvation and follow him to heaven". He would not be exempt from their afflictions; his solidarity with them must be complete. He who makes his people holy is the Son of God; those whom he makes holy are through him the sons of God, acknowledged by him as his brothers."

And he points to the fact that in the Fourth Gospel,

We find the purpose boldly expressed that all Christ's people should come to have the same kind of unity with Him, and through Him with the Father, as He has with the Father: 'that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that Thou didst send me.'¹

The New Testament affirms, Baillie holds, that, even although we cannot be divine and even although our relationship to God can never be identical with that of Christ, nevertheless, in a sense and in a measure our relationship is the same; in a sense and in a measure we are one.

But if this is true, if Christ is the first-born among many brethren, if it is true that in a sense and in a measure our relationship to God is the same as that of Christ on the analogy of grace, does this not make Christ only the First Christian? Baillie, while affirming that in a sense and in a measure our relationship to God is the same as that of Christ, still insists that at the same time Christ is divine. He once said,

As far as Jesus becoming divine by a good life -- well, that means deification and Christianity...never will be content with a doctrine of deification, (nor an Adoptionist Christology). These ways of thinking bring in the divine at the end of the process instead of at the beginning where it must always properly be.² There is not any point at³ which we can bring in the divine on top of a human achievement.

It was God who decided to do this and it was done on His initiative and by His election, even although it was a son he sought and not a

¹ God was in Christ, pp. 128 f.

² Unpublished Lecture Notes.

³ Ibid.

servant. Affirming, therefore, that God lived and acted in Jesus of Nazareth completely and without measure, he holds that this Divine Prevenience was nothing short of incarnation; that Jesus lived as He did because He was God incarnate. In a sense He was the first Christian; but at the same time He was uniquely and wholly divine. This is a paradox, it is the paradox of all the paradoxes in the Christian faith -- and Baillie leaves it there.

Even his great emphasis on the constant prevenience of the divine, however, and his interpretation of the Trinity and of pre-existence which understands the Incarnation not so much as the coming of the Second 'Person' of the Trinity as the coming of the Person of God Himself, do not satisfy some critics regarding the "uniqueness" of the divinity of Christ. They feel that Baillie's interpretation, even as thus presented, whatever may have been his intention, gives us a Christ who differs only in spiritual stature and not in spiritual status, that He differs from us only in degree and not in kind.

This type of criticism did not reach print until after Baillie's death, so what his reply would have been cannot be known. Although this criticism does point to what appears to be a weakness in Baillie's Christology, as it stands, it is not a weakness that would warrant discarding Baillie's theory, because it can be covered by the opaqueness of the paradox of the Incarnation. It is possible that Baillie would have pointed to this and left the matter there. It is much more probable, however, that he would have developed his theory somewhat along

a line of thought incipient in his theology. This line of thought may be seen in Baillie's presentation of the nature of faith. Bearing in mind the above-outlined understandings of the importance of the recognition of the prevenience of divine action, of the meaning of the Trinity, and of the nature of pre-existence, let us refer back to his presentation of the nature of faith. Faith and revelation, it will be recalled, he described as two sides of the same coin. God he believes, is always seeking to make Himself known; He is always "pressing in" with His revelation of Himself. Man's search for God is first inspired by God's search for man. An elementary degree of revelation is to hear God speaking through moral values, even although the hearer may be completely unaware of the fact that this is a relationship to God. A greater degree of revelation is to find in Christ the embodiment of the moral ideal. To find oneself unable to reach the moral ideal and to discover the reality of enabling grace represents a still greater degree of revelation. To understand that God rather than self is at the centre of life represents a yet greater degree, and the fullness of revelation comes in the recognition that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. This does not represent a necessary pattern of salvation; it does not outline a pilgrimage of salvation along every step of which a Christian must follow in order to reach the recognition that Christ is Saviour. But it does represent ascending degrees of revelation. Since revelation and faith are two sides of the same coin, increasing "amounts" of revelation mean increasing "amounts"

of faith. At that time we were critical of Baillie for not making a distinction between faith in God and saving faith in God in regard to the "quantity" of faith involved. And now this seems to be a weakness in his Christology also. In speaking to his students he once suggested, "Can't a difference in degree become so great that for all practical purposes it becomes a difference in kind?"¹ In Christ he sees the full revelation of God. To say that Jesus was "full of grace and truth", he held, as already quoted,

is to say that God, who had always been revealing Himself in a measure to mankind, was as fully manifested in Jesus as God can be in the conditions of real human life on earth, which is the very meaning of incarnation.²

Does it not therefore follow that this quantitative difference in the revelation of God, -- in the presence of God -- would amount to a difference in kind; that Jesus in other words is more than merely the first Christian? Because God lived and acted in Him without measure, this line of thinking would lead to the conclusion that He was different in kind and was much more than merely the first Christian. It was clearly Baillie's intention to present a Christ who was uniquely and wholly divine. He was not in favour of a "toned-down"³ Christology; it must be "all or nothing".⁴ This further development of his thinking would have clarified his position and enabled his theory to fulfil his intention

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² See above p. 230.

³ God was in Christ, p. 132.

⁴ Ibid.

without receding into paradox as far as his Christology, as presented, does recede.

This is the line of "defence" taken up by Principal John Baillie in reference to the criticism levelled at Donald's Christology by Professor Hick to which reference has been made. The latter criticized Donald on grounds we have been discussing, namely, that the theory shows how Jesus was divine in the same sense, but in a far higher degree than other men. And his criticism is that this does not do justice to the traditional concept. He claims the Nicene and Chalcedonian position to be that "God was in Christ in a unique sense which is not approximated or paralleled in the case of any other human life."¹ John throws valuable additional light on Donald's thinking when he replies,

I have, however, heard my brother say that it is misleading in such a connection to rely too much on the familiar distinction between degree and kind (or sense) because the absolute and perfect differs from the imperfect and relative not merely in degree but in kind, just as infinity and eternity are no mere prolongation of the finite and the temporal, but belong to another order of being. That is to say, when a difference of degree is² 'taken at the absolute pitch', it is already a difference of kind.

This concept, John points out, was held by their common teacher, the late D. R. Mackintosh, from whom Donald almost certainly acquired it.

Principal Mackintosh said,

Divine immanence is essentially a matter of degree³. One true mode of describing Christ, accordingly, is to speak of His person as representing the absolute immanence of God... God has been coming to men from the very beginning... We see God as it were ever moving on his way to incarnation... approaching always nearer to

¹ Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 11, p. 6.

² Ibid., p. 265.

complete personal union... the divine leads towards the human, and in Jesus is realised the ideal limit of their influence. But we have spoken of absolute immanence; and the emphatic adjective is witness to the fact that in Christ immanence reaches its climax. It is a climax which crowns the series by its likeness to the past and transcends it by singularity and difference. The self-giving of God is wholly present in Jesus.¹

John further points out that Donald would claim that this consideration is not the only "unique sense" in which God was in Christ. Professor Hick notes that the Chalcedonian definition clearly points up the difference between degree and kind in its concept of substance -- that Christ was *ἁποθνήσκων τῷ πληρί*; although he admits that some new concept would need to be found that is "dynamic" and not "static" like the concept of substance. This, John claims, can only mean that the Person of Christ would then be construed in the light of His work, and this is certainly the manner in which Donald regarded it. The grace of God is prevenient, and God paradoxically gives to each what He demands of them. God means "The one who at the same time makes absolute demands upon us and offers freely to give us all that He demands",² Donald wrote. That is, the grace God gives to each is adjusted to the task He has given each to perform. Thus Donald would affirm, John claims, that "the difference between God's indwelling in Jesus and His indwelling in the rest of us is best defined in terms of the difference between His vocation and ours. Only He was sent to be the Saviour of

¹ H. R. Mackintosh, The Person of Jesus Christ, quoted in the Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 11, p. 266.

² God was in Christ, p. 121.

the world".¹

This elaboration of Donald Baillie's Christology would seem to be clearly in keeping with his thinking and it secures his obvious intention to present a Christ who is uniquely and wholly divine.

Professor Hick pursues his criticism regarding the lack in Baillie's Christology of a place of unique status for Christ by referring to the question of grace. He notes that Donald Baillie seeks to preserve this unique status by pointing out, as Hick phrases it, that

The situation is not correctly described by saying that God's mode of being 'in Christ' is a supreme instance of His manner of being in all men, but rather the reverse, God's mode of being in us is derivative from His being in Christ. Because He was firstly and perfectly in Christ He is able to be in us too, in so far as we ourselves are 'in Christ'. Instead of the mystery of the Incarnation being a case of the paradox of grace in general Christian experience, this itself is a partial reproduction of the supreme mystery of grace in the Incarnation.²

The paradox of grace, however, is not confined to the Christian life. Consequently, we are not able to relate it causally to the Incarnation. "Hence the attempt to preserve a unique position for Christ as the source of the paradox of grace in others", Hick concludes, "does not succeed."³

¹ Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 11, p. 266. See Donald's reply to the question "would any man who lived a perfect life be therefore and thereby God incarnate?" in God was in Christ, p. 131. This would make the human side of the achievement prior; we must, he insists, take the priority of the divine in earnest.

² Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 11, p. 7.

³ Ibid.

In the first place it should be pointed out that Baillie did not say that our experience of the paradox of grace is a partial "reproduction" of the supreme mystery of grace in the Incarnation, but rather he said it is a "reflection" of that perfect union of man and God in the Incarnation. The real problem lies in the question of what we mean when we say that our experience of grace is 'causally connected' to the Incarnation. Baillie says that our experience of God depends on Jesus' experience of God.¹ But how does our experience of God depend on His experience of God? Does the dependence consist only of revelation or does it have soteriological significance? Baillie is not clear but his answer would have to be both. The problem is connected with the problem of the relation of the eternal and the temporal, as Baillie would see it. This was something that took place in time and as such has very great soteriological significance. But it is also a revelation of something that is always there; it is an "outcropping in history" of something that is always there. Thus the benefits of the Incarnation and Atonement are not confined only to those who have heard about them in this world.² The grace that brought about the Incarnation is the same grace that operates in us. In Baillie, God -- the God who is Father, pre-existent Son and Holy Spirit -- is the source of all grace. The grace of the pre-existent Son given to the Incarnate Son

¹ God was in Christ, p. 128.

² Our understanding of God's activity is wholly dependent on this historical event, it is from this concrete experience that our awareness of God's saving activity is derived. But the activity of God's grace is now; God's atoning activity is not limited in time by this event. The revelatory cause and the soteriological consequence are immediate and ever contemporary.

and the grace of the Incarnate Son given to us is all the grace of God. As Baillie points out, the New Testament can speak of God the Father dwelling in Christ and of God the Father dwelling in us and of Christ dwelling in us.¹ When we say "Not I, but the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" we are really saying, "Not I, but the grace of God." In so far as Christ is the incarnation of the pre-existent Son of God, He is the source of all grace, because all grace is of God, and God is Father, pre-existent Son and Holy Spirit. John Baillie points Professor Hick to Donald's statement regarding pre-existence:

From the human life of Jesus on earth we are, paradoxically but inevitably, led backwards to its divine origin and eternal background in heaven, on which all depended... In that sense it is impossible to do justice to the truth of the Incarnation without speaking of it as the coming into history of the eternally pre-existent Son of God.²

In the light of these considerations it seems that Professor Hick's argument is invalid when he claims that since all grace is not causally connected to the Incarnation, then "the attempt to preserve a unique position for Christ as the source of the paradox of grace in others does not succeed."³

On the assumption that the above criticism is valid Professor Hick presses his attack on the grounds that if Christ's uniqueness lies in the degree of divinely enabled moral achievement which was

¹ See God was in Christ, p. 147.

² Ibid., p. 150.

³ Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 11, p. 8.

His then this Christology is an adoptionist Christology. To speak of Christ's uniqueness as lying in a degree of "divinely enabled moral achievement", however, presages right away either a misunderstanding of, or a refusal to accept, Baillie's insistence on the prevenience of divine action. This soon becomes evident upon examination of the nature of Professor Hick's criticism. He proposes to demonstrate that this is an adoptionist Christology by unveiling a dilemma in Baillie's theory. There are two possible interpretations of the paradox of grace, he claims:

On the one hand the paradox might be viewed as a vehicle of predestination, by which God determines man's choices even whilst such choices remain, from a human point of view, free and responsible decisions.¹

This predestination point of view, he points out, is evident in Baillie's repeated insistence on the priority of the divine action. Writing of Jesus' continual obedience to God's will Baillie said, "In the last analysis such human choice is never preventive or even co-operative, but wholly dependent on the divine prevenience."² And Professor Hick claims that:

Taken without qualification, this represents so close an approach to the thought of an irresistible divine grace as to imperil the whole conception of God as respecting man's freedom and autonomy.³

This, he is confident, Baillie would not want to do, and so he considers him to be forced onto the other horn of the dilemma.

¹ Ibid.

² God was in Christ, p. 131.

³ Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 11, p. 8.

What must, of course, be pointed out is that this is not really a "possible interpretation of the paradox of grace" at all, but simply the presentation of one arm of the paradox. To such a treatment of paradox Baillie never could subscribe and so he could not take this "possible interpretation" "without qualification". Moreover, Professor Hick is making much too great an assumption when he assumes that Baillie would not subscribe to a predestinarian point of view. He almost certainly would subscribe to it, providing it be recognized as constituting one side of the paradox. Having, however, excluded this "possible interpretation" to his satisfaction Professor Hick turns to outline the other "possible interpretation" to which he considers Baillie to be now committed. First of all he quotes Baillie:

When I make the wrong choice, I am entirely responsible, and my conscience condemns me. And yet (here is the paradox) when I make the right choice, my conscience does not applaud or congratulate me. I do not feel meritorious or glow with self-esteem -- if and in so far as I am a Christian. Instead of that I say 'Not I, but the grace of God.' Thus while there is a human side to every good action, so that it is genuinely the free choice of a person with a will, yet somehow the Christian feels that the other side of it, the divine side, is logically prior. The grace of God is prevenient.¹

This he interprets to mean:

When, in the mystery of personal freedom, a man does choose rightly, what he has done is to allow the divine grace to operate within him. God is not able (without retracting His gift of freedom) to cause a man to choose rightly, although when he does so choose his choice is at once taken up into and is inextricably interpenetrated by the prevenient divine activity.²

This may be a possible interpretation of this particular passage, but

¹ Quoted Ibid., p. 9.

² Ibid.

it is surely not a valid interpretation of Baillie's whole thinking. This is truly an emasculated paradox. The only prevention here is that God offers man a good thing and man is free to accept it or reject it. This is really no paradox at all. It is certainly far distant from the deep mystery of the relation of grace and free will. On this understanding man's choice is determinative and any man who fully accepted the proffered grace would ipso facto become the Son of God. This surely is Adoptionism. But this is not Baillie's theology. Even in the human response, in Baillie's view, God's action is preventient. In answer to the question "Would any man who lived a perfect life be therefore and thereby God incarnate?", Donald replied, as already quoted;

When we really accept the paradox of grace, when we really believe that every thing in a man is wrought by God, when we have really understood the confession 'I, yet not I, but God', and have taken the divine priority in earnest, the question loses its meaning.¹

This, Professor Hick claims, is only falling back on the predestinarian "interpretation" of the paradox of grace and this he rules out. In this way, he considers, Baillie is forced into the position of admitting that any man who lived a perfect life would therefore and thereby be God incarnate. This, however, is robbing Baillie of one arm of the paradox, which automatically destroys his whole position. Having robbed him of the real paradox it is not difficult to show that the remaining Christology is "Adoptionist" and that his remaining theology

¹ God was in Christ, p. 131.

is "humanitarian". Baillie did consider the freedom of human choice to be important, but this second "interpretation" is putting it in a position of importance that it does not find in his theology. This concluding "step" in Professor Hick's criticism is arbitrary and not a fair criticism of Baillie's Christology.

Not unrelated to the final stage of Professor Hick's argument is a criticism offered by Professor J. L. M. Haire.¹ He accuses Baillie of being ambiguous and of affirming that Christ was both the first Christian and God incarnate, -- one in whom dwelt a unique divine presence.² In seeking to set the ambiguity in clear outline he asks the question, "Does Christ display the perfect sense of dependence on God, which is the mark of the true Man, because He is the very best of men or because there is a unique Divine Presence in Him?" If we answer "both", this would only show us, he claims, the "form in which the Son of God as a real Man depends as a man on God, but does not adequately explain His Person."³ Baillie phrases the question differently. He asks, "Was Jesus divine because He lived a perfect life, or was He able to live a perfect life because He was divine?"⁴ And his answer is, "The dilemma disappears when we frankly recognize that in the doctrine of the Incarnation there is a paradox which cannot be rationalised but which can in some small measure be understood in the light of the 'paradox of grace'."⁵

¹ Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 17, No. 3, Sept., 1964, p. 303.

² Ibid., p. 305.

³ Ibid., p. 306.

⁴ God was in Christ, p. 130.

⁵ Ibid., p. 131.

If pressed, therefore, in regard to the question of whether Christ was the First Christian or the uniquely divine Son of God, he would have to answer "both". He is ambiguous. But the ambiguity existed first in the New Testament. There Jesus of Nazareth is the first born among many brethren; He is not ashamed to call the sanctified "brothers". But at the same time He makes the highest claims, such as "he who has seen me has seen the father",¹ and He accepts as valid Peter's confession, "You are the Christ"². Baillie sees it as a paradox inherent in the Incarnation, and leaves it at that. If we so accept it, it does mean that it is quite legitimate to interpret His experience in the light of ours. And it also means that the Christian intuition is valid that the author of our salvation, who elicits our total worship, could never be merely a created being.

Although Baillie left the matter at this point, the paradox may be further reduced, as we have noted, and his position strengthened and clarified by developing his idea that a difference of degree amounts to a difference in kind. This would mean that although in one sense Christ was first among many brethren, yet at the same time, by degree of the presence of God, he belonged to another order of being. He was God incarnate, He was uniquely divine.

In stating his case Professor Haire wrote,

I believe that it is impossible to state the full Christian doctrine of the relation of our Lord to ourselves unless we say both that He is the true Man perfectly obedient to God, and is also in some prior

¹ John 14:9, R. S. V.

² John 8:30, R. S. V.

sense also the Eternal Son who, for that very reason, comes and is able to restore our human nature, and to show us a humanity truly dependent on God.¹

In saying this he is voicing the major concern that Baillie's critics hold. But what exactly is meant by this statement that in some "prior sense" Jesus is also the Eternal Son? It is fair to assume that in this day and age Professor Haire is thinking of the Person of Christ in dynamic rather than substantive terms; that is, that he is thinking of the Person of Christ in terms of the work of Christ. This being so, does he mean that God in the Eternal Son took preventient action and through union with a human ego became incarnate, restored our human nature and showed us a humanity truly dependent upon God? If so, this would not be in disagreement with Donald Baillie. But if he means that the Eternal Son, as one of three distinct Persons in the Godhead, somehow became flesh without union with a human will, and restored our human nature and showed us a humanity truly dependent upon God by divine action alone, has he left any room for human freedom and responsibility? How could the divine Eternal Son become human, other than by union with a human will, except by some process of Kenosis? If this is his theory, then he would encounter the problem which Kenoticists encounter, namely, the problem of being able to regard Christ as truly temptable, of being able to present Christ as being truly human. It must be granted that to think of the divine Eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity,

¹ Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 17, p. 306.

"coming down" to inhabit the full conditions of humanity and thus being able to restore our human nature and to show us a humanity truly dependent upon God, gives a much more clean-cut and intellectually acceptable Christology. But it is achieved at the cost of failing to make Christ truly human. Baillie also understands the Incarnation to be a divine, personal condescension in which the divine action is prior and in which the divine takes the initiative; Jesus Christ is wholly divine. But it is a personal union with a human personality in which human freedom is not only not destroyed but rather is enhanced to its true fulfilment; Jesus Christ is also wholly human. Baillie's Christology does show how the Son of God as a real Man depends as a man on God; but it also shows how God, the Eternal Son, became man.

Nevertheless, criticism of Baillie's theory is understandable. He does present the human side of the Incarnation very well; all Christ's claims are really disclaimers. And the paradox of grace does illuminate the nature of Christ's relationship to God as a man. But he is only able to adequately include the concept of the coming of a uniquely divine Being in the Incarnation by the use of paradox, and the innate human quest to know everything possible about so important a matter as the nature of man's relationship to God can never be fully satisfied to leave the matter there. The theory starts with the fact that Christ is a created being and never quite escapes it, and is only able to see Him as uniquely divine by way of paradox. Dr. P. T. Forsyth, although his criticism is not directed at Baillie, points to the central

core of the problem more clearly than anyone. He writes,

I cannot regard as other than Socinian (which can be fairly equated with humanistic) the idea that in Christ we have the greatest of created personalities, completely filled with the Spirit of God. For the centre of gravity must always be where the personality is; and in this case it is in the created humanity alone. The person concerned is a person in the same created sense as the rest of us, however magnificent in his scale and range, and however filled with the Holy Ghost.¹

Thus, in seeking to escape this weakness, he seeks a more cosmic Christology; he seeks to present a Christ who is not in any sense a created being but rather One who is uniquely divine. He makes a clear distinction between the Persons in the Godhead, and yet also seeks to provide a place for the realization that God's real presence is in Christ. "We want in Christ God's real presence,"² he said. So he portrays Christ's personality as consisting in his relationship to God. Constitutive of this relationship is obedience; the obedience of Christ in the flesh is but an expression of this pre-incarnate obedience. The personality of the incarnate Christ is thus a divine personality and Christ becomes incarnate by way of a kenoticism which enables Him to live within the conditions of humanity. This clearly contains the personal condescension and sacrifice of divinity. It presents Christ on the Godward side of the paradox of grace; it presents Christ as clearly divine. But it does not quite succeed in presenting a Christ who is fully human. In the last resort, it would seem,³ there must be a paradoxical union with a human ego before the Incarnate Christ can be fully human. On the

¹ The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 78.

² Ibid., p. 83.

³ See Discussion of Kenoticism, Chapter 4, Section 2, pp. 175 f.

other hand, Baillie's presentation certainly safeguards the human element. He starts with the human side of the paradox of grace. It was a human self in which God lived and acted without measure, but it was more. It was a dynamic union of two persons resulting from a personal act coming out of the Godhead itself.

Neither theory is fully satisfactory. If they were it would mean the end of the search to fathom the Mysterium Christi, and that is not likely to happen. Both theories emphasize elements of truth that must be retained. But Baillie's retention of both the fully divine and the fully human through the use of paradox seems most satisfying. It retains those elements of faith which any adequate Christology must contain. On the one hand it contains the truth that it was God who lived and acted in Christ. This is essential. As a Christian a Christology must enable me to know that it was God who suffered for me; that it is by God that I am judged and redeemed; that it is the love of God that I see on the cross; that it was God who was in Christ reconciling. But at the same time this Christology retains the awareness that Christ met life as I meet it; that He met temptation as I meet temptation; that He also was a man. Baillie's theory is paradoxical; but it does contain these essential elements of the Christian faith.

In the face of the Mysterium Christi some measure of paradox seems inescapable. But this need not write "finis" across all Christological investigation and thinking. The most hopeful possibility of development would seem to be the exploration of some application of kenoticism within

the analogy of the paradox of grace. That is, there seems to be a possibility of development by way of using kenoticism in regard to the question of how God became man within the concept of the union of two personalities and on the analogy of the paradox of grace. A Christology should include the awareness that God did humble Himself and take the form of a servant and "come down". If there is a personal "coming down" in the Incarnation there must have been some "reduction", although not to the point of avoiding the necessity of union with a human "ego". There is room for criticism to the effect that Baillie's presentation of paradox is too rigid; that it cuts off any further investigation. Some application of the above suggestion to the problem of how the dynamic union of two persons takes place in the Incarnation, within the concept of paradox and on the analogy of the paradox of grace, would seem to be a hopeful channel of investigation.

IX

An Evaluation

One of the great strengths of Baillie's Christology lies in his determination to retain both a genuine place for human responsibility and an adequate place for the traditional Christian conviction that in the Incarnation is to be found divine condescension and intervention and the embodiment of a uniquely divine Personal God. This leads him to take a middle road between the two major emphases of modern theology; to establish a position between the subjective theology of the "liberals"

and the "existentialists" on the one hand, and the objective theology of the "theology of the Word" on the other. Not only does this position provide a meeting place for the two trends, but in this way he is able to retain the essential strengths of both and at the same time avoid their major deficiencies. In contrast to the theologies of both Dr. Karl Barth and Dr. Rudolf Bultmann and in contrast to much modern theology he gives a very large place to morality and retains an important place for the Historical Jesus. This constitutes a significant contribution because these are deficiencies that need to be corrected. Along with the "objective" approach, his Christology, by way of the prevenience of the grace of God, is theocentric; yet it remains human. Both he and Dr. Barth use paradox, as has been noted, but Dr. Barth's concept of the "overlapping" of God's grace over human freedom leaves little room for genuine freedom of choice. As Baillie comments, Dr. Barth has "overemphasized the divine so much that it can hardly be combined with the human at all."¹ Baillie, however, fully retains human freedom and provides a living relationship between Christology and human experience. Along with the "subjective" approach his Christology finds its starting point in human experience and is extremely relevant to modern life; yet it moves beyond a human experience that finds Christ to be merely the "man for others". He does not leave the background of the Incarnation in pure mystery as Dr. Bultmann does, but sees it as the redemptive action of a Personal God. Thus,

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

although he starts in human experience he moves beyond it to a theology of revelation that finds Christ to be God Incarnate, the incarnation of a Divine Person. In this way his Christology retains the essential values but avoids the major deficiencies of the two major emphases of modern theological thought.

Its greatest strength, however, lies in the factor of its relevance to daily life. Baillie's basic and major concern was not the working out of the metaphysics of the problem, but rather the working out of what it means. He once said to his students, "Even if we can't altogether answer the question of how it is possible, we can't refuse to tackle the question as to what it means."¹ What therefore does the Incarnation mean in terms of man's experience? It means, first of all, that Jesus Christ was a real person who met life as man meets it. Man is not called upon to face any temptation or trial that He did not have to endure. It means, further, that the Christian life is charged with moral responsibility; it is a matter of constantly exercising our God-given capacity for moral choice in following our Moral Leader, Jesus Christ. Consequently, the Christian faith is constantly vital and relevant and demanding.² But following this Moral Leader, even although He meets life as we meet it, is not a simple matter. Man finds that he is not able to do it by himself. The commandment "Thou shalt love thy

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² Moreover, the area of Christian ethics seems to be the area that provides the most potential for contact with non-Christian modern man.

neighbour as theyself" is utterly beyond him. As Baillie writes, "we cannot even begin to do it by an exercise of our wills. We can only do it when grace comes to our aid."¹ And here man discovers the second meaning -- the reality of enabling grace. This, however, does not constitute the total revelation. Experience also reveals that the grace of God is always prevenient, the love of God is always taking the initiative. However important human decision may be, the action of God is always prior. In man's relationship to God, therefore, man is ever responsible for making moral decisions. Yet at the same time he is aware that God's grace is prevenient, that all good in him really comes from God. All of this is revealed in the experience of the paradox of grace. And Baillie carries the thought right through into his concept of atonement. Man is responsible for his own salvation; yet it is really altogether an act of God. Thus the paradox of grace provides an analogy in human experience that serves as a handle to enable man to grasp an understanding of the nature and meaning of the Incarnation. What, then, is the meaning of the Incarnation that experience thus enables man to grasp? It means that Jesus was a real man who met life as men meet it. It means that He is the revelation of how God intends men to life; that He is the prototype of the Christian life. It means that His relationship to God, in faith and prayer and trust, for example, is in a sense and in a measure the same as man's. It means that the historical Jesus is very important

¹ The Theology of the Sacraments, p. 136.

and man's responsibility in following Him is very important. But it also means that it was God who lived and acted in the historical Jesus. It means that it was God who was humiliated and suffered. It means that it was the redemptive love of God that took the initiative in the Incarnation; the costly reconciling act of God in Christ is the climax of the activity of grace. It means that God enables man to respond in obedience and surrender as man never could do without enabling grace. And it means that God has done something for man's redemption in the Incarnation at the cost of unfathomable suffering that man could never possibly even begin to do for himself. As man stands in the shadow of the cross he can only stand in silent and grateful wonder as he realizes that God has done this for him, and he is moved in response to make an offering of his total self. In his heart he knows that "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."¹

Baillie makes the Incarnation much more than a theory; it is a living reality in the experience of man in his daily life that means more to him than words can ever be found to express. It is relevant beyond measure. The great strength of Baillie's Christology, therefore, lies in its relevance to man's experience. It makes the Incarnation meaningful and at every moment relevant and vitally important to the practical living of the Christian life; and the experience of the Christian life, in turn, throws light on the meaning of the Incarnation.

¹ Isaac Watts, The United Church Hymnary, No. 86.

The weakness of his Christology, however, lies in its theory. How can a created being ever become also uniquely and wholly divine? Baillie is only able to provide for this by unwavering insistence on the prevenience of divine action and by the deepest of all paradoxes. We cannot ignore the fact, however, that the importance of man's relationship to God is such that the questing human spirit can never be content to simply leave the matter there. One alternative, as has been pointed out, is to start from the divine side, and explain the Incarnation as the "coming down" of a divine centre of self-consciousness which becomes human by a process of kenosis whereby it is enabled to live fully within the conditions of human life. But this theory never succeeds in making Jesus truly temptable and, therefore, truly human. Some union with a human ego seems essential to retain true humanity. Neither the approach from the divine side nor the approach from the human side, therefore, seems wholly satisfactory. Baillie's approach does include the essential truth of the Incarnation of a Personal Being, uniquely and wholly divine; and at the same time it safeguards the equally essential truth that it was a real incarnation, that Jesus was truly human. His approach does contain these essential truths if he be granted the use of paradox. Professor John McIntyre, in a review of God was in Christ, proffers the charge that in Baillie's presentation, "the Chalcedonian problem has been bypassed but it has not been solved."¹ It is true

¹ John McIntyre, Review of God was in Christ, The Reformed Theological Review, Vol. 7, No. 2, Nov. 1948, p. 18.

that problems relating to the substantive definitions regarding the two natures co-existing in the person of Christ have been by-passed. But it is one of the strengths of Baillie's Christology that he thinks of the two natures in purely dynamic rather than substantive terms. It is this approach that makes the union understandable at all. In such terms the definition has not been by-passed. Indeed, Professor W. N. Pittenger offers the opinion that "It is exactly this line of approach which the Chalcedonian definition implies."¹ And Professor H. P. Van Dusen writes that while it breaks genuinely new ground, "it is essential orthodoxy."² Baillie's approach does contain the essential traditional truths, if he be granted the use of paradox. If it be true that both of these essential truths cannot be fully maintained without some use of paradox, then it would be better to use paradox than to sacrifice truth. Consequently, if some measure of paradox cannot be avoided, and since his approach does start on the elementary level of moral choice, which is a level that appears to offer the most hope of an effective contact with modern man, and since his theory is based on human experience³ and is extremely relevant to daily life, it would

¹ Review of God was in Christ, Review of Religion, Jan. 1950, p. 172.

² H. P. Van Dusen, Review of God was in Christ, Christianity and Crisis, Dec. 25, 1950, pp. 172 f.

³ It should not be forgotten that in Baillie's thinking this includes the experience of redemption. Here man is conscious of carrying responsibility but at the same time very much aware that his redemption is an act of God.

seem that his Christology is one of the most useful and one of the most satisfying for the contemporary situation. The continuing task is to seek to reduce the opaqueness of the paradox of the Incarnation. An adequate Christology should have greater place for the idea of condescension than Baillie's theory provides, and it seems possible that this could be accomplished by the application of the idea of kenosis within the boundaries of the concept of paradox and on the analogy of the paradox of grace.

It has been objected that Baillie's Christology does not give adequate place to Christ as Saviour. This criticism, however, can be misleading. Baillie once said, "the doctrine of the Incarnation is not only the doctrine of Christ but also the doctrine of God."¹ And elsewhere he wrote, "Christianity is not merely a story about Jesus. It is a story about God, about the works of God, about the purpose of God."² What his Christology does do is to reveal that God was in Christ reconciling; it reveals that God in Christ is Saviour. Certainly Baillie would insist that there is soteriological significance in the Incarnation but would caution that one does not attempt to attribute this to Christ as distinct from the work of God.

The main achievements of Baillie's Christology, therefore, are its immediate relevance to daily life and its retention of an adequate place

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² To Whom Shall We Go?, p. 111.

for both human responsibility and divine sovereignty. This latter feature constitutes a most significant contribution to modern theology and both features play an important part in his examination of the meaning of the atonement.

CHAPTER 5

THE ATONEMENT

I

The Meaning of Atonement

The cross of Jesus Christ, as pointed out at the beginning of our examination of the nature of Donald Baillie's contribution to modern theology,¹ is the centre and symbol of the Christian faith. Its inclusion is the sine qua non of any presentation of faith in God that merits the name Christian. But Christians have not always been of one mind regarding its meaning and significance. And differing opinions have seldom been more at variance than they are within Christendom at the present time. The two major trends in modern theological thought present interpretations that are diametrically opposed, and it is not an easy matter to reach a perspective that avoids the weaknesses of both and yet retains the elements of essential Christian truth which each contains. Preliminary to an adequate examination of the subject is the attempt to answer the question, "who is Jesus Christ?" This we have attempted to do. And now we must face the final question to which all our study has been leading, namely, "what is the meaning and significance of the cross of Christ for this generation?".

¹ See above Chapter 2, pp. 10 f.

Traditionally the cross was closely associated with redemption, reconciliation and atonement, and salvation. Man was considered to be sinful, headed for death and destruction, and without hope in the world until God in His great love and mercy rescued him, broke the power of sin within him, forgave him and brought about his reconciliation and his consequent salvation. In other words, the cross spelled out his atonement. This was considered to be of the absolute essence of the Christian faith. Professor John Dickie wrote, "Faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord is the central affirmation of the Christian Faith, on which all others hang."¹ "The idea of Christ as saving man is one of the most general and fundamental of all Christian ideas."² Elsewhere he elaborates;

Christianity is the religion of redemption through Jesus Christ ... Redemption is deliverance by the power of God from the guilt and power of sin.³

And then he points to the factor that is of tremendous importance in an understanding of the meaning and significance of atonement when he adds;

our view of sin, accordingly, must exert a marked influence upon our view of redemption. Wherever there is a tendency to minimize the sinfulness of men ... lowered views of the significance of the Redeemer, and of the grace of God, in the forgiveness of sins ... invariably make their appearance.⁴

¹ John Dickie, The Organism of Christian Truth (London, 1930), p. 228.

² Ibid., p. 231.

³ Ibid., p. 131.

⁴ Ibid., p. 132.

The question of the nature of sin, therefore, is crucial to an understanding of the meaning of atonement. If sin is not understood as sin against God involving a consequent breach in man's personal relationship with God that carries all the consequences of separation from God, then the whole concept of atonement carries quite a different significance than it does in traditional Christianity and loses much of its meaning and relevance. In the Enlightenment and in Liberal Theology sin was largely regarded as infirmity or moral failure. Christ was considered to be the Leader and Example; salvation was primarily a work of man rather than a work of God. God, it is true, had provided a Saviour in giving the Example; but now it was up to man to follow, and sin was spelled out in terms of failure rather than in terms of rebellion. Consequently, there was little sense of a breach of a personal relationship, a weak sense of guilt, and practically no room for a concept of atonement.

In existentialist theology also, sin is largely regarded in terms of imperfection, immaturity and failure, rather than in terms of defiance and rebellion. In Dr. Bultmann's thinking, as noted above,¹ alienation from God follows from alienation from the authentic self. That is, in so far as man fails in measuring up to his true self he suffers alienation from God. Thus, the essential nature of sin is failure. This is a critical weakness in existentialist theology.

¹ See above pp. 65 f.

In that branch of it that places its emphasis on immanence, considers God to be the Ground of being, and interprets Christ as Saviour in that He is completely translucent to the Ground of being, sin is also largely regarded in terms of failure. It is failure in openness and otherness. This interpretation of theology sees the cross of Christ as the accomplishment of One who was complete and perfect in openness and otherness; it sees it as the accomplishment of One who had so completely emptied himself of self that he was completely translucent to the Ground of being. He was the "Man for others". In this view atonement is at-one-ment with the Ground of being, and the work of Christ is essentially a work of revelation because He reveals in Himself what this at-one-ment with the Ground of being is. As the Bishop of Woolwich expresses it, "there is no final difference between the person of Christ and the work of Christ."¹ Donald Baillie also construed the Person of Christ in the light of His Work, but in his theology the cross represents both a revelatory and a soteriological action. The revelatory cause in time has a soteriological consequence that is not tied to a point in time but is eternal. Whenever the story of the historical incident is repeated the revelation can recur, and if it does the soteriological consequence is ever contemporaneous. Baillie once said to his students,

Some one may well ask: In what sense then does the actual historical cross of Christ make a decisive difference? In what sense did

¹ Honest to God, p. 77.

the cross of Christ change the situation? Is its significance objective and cosmic or only revelatory? Did it do something, or only reveal something which was eternally real?

I would reply: How can we ever separate these two things in this realm of personal relationships? Whenever God does something for human salvation, isn't it by revealing himself? Atonement, reconciliation, salvation -- what do these mean except our being brought back to God? We could not be brought back to God if the love of God were not eternally bearing our sins, for only such a love has the power to bring us back. But also we could not be brought back to God unless that sin-bearing love were revealed to us, to melt our hearts into penitence and to kindle our faith and that is what is done when the love of God breaks into history in the cross of Christ. So the cross is not merely a symbol, an illustration of the love of God. It is the actual outcropping of that love on the plane of history for our salvation.¹

Thus the revelatory cause has a soteriological consequence. And the nature of this soteriological consequence is not merely a mysterious grace rising out of the surrounding darkness, enabling man to overcome his failure in emptying self of self and thus to become at-one with the Ground of being. Rather it is a Personal Creator "breaking into history", forgiving at tremendous cost a rebellious creature, breaking the power of sin or rebellion in him and restoring a broken personal relationship which amounts to being brought back to God, or at-one-ment with God.

It would seem, therefore, that only a concept of sin that regards sin as rebellion against the God whose name is a proper name, and a concept of God that regards God as a Supernatural, Transcendent Person who stands over against creation and breaks into history, can conserve traditional Christian truth.

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

At the same time, however, some place must be kept for the awareness that man is in some sense responsible for working out his own salvation. In attempting to conserve this latter truth Dr. Bultmann leaves the background of the Incarnation in pure mystery and other existentialists reject entirely the idea of a Supernatural, Transcendent, Personal God coming down to rescue sinful man. As the Bishop of Woolwich expresses it;

The whole scheme of a supernatural Being coming down from heaven to 'save' mankind from sin, in the way that a man might put his finger into a glass of water to rescue a struggling insect, is frankly incredible to ¹man 'come of age' who no longer believe in such a deus ex machina.

From this point of view the traditional understanding of the meaning of the atonement has lost its meaning for modern man and become utterly irrelevant. Yet it is exactly this understanding of the meaning of atonement that is held by the Barthian school of theology. To them the atonement is indeed an act of God, motivated by His love and mercy, to rescue helpless man. What then is the meaning of atonement? And if something of its traditional meaning is still valid, how can it be demonstrated to be relevant to modern man?

Donald Baillie characteristically approaches the question in terms of the human situation and by an examination of the atonement as it is related to life. "If your Christology is true, what difference does it make?" he asks. "How are we better off in the actual business of living

¹ Honest to God, p. 78.

for having such a Christ?"¹ Part of the answer is that it gives us a Christian conception of God, and this takes us a long distance along the way towards a satisfactory answer. But the full answer, he writes,

cannot be given without a consideration of the whole problem of sin and forgiveness, atonement and reconciliation.² Throughout the whole Christian tradition the supreme human exigency to which the doctrine of the Incarnation had to be related and made relevant has been the need of salvation from sin, the forgiveness of sin.³

Such statements place him squarely within the camp of traditional, orthodox, theocentric theology where his Christology has taken him. But how is he to follow his usual practice and start in human experience to demonstrate the relevance of atonement while holding this position? Surely the concepts included in the above quotations are the very concepts that are not meaningful and relevant to modern man. Modern man has little awareness of sin and no conscious need of forgiveness so how can this be a point of contact that will demonstrate the relevance of the atonement? Baillie, however, insists that it can be such and proceeds to show why.

He is perfectly ready to admit that a sense of sin is not one of the foremost characteristics of modern man; he admits that modern man has very little sense of sin at all. The modern attitude is that there is nothing to be gained by crying over spilt milk; the only sensible thing to do is to make whatever reparation is possible to those wronged

¹ God was in Christ, p. 159.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 160.

and then forget about it. But is it as simple as this?, Baillie asks. Is it not more realistic to recognize that we cannot simply walk away and forget about it? If we are able to do this it means that we do not take right and wrong very seriously and we will simply return to do the same thing all over again. But if we do take right and wrong seriously, we simply cannot forget about our misdeeds easily, even although it may seem possible to do so. They bother us and give us a sense of failure. We do not know what to do about it, it becomes intolerable to face it, so we try to repress it and it becomes a complex that interminably bothers us -- a sort of "moralistic substitute" for a sense of sin. The cure which modern psychology offers is to bring the cause of our complex up to the light of day where it can be faced and vanquished and then our mind is healed. This procedure may be effective if the cause of the complex is some trivial experience in the past that has grown in importance in the subconscious until it has become a complex. But if the foundation of the complex is solid and evil, if it is based on the fact that a man has "disobeyed his conscience, betrayed his ideals, tarnished his character, lost his battle,"¹ as Baillie puts it, then it is another matter. The complex is not remedied by bringing it up to the light of day. In fact, the individual is in a far worse position instead of a better one. Psycho-analysis by itself is not the answer. Neither can the moralist forgive himself;

¹ Ibid., p. 167.

the more earnest he is the more hopeless is his situation. Thus this matter of sin is relevant, because there really is no answer until "we allow the whole situation to be transformed by an orientation towards God."¹ Then the consciousness of moral failure becomes a sense of sin against God. That makes the situation worse than ever, yet at the same time better than ever, because it opens up the possibility of divine forgiveness. If we are truly appreciative of this divine forgiveness, see something of its cost, and accept it, then we can learn to forgive ourselves. The centre of gravity in our life moves from self to God; seeing the cost of forgiveness we become more concerned about God than about our own character, and are able to accept it. As the late F. W. Robertson put it;

it is the beauty of the penitence which is according to God, that at last the sinner, realizing God's forgiveness, does learn to forgive himself.²

The sorrow of penitence turns into the joy of forgiveness and the penitent gets a new start. This, Baillie claims, is a part of Christian experience, and could scarcely be more relevant to modern life. He concludes;

the consciousness of sin against God and of divine forgiveness, instead of being morbid or unpractical, is the ultimate secret of wholesome living and far more conducive to it than the moralistic substitute which belongs to a secular age.³

¹ Ibid.

² F. W. Robertson, "The Power of Sorrow", Sermons, (Third Series), quoted in God was in Christ, p. 165.

³ God was in Christ, p. 166.

Baillie then goes on to consider briefly the consequences of sin. Does forgiveness mean that the consequences of sin are removed? Obviously, much suffering consequent upon our sin cannot be removed. But the suffering of remorse is removed. We are living in a new relationship to God who has forgiven us and enabled us to forgive ourselves, and who gives us grace to bear our suffering without bitterness or paralysing guilt or remorse. We are able to see our suffering as the consequence of sin but not as the punishment of it, as some Christians regard it, and this makes a very great deal of difference in our ability to bear it and in our relationship to God. If our sin has brought suffering to others then every effort at restitution must be made as a first responsibility, even if it takes a lifetime. But this must be done without personal self-reproach and bitterness, and having done this, the rest must be left as part of the great burden of the suffering and evil of the world.

Here Baillie reveals an awareness of a reality which he does not develop. This reality, however, should be recognized in an adequate treatment of the objective aspect of atonement. It is the reality of the network of sin and suffering in which man is by birth inextricably involved. He contributes to it by his sin and he shares the suffering consequent upon other people's sin. Baillie refers to this reality as follows:

now the evil he has caused in other lives is part of the world's great mass of evil, which all true men must help to bear ... after all, we ought, all of us, to be in some measure feeling the whole of the world's woe, as a burden for which we have a corporate responsibility.¹

¹ God was in Christ, p. 169.

It is a network or power in which man becomes involved and to which he becomes subject by birth. Dr. Bultmann speaks of it as follows: "This power does not come over men, either the individual or the race, as a sheer curse of fate, but grows up out of himself".¹ He claims that, "Paul can even express the fact that the world masters those who constitute it by speaking of the 'spirit of the world'² -- no matter whether that is only a rhetorical phrase as an antithesis to 'the Spirit which is from God' or whether 'the spirit of the world' is conceived as an actual mythical entity."³ And he goes on to say, "In modern times, 'the spirit of the world' is the atmosphere to whose compelling influence every man contributes but to which he is also always subject".⁴ It seems that an adequate treatment of the objective aspect of atonement should include the awareness that this power was broken through the cross of Christ and a new order introduced which the New Testament calls the Kingdom of God. To this we shall return in considering the objective aspect of atonement.

Meanwhile, returning to the main theme of Baillie's argument, he believes that if we have contributed to the suffering of others by our sin, we must leave it as part of the great burden of suffering of the world, and accept forgiveness. If we refuse to do this, he suggests,

¹ Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. 1 (London, 1952), p. 256.

² 1 Cor. 2:12.

³ Theology of the New Testament, p. 257.

⁴ Ibid.

it is because we are thinking too much of ourselves and are trying to justify ourselves by our works instead of accepting forgiveness and being set free for the service of God and man. This, he thinks, "is very near the heart of the new secret that Paul discovered in becoming a Christian."¹ He had tried so hard to win God's favour by being a good man, and he made the great discovery that God's love for us is not dependent on our being worthy of it; God loves us "while we are yet sinners."² He had certainly contributed to the suffering of others, but he accepted forgiveness and rejoiced in it and was set free to serve. "I laboured more abundantly than they all:" he writes, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."³ There is no solution to man's moral problem until he is oriented towards God. Forgiveness is necessary for a wholesome and essentially healthy life; the concepts of sin and forgiveness are directly relevant to the daily life of modern man.

But if this is true, is it not enough? Why do we need to go on to speak of atonement? If God loves us whether we are worthy of it or not, if He is ever seeking us for our own good, if His forgiveness is free to all who will accept it, then we can accept it and let that be the end of it. Why go on to speak of atonement? Baillie's answer is that there is a vast difference between "a good-natured indulgence and

¹ God was in Christ, p. 170.

² Romans 5:8

³ 1 Cor. 15:10

a costly reconciliation."¹ And this must be recognized. Then, in his turn, he asks a most significant question: would a facile and cheap forgiveness "have the liberating power to set us free for a new and better life?"² The significance of this question lies in the fact that Baillie's concept of the atonement has been criticized on the grounds that it does not take adequately into consideration its objective aspect. Here, obviously, he is thinking of something more than a subjective influence as far as the individual is concerned. He is thinking of a "liberating power to set us free for a new and better life." To this consideration we shall return in evaluating the criticisms levelled against his interpretation. Meanwhile, returning again to his argument, he considers it a matter of paramount importance to recognize the vast difference between a good-natured indulgence and a costly reconciliation. It would not only be morally unwholesome to regard Divine forgiveness as good-natured indulgence, but what is more important, it would not correspond with the revelation of the cross. God cannot lightly pass over our sins; not because He does not love us, but because He does. The love of God, simply because it is so real and deep, knows no mercy in regard to sin; as George Macdonald said, "nothing is inexorable but love."³ And the soul-shaking feature of our relationship to God is that God knows what our sin really is and yet continues to love us in a measure of depth that we simply cannot fathom; a measure of which we get a glimpse on the cross. To betray such a love is the ultimate betrayal. In the

¹ God was in Christ, p. 172.

² Ibid.

³ Quoted Ibid., p. 173.

light of a fiercely burning wrath against all evil, and of a love whose depth cannot be plumbed, this betrayal must be blotted out before reconciliation is possible. This is a situation which only Divine atonement can meet. And "such an 'atonement'", Baillie wrote, "must be the most difficult, the most supernatural, the costliest thing in the world."¹ Forgiveness and reconciliation are brought about at a cost utterly beyond human capacity to comprehend. And the altogether staggering thing about it is that God Himself bears the cost. Thus Baillie sums it up:

It (forgiveness) comes from the heart of a love that has borne our sins, and because the love is infinite the passion is infinite too. "There is an atonement, an expiation, in the heart of God Himself, and out of this comes the forgiveness of our sins."²

We can only stand in wonder and thanksgiving in the shadow of the cross when we realize that this was done by God for our redemption. And our wonder deepens to the point of leaving us speechless when we realize the fact which Baillie cannot overemphasize, namely, that God's love not only initiated this action, but that God alone bears the cost. He admits that we have inherited the whole terminology of atonement, expiation, propitiation, reconciliation, from the sacrificial system of ancient Israel. But he claims that the climax to which this whole development leads in the New Testament is a concept of atonement in which God alone bears the cost. This is important to his theology and, he believes, most important to a proper understanding of the atonement;

¹ Ibid., p. 174.

² Ibid., p. 175.

and so he outlines the basis on which he makes his claim.

When sacrifice came to be regarded in Israel as a means of expiating offences, this applied to minor and ceremonial offences only. For the remission of the greater sins of dishonesty, violence and the like, it did not avail. From the punishment of these major sins there was no escape. With the great Prophetic movement of the eighth century B. C., however, two new notes were sounded. The first was that it was the moral offences, injustice, dishonesty, violence, etc. that really mattered, whether they were within the law or not, and no amount of sacrifice would have any influence with God. The other new note was that "God will freely forgive even the greatest sins, if only the sinners will repent and turn from their evil ways."¹ One might expect that this would bring the sacrificial system to an end. But instead of that, whatever may have been the reasons, in the Post-Exilic period it became more elaborate than ever and was extended to include all sin. In the New Testament, however, comes an "extraordinary climax".² On the one hand the Prophetic message of absolutely free forgiveness to the penitent sinner is carried further than ever because now not only is the one who repents forgiven, but Jesus teaches that God goes out after those who have not repented. On the other hand New Testament writers speak of the long sacrificial system as having at last found its climax and fulfilment, but with its meaning completely transformed.

¹ Ibid., p. 176.

² Ibid.

Now it is God Himself who makes the sacrifice, now God is both priest and victim. This "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."¹ is none other than God Himself. So, he concludes,

the two strains that we distinguished, from the age of the Prophets onwards, become one in their Christian climax: the strain that tells of God's readiness to pardon freely and abundantly, and that which persistently speaks of the need of costly atonement.²

Thus the sacrificial system does find its climax and fulfilment in the New Testament and provides the concept of atonement with the language in which it is set. But there are two very important things to notice in this fulfilment. In the first place God is now both priest and victim. In other words, God did not delegate the suffering in order to satisfy the demands of justice; He bore it Himself. And in the second place it was no outside influence that finally effected forgiveness and reconciliation. God provided the victim Himself. The expiation is made within the heart and life of God Himself. These are points of great importance in relation to the Satisfaction Theories of atonement to which we will shortly be turning our attention.

Thus far, then, Baillie has led us in the development of his interpretation of the meaning of the atonement. Starting in the human experience of the need of forgiveness he finds that this can only be met in relation to God. But when oriented to God, this forgiveness is found to be available to anyone who responds to the love of God in pe-

¹ John 1:29

² God was in Christ, p. 178.

nitence and obedience and reciprocal love. It is, however, a forgiveness that is no easy amnesty; it is costly beyond words to express. But it does establish reconciliation with God. Having thus developed the need and relevance and reality of reconciliation, he turns back to examine its relation to the cross and Passion of Christ.

II

The Relation of the Cross and the Atonement

Since the birth of the Christian faith the cross of Christ has been central, and through most of that long history it has been closely associated with the concept of atonement. In examining this relationship Baillie returns to an emphasis that is prominent in his whole theology, namely, the importance of the place held by the historical Jesus. He points out that although the writers of the four Gospels gave a disproportionate amount of space to the story of the passion and death, they also included

vivid and elaborate reminiscences of the words and deeds of Jesus throughout His public career ... because the meaning of the cross could not be understood without some knowledge and understanding of the person who died on it.¹

Here Baillie has a point of real importance. We cannot agree with Kierkegaard that it would be more than enough to know that it was the belief of the contemporary generation that God had appeared in the form of a servant, that He had lived and taught in their community and

¹ God was in Christ, p. 181.

finally died.¹ Surely it is because we know something of the man who died on it that we are able to grasp the meaning of the cross. This too, is part of the revelation. It is because we see his self-giving for others all the way through his life, his interest in their welfare and his love for them, that we are able to see on the cross the wonder of the self-giving of God for man. It is because Jesus literally died for sinners in the contemporary situation of his earthly life that we are able to attach this eternal theological significance to the cross. It is in the light of the earthly life that we are able to grasp the meaning and significance of the cross. He could have escaped death right up to the very last. If He had been content to give up his association with sinners and His troublesome activities, the authorities would have been more than glad to be done with Him. But He would not because He could not. What they so disliked because they thought it was upsetting their whole moral code, He knew He had to do. He went right on being a friend to sinners until it brought Him to the Cross. This was the significance of the Cross; it meant literally that Jesus died for sinners.

The truly amazing thing about this, Baillie points out, is that when the early Christians looked back on this dreadful happening it made them think of the redeeming love of God. It did not cause them to lose faith in the love of God or in the providence of God; rather

¹ See pp. 151 f, above.

it increased their faith in both. From the very earliest days their message was that this had been brought about by God for the purpose of redeeming sinners. How far this concept arose out of Jesus' own teaching about the significance of His death or out of His identification of Himself with the words of Second Isaiah about the death of the Servant of the Lord, cannot be known. But by the time of the teaching of Paul and John the death of Jesus is connected to a divine purpose of atonement and confidently traced to the working of the love of God. Moreover, this love is not thought of as merely sponsoring a gracious action, but rather something that impelled an action of infinite costliness, the giving up by God of His only Son in the process of dealing with our sins. Paul says "God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."¹ And John writes, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."² Perhaps it can be summed up best in the words of Paul "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not counting their trespasses against them."³ And this is not merely ancient history; the re-telling of the story makes man again aware of the love that God has for him, moves him to repentance and the soteriological result of this is ever contemporaneous -- he is reconciled to God.

¹ Romans 5:8 (Italics mine).

² 1 John 7:10

³ 2 Cor. 5:19, R. S. V.

Thus Baillie presents his concept of the atonement. It is an accomplishment of God at a point in time, brought about through the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that has soteriological consequences for man that are ever contemporaneous and which leave him infinitely indebted to God. In simpler terms it means that Baillie regards the atonement as not the easy wiping out of man's failure to achieve his true self plus the bestowal of a mysterious grace that will enable him to complete that achievement. Rather he regards it as a mighty act of a Transcendent Divine Person, who, motivated by infinite love and mercy, broke into history in Jesus Christ, rescued man from sin and death and did something for man that man could never even begin to do for himself. The Atonement means that God, through this mighty act, breaks the power of sin and rebellion in men and sets them free as they never could free themselves. The Atonement means that at infinite cost to Himself, God forgave man, which, in the very nature of the case, is something that man could not even begin to do for himself; and it means that God continues to forgive and to offer new beginnings and fresh hope which again, in the very nature of the case, man could not do for himself. The Atonement means that God, by way of an "expiation made in the heart and life of God Himself,"¹ brought about an at-one-ment, that spells out fulness of life for man here and hereafter, that man could never accomplish for himself. Finally, the Atonement

¹ God was in Christ, p. 178.

means that man is under infinite obligation to God. But it is an obligation to which he has most willingly committed his whole self because with endless gratitude he is so very much aware that love so amazing, so divine, demands his soul, his life, his all. The Cross is the centre of the Christian faith and it spells out for man reconciliation and at-one-ment with God; it is the means of his salvation.

III

The Relation of Baillie's Concept to Other Theories

Having established the basic concept that God, through Christ and the Cross, has thus effected man's atonement, theories of how the cross is effective to this end are a secondary matter. We may exercise our intellects within the boundaries of the revelation; indeed in a matter of such vital importance to us we cannot avoid doing this. But at the same time we will be ever conscious that here we are within an area that is really beyond the depth of man's knowledge; we are within the mystery of God. Here we may theorize, but not in dogmatic fashion. That Christ died for our sins has been a conviction held by the Church from earliest times.¹ But when we attempt to work out the theory of

¹ See 1 Cor. 15:3. Here Paul says, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." This is proof that from the earliest days this connexion was made.

how the cross is effective to this end we will move in caution and humility and maybe not a little perplexity. Only some of the sects feel that they are in a position to be dogmatic at this point; the theory has never been defined by the church.¹ As long as we bear this in mind, an examination of the relation of Baillie's concept to other theories, will be helpful; it will deepen our understanding of his concept, set it out in clearer relief and enable us to make an evaluation of it.

Baillie does not deal with any of these as theories² but he does deal with aspects of the concept of atonement that are related to particular theories. The first aspect tackled in God was in Christ is the concept of the wrath of God and the associated concept of propitiation. Does the atonement mean that the cross "propitiates" the wrath of God and thus brings about reconciliation?

¹ Dr. H. R. Mackintosh wrote, "There is no absolutely satisfactory theory of the Atonement. The fact is prior to the theory. The conviction of a changed relation to God effected by the Lord Jesus Christ has persisted throughout the whole course of Christian history, while each generation has more or less formulated its own special doctrine of atonement. In other words, the experience remains constant while the theories vary. H. R. Mackintosh, The Person of Jesus Christ, (Edinburgh, 1912), p. 246.

² Although there are many theories of atonement, they are generally considered to fall into three classifications. One is the Moral Influence Theory, another is the Satisfaction or Substitutionary or Juridical Theory, and the third is the Classical or Dramatic Theory. This last has been brought to attention again in this century in the revised form given to it by Bishop Gustav Aulen. See Gustav Aulen, Christus Victor, (London, 1934). First published 1931.

Baillie is quick to make clear that, in his view, atonement does not mean the propitiation of a vindictive and wrathful God who demanded such a sacrifice before He could change His wrath to love and mercy. Such a concept, he feels, belongs to paganism rather than to Christianity. He does agree, however, that there is a place for the idea of the "wrath" of God. Speaking of salvation as having as its background the eternal love of God, he said:

This does not mean that there is no place for the idea of the 'wrath' of God, or that 'the Wrath' from which we are saved is something impersonal and apart from God in New Testament thought ... it is identical with the consuming fire of inexorable divine love in relation to our sins.¹

If we admit this, however, are we not then inevitably involved in some concept of propitiation in relation to the Atonement? This is where Baillie definitely parts company with the Juridical Theory. He cannot tolerate any concept of discontinuity in the love and mercy of God. He cannot abide the thought that God had to be reconciled by some propitiation from outside Himself before His wrath was assuaged and His love and mercy came into operation. Moreover, his deep awareness that God was in Christ leads him to the conviction that it is wrong to think of Christ as offering a propitiatory sacrifice to God. He cannot be-

¹ God was in Christ, p. 89. Principal Matthew Black of St. Mary's College in St. Andrews University in Scotland has pointed out that you cannot personalize love and refuse to personalize wrath. (In a lecture to his students, Candlemas Term, 1965).

lieve that God delegated this suffering in order that His wrath might be assuaged and the demands of justice met. He is convinced that God did the suffering Himself; that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. And this leads him to affirm that God indeed was the Reconciler, but that only man was reconciled.

It is our opinion that he is right in his insistence that there can be no discontinuity in the operation of the love and mercy of God but that he is wrong when he allows this deep conviction to lead him to the conclusion that in the Atonement there was no reconciliation of God. God was truly the Reconciler; but in this mysterious and infinitely costly action God was also reconciled and His wrath against sinful man was propitiated. This propitiation and reconciliation was not brought about by some offering made on behalf of man but by an offering made at infinite cost within the being of God Himself. It is our opinion that Baillie's awareness that the Atonement was immeasurably costly to God could easily include this idea, that the objective aspect of his interpretation would be greatly strengthened if it were included, and that such inclusion would in no way do violence to his thinking. In any case, an examination of this opinion will serve to show how his interpretation differs from the Juridical Theory.

The major strength of the Juridical Theory lies in its recognition that sin is a matter of most critical consequence and that it simply must be taken seriously. With this point of view Baillie fully agrees. He told his students:

We surely must retain the note of absolutely uncompromising inexorable goodness—a perfection of divine goodness which cannot tolerate evil, which cannot be deceived, which cannot lightly pass over sin, which is terrifying and devastating to all pretence: the wrath of God.¹

This awareness, however, leads the Juridical Theory to insist that justice must be met at all costs. In this way it puts justice before love, and with this Baillie cannot agree.

This theory represents a legal approach to the meaning of the Atonement and is congenial to a forensic frame of mind. The demands of God's honour or God's justice simply must be met and the divine substitutionary sacrifice was God's divine means of meeting them. The theory's roots are deep in scripture. The sacrificial system was undoubtedly built on the idea of substitution. Moreover, the whole terminology of the Atonement fits in with this forensic interpretation of its meaning.

As Baillie points out, however, God did not desire the death of a sinner, even in the Old Testament. God desired rather that man repent, and to this end provided the means of escape, even although man had to provide the victim. And he further points out that although the whole sacrificial system found its climax in the New Testament, there is this completely new and antithetical element in it, namely, that now it was God who provided the victim. The supporters of the Juridical or Substitutionary Theory, of course, would agree that it was God who supplied

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

the victim, because it was God who supplied His own Son. Nevertheless, in their thinking God is one step removed, so-to-speak, from the actual sacrifice. That is, the sacrifice was offered to God by Christ as a man; the sacrifice was offered to God by man and God Himself was not immediately involved in it. The concept includes not only a distinct division between Christ and God, but sets them in opposition to each other. Christ, as man, offers himself to God in man's stead.¹ In this way the wrath of God is propitiated, the balance of justice is restored and the demands of the laws of righteousness are satisfied. Undoubtedly this is a neat, lucid, clear-cut, and rational theory that offers to those who demand rational clarity an attractive explanation of the Atonement. As Bishop Aulen has pointed out, however, "It may be doubted whether this demand for rational clarity represents the highest theological wisdom."²

Baillie's chief objection to the theory, as already indicated, is that it makes the law of justice primary to the law of love and thus creates a discontinuity in the operation of the love of God. That is, it makes the operation of the love and mercy of God contingent upon the satisfaction of His righteousness and the propitiation of His wrath. To Baillie this represents a misunderstanding and a misconception of God to think that His love grows out of His righteousness and

¹ As Professor N. H. G. Robinson has expressed it, "the Persons of the Godhead are set moving in opposite directions." (In a lecture at St. Mary's College, Spring Term 1965).

² Christus Victor, p. 75.

His Wrath and is secondary to them. Rather, it is his understanding that the love of God is the primary factor, and although wrath and love are inseparable, the wrath against evil grows out of the love and not vice versa. And this would seem to be the witness of the New Testament. As Principal T. W. Manson has written:

the great and outstanding novelty in the Gospel, both in the life and death and words of Jesus and in the thought of Paul, is the simple fact that it is love and love only -- not punishment or exhortation or enlightenment -- that has redemptive power. When John begins, 'God so loved the world that...' he is giving the very nerve of the Christian doctrine of redemption.¹

Baillie's second objection lies in the fact that the maintenance of the theory necessarily sets up a conflict between God and Christ. The sacrifice is offered to God from the side of man, from outside of Himself. Nevertheless, God planned it and initiated it. This means that He must have delegated the suffering to someone else, even if that someone was His son, in order that His wrath might be propitiated and His justice satisfied. This seems unworthy of God. So strongly does Baillie feel about this discontinuity in the operation of divine love that it leads him to deny that the Atonement means any reconciliation of God. He writes, "God's merciful attitude towards sinners is never regarded as the result of the process, but as its cause and source."²

If, however, there is no discontinuity in the operation of the

¹ T. W. Manson, On Paul and John (London, 1963), edited by Matthew Black; Studies in Biblical Theology, #38, p. 56.

² God was in Christ, p. 188.

love of God, what place is there for the concept of a propitiatory sacrifice as the means of removing the wrath of God and bringing about reconciliation? On the assumption that only some discontinuity can retain the concept of propitiation, Baillie seeks to find some other interpretation for this reference to it in the New Testament. The particular passage that points the problem sharply is from the pen of St. Paul and reads as follows:

Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth as a propitiation (*ἱλαστήριον*) through faith, by his blood.¹

Baillie points out that the passage has been much discussed by commentators, that the Greek is ambiguous, and that a very great deal of scholarly effort has gone into the investigation of its true meaning. The R. S. V. Bible uses the word "expiation" and the New English Bible translates it as "remedy". Baillie, understandably, leans heavily on the work of Professor C. H. Dodd,

who has made a careful study of the word (and) assures us that the rendering 'propitiation' is misleading, being in accord with pagan usage but foreign to Biblical usage, and that the real meaning of the passage is that God has set forth Christ as 'a means by which guilt is annulled' or even 'a means by which sin is forgiven'.²

More recently, however, this interpretation has been brought into serious question. Dr. Leon Morris, in his book, The Apostolic Preaching of the

¹ Romans 3:24 f.

² God was in Christ, pp. 187 f. See C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, (Fontana Paperback, 1959), pp. 78 f.

Cross, challenges Dr. Dodd's conclusions regarding the use of the word in the Septuagint and goes on to make the well-nigh irrefutable point that, "more than expiation is required, for to speak of expiation is to deal in sub-personal categories...whereas the relationship between God and man must be thought of as personal in the fullest sense."¹ The immediate context of the use of the word² is the wrath of God, and if we regard this as being personal, some form of propitiation seems inescapable before reconciliation can take place.³ If, however, the wrath of God is the wrath of a Divine Person, and if Atonement must, therefore, include the concept of the propitiation of this wrath before reconciliation can take place, how can this be conceived without some discontinuity of the operation of the divine love and mercy? The answer seems to lie in the Classic or Dramatic Theory of Atonement as presented by Bishop Aulen. According to this theory there is no discontinuity in the divine love and mercy, but there is a propitiation

¹ Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (London, 1955), p. 170.

² See Romans 1:18.

³ Principal Matthew Black is of the opinion that we cannot avoid the meaning given to the word in both Biblical and profane Greek, namely, propitiation. (Lecture, St. Mary's, 1965). There is a very real danger in becoming lost in etymology. See James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Languages (Oxford, 1961). "A true interpretation must include the context on the whole character and content of a man's thinking.... What he (Paul) would appear to be saying, therefore, is: "you are guilty of sin and you do deserve death; but God has justified you, delivered you, ...and even provided for the propitiation of His wrath for your sake"."

of the divine wrath. This propitiation, however, is not brought about by a sacrifice offered to God by man, but is brought about by a sacrifice provided at immeasurable cost within the life and being of God Himself. This interpretation includes the concept of a dualism that must be grasped before it makes any sense. It is explained by Bishop Aulen as follows:

It (the idea of dualism) is used in the sense in which the idea constantly occurs in Scripture, of the opposition between God and that which in His own created world resists His will; between the Divine Love and the rebellion of created wills against Him. This Dualism is an altogether radical opposition, but it is not an absolute Dualism; for in the scriptural view evil has not an eternal existence.¹

That is, evil is a part of the creation that God has made; nevertheless --- although the concept is rationally unclear --- God is engaged in a mighty struggle against this evil, and His wrath is hot against it. The cross marks His victory over this power of evil and in winning the victory His wrath is assuaged and He is reconciled to man. Thus the Sacrifice of the cross is the means whereby the power of evil is overcome. It does not follow, however, that the Sacrifice must come from man's side. As the Bishop explains it,

The idea that God receives the sacrifice is not based on a theoretical calculation of what God must demand from man's side for the satisfaction of His justice before atonement can be effected. Rather the idea is that sacrifice stands in the Divine Economy as the means whereby the Divine will-to-reconciliation realises itself, and which also shows how much it costs God to effect the Atonement.²

The idea that God is engaged in a struggle with the power of evil that

¹ Christus Victor, pp. 20 f.

² Ibid., p. 74.

exists in a world that was created by His will and that does not have a source outside of His will, is not an easy concept to comprehend. As Bishop Aulen admits, "it makes it next to impossible to construct a rationally consistent theory of Atonement."¹ It is paradoxical, but it does enable the theory to present God as winning the battle over the power of evil and at the same time providing the propitiation of His own wrath through the winning of the battle. All of this is accomplished through the sacrifice that is tremendously costly to God, and it can be thus accomplished because "sacrifice stands in the Divine Economy as the means whereby the Divine will-to-reconciliation realizes itself." Thus the Divine wrath is propitiated and God is reconciled; God is both Reconciler and the Reconciled. In this way the continuity of the operation of the divine love and mercy is maintained and at the same time the divine wrath is propitiated. "The safeguard", as the Bishop expresses it, "of the continuity of God's operation is the dualistic outlook."² This, of course, necessitates a discontinuity in the order of justice because there is no satisfaction of God's justice from the side of man. "The relation of man to God is viewed in the light, not of merit and justice, but of grace."³ This makes the order of love primary to the order of justice, and this is surely putting the divine laws of love and justice in their proper New Testament order.

¹ Ibid., p. 75.

² Ibid., p. 163.

³ Ibid.

In the idea that the sacrifice was supplied by God Himself and that the whole operation took place within the being of God, and in the idea that this was tremendously costly to God, the thinking of the two men is strikingly similar. Bishop Aulen has just been quoted.¹

Baillie writes:

this is the amazing new fact that emerges when we come to the New Testament: that God even provides the victim that is offered, and the victim is His own Son, the Only-begotten. In short, 'it is all of God': the desire to forgive and reconcile, the appointment of means, the provision of the victim as it were from His own bosom at infinite cost. It all takes place within the very life of God Himself: for if we take the Christology of the New Testament at its highest we can only say that 'God was in Christ' in that great atoning sacrifice, and even that the Priest and the Victim both were none other than God.² The Atonement is something within the life of God, wrought by God Himself.³

Further emphasis on the cost to God is found as the Bishop writes, "The redeeming work of Christ shows how much the Atonement 'costs' God."⁴

Baillie writes, "such an 'atonement' must be the most difficult, the most supernatural, the costliest thing in the world."⁵, and "God alone bears the cost".⁶ Neither of them attempt to explain how this sacrifice which takes place within the life and being of God and is so costly to God, is effective in bringing about reconciliation and in effecting atonement. In explaining the Classic view of the struggle between God and evil Aulen writes:

¹ See above p. 291.

² God was in Christ, p. 188.

³ Ibid., p. 192.

⁴ Christus Victor, p. 171.

⁵ God was in Christ, p. 174.

⁶ Ibid., p. 175.

The Atonement is set forth as the Divine victory over the powers that hold men in bondage. Yet at the same time these very powers are in a measure the executants of His own judgement on sin. This opposition reaches its climax in the tension between the Divine Love and the Divine Wrath. But here the solution is not found in any sort of rational settlement; it is rather that the Divine Love prevails over the Wrath ...by the way of Divine self-oblation and sacrifice.¹

Baillie, we noted, strongly upheld the reality of the wrath of God as the wrath of a Divine Person and not merely a cause and effect sequence in a moral order. But he was not able to accept the idea of propitiation because it seemed to require the breaking of the continuity of the love of God. He really did not satisfactorily deal with the necessity of propitiation; he had no satisfactory answer regarding the meaning of *ἰδὸς ἑπίου* other than to translate it as expiation and to quote with approval Dr. Emil Brunner's statement in regard to the Incarnation: "This is the place where the Love of God breaks through the Wrath of God. This revelation of the divine mystery of love in the midst of the reality of wrath is the 'propitiation'."² Here Bishop Aulen and Baillie -- as the latter quotes Dr. Brunner -- seem to be saying exactly the same thing. In this area of attempting to explain how the Atonement takes place within the life of God through the relationship of the Love and Wrath of God in such costly fashion, we are obviously moving on a level of depth in the mystery of God that is very deep indeed. Here there is no room for arrogant certainty and little room

¹ Christus Victor, pp. 170 f. (Italics mine).

² Emil Brunner, The Mediator (London, 1934), p. 520, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 189.

for certainty. But Baillie seems to be saying exactly the same thing as Bishop Aulen and it seems a very short step for him to join the Bishop completely in this regard and say that propitiation is the true meaning of ἰλκεῖσις and that the Atonement does mean a reconciliation of God as well as man. As long as the continuity of the love and mercy of God is safeguarded, which seems to be his chief concern in denying any change in God, there would seem to be no reason why he could not take this additional step and join the Bishop in affirming that God is both the Reconciler and the Reconciled. It would seem to do no violence to his thinking, and it would enable him to deal more adequately with the very important concept of the wrath of God. As it stands, he insists on the reality of the wrath of God but provides no satisfactory answer to the problem of the necessity of propitiation before atonement is possible. Moreover, and this is a factor of even greater importance, it would enable him to add this significant objective content to his theory of the Atonement and this would fill a need which his insistence on the cost to God does not clearly cover. Unquestionably Baillie does lay stress on the cost of forgiveness. It constitutes almost the total content of the objective aspect of atonement in his theory. But he includes it almost by sheer dogmatic affirmation. He does affirm that forgiveness is costly, but why is it costly? The inclusion of the concept of propitiation would give the concept of costliness a place in the logical development of his thought that it does not have as the theory stands and would add greatly to its strength.

The discontinuity in the operation of the love of God and the separation between Christ and God that is involved, constitutes Baillie's chief objection to the Juridical Theory. He has, however, other objections. To him the Atonement is essentially a personal relationship and does not lend itself to this forensic type of interpretation; in a personal relationship penalties cannot be transferred simpliciter in this way. "In the moral and spiritual realm", he said,

there can be no direct substitution of penalties; there can be no sheer transference of punishment from one person to another. The real punishment of sin is not any separable penalty. It is a moral and spiritual penalty, it is a degeneration of the soul and life, it is alienation from God. And that cannot be transferred from one person to another by any kind of transaction.¹

In this he is at one with the Classic Theory.² His idea is that "in this subject (the atonement)...we are dealing with a realm of personal relationships and nothing else".³

A further characteristic objection is that the theory is almost entirely negative in emphasis. It points out clearly enough that man is saved from the dire punishment of sin, but it completely misses the

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² Bishop Aulen wrote: "here, (in the Classic Theory) if anywhere, the idea of sin is fully personal." (Christus Victor, p. 165) "So long as the justice of God can be held to be satisfied by the payment of a compensation for sin...God's personal demand on man is not adequately expressed, nor is the idea of sin itself seen in its full personal meaning." Ibid., pp. 164 f.

³ God was in Christ, p. 198.

note of triumph over sin. Baillie does strike this note strongly enough in regard to the triumph over sin in the individual. He speaks of the Atonement as "having the liberating power to set us free for a new and better life".¹ In comparison to the Classic Theory, however, his account too is lacking in regard to the triumph over sin on a cosmic scale.

This last point is of interest because it marks a difference between Baillie's thinking and the Classic Theory. In relation to continuity in the operation of the love of God, in relation to the atoning sacrifice being made within the being of God and not offered to God by Christ as a man, and in relation to the personal rather than forensic quality of the Atonement, Baillie and Bishop Aulen are very much of one mind. But in relation to the finished work of Christ and the continuing work of Christ there are interesting parallels and marked differences. They both regard the historic event of the Incarnation as decisive and finished, with eternal consequences that make its effectiveness ever contemporaneous. Bishop Aulen sees the Incarnation as a decisive triumph over sin. Baillie too sees it as an act of God that brings about forgiveness and reconciliation and triumph over sin as far as the individual is concerned in his own life. But Bishop Aulen sees it as the triumph over sin on a cosmic scale; the power of sin in all the inter-related pattern of evil into which man is born, has been broken. And this victory is an eternal victory and

¹ God was in Christ, p. 172.

is, consequently, ever contemporaneous. He writes; "the victory of Christ over the power of evil is an eternal victory, therefore present as well as past".¹ Baillie too thinks of it as an eternal victory, but not as a once-for-all triumph over the power of sin in a cosmic sense. Rather it is a victory that is eternally being won in the being of God. In considering the paradoxical situation of suffering for sin as a reality in the heart and life of God while at the same time God is victorious over the power of sin, he writes; "while there is suffering (for human sin) in the life of God, it is eternally swallowed up in victory and blessedness".² And speaking of the Atonement he writes;

the divine atonement cannot be confined within any moment of time, but, so far as it can be described in temporal terms at all, is as old and as endless as the sin with which it deals.³

In what sense then did he consider the death of Jesus to be decisive? For him it was decisive in that it was a unique outcropping on the plane of history of something that is supra-historical or eternally there. God was, as Baillie puts it, "uniquely present in the passion and death of Jesus, making Atonement, 'reconciling the world unto Himself'".⁴ And it is this revelation on the plane of history that makes the atonement possible for individuals in every age. Even although the victory over sin is eternal and eternally a new victory, neverthe-

¹ Christus Victor, p. 167.

² God was in Christ, p. 199.

³ Ibid., p. 197.

⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

less, it cannot be a victory for individual men without the revelation that comes through the earthly victory of Christ. This revelation does not need to take place again; on the plane of history it was once and final. But it is this revelation which is the essential source of the soteriological result in the lives of men. The finished work and the continuing work are closely connected. Baillie's thought on this is best illustrated by something that he used to say to his students;

In what sense does the actual historical cross of Christ make a decisive difference? In what sense did the cross of Christ change the situation? Is its significance objective and cosmic or only revelatory? Did it do something or only reveal something which was eternally real? I would reply: How can we separate these two things in the realm of personal relationships?...we could not be brought back to God unless that sin-bearing love were revealed to us.¹

The Subjective or Moral Influence Theory of the Atonement is most congenial to Baillie's thinking and has an important place in his concept. It is called "Subjective" because the effects of the achievement of God in Christ all take place within the human spirit. It is also called "Moral" because the effect of this revelation of the love of God in action on the Cross deeply influences man and moves him to repentance; that is, it is a moral influence that brings about a moral change in the human individual. The essence of the theory is presented by Professor O. C. Quick in his book Doctrines of the Creed where he writes,

the effect of the Atonement, and the change wrought by it, begin only when human souls perceive through the life and death of Jesus² Christ the truth of God's love, and are moved thereby to repentance.

¹ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

² O. C. Quick, Doctrines of the Creed (London, 1938), p. 222.

In Baillie's concept, the story of this costly "expiation" wrought by God, along with the Christian interpretation of it, "makes us willing to bring our sins to God, to see them in His light, and to accept from Him the forgiveness which we could never earn".¹

This acknowledgement of a place for human responsibility is most important for any adequate concept of the Atonement. It is a most important part of Baillie's concept because it represents an essential element in his whole understanding of the nature of the relationship between God and man. Nevertheless, however important may be the aspect of his thought which this theory represents, it is also most important to be aware that it does not represent his total understanding. In his view the Cross of Christ is much more than an example or a mere revelation of the love of God in action, whose influence moves man to repentance. To consider this moral influence as Baillie's total point of view would be to ignore the major emphasis of his whole Christology, namely, the prevenience of the grace of God. Most certainly there is human responsibility in the response of repentance. But it is also in some real way effected by the activity of the prevenient grace of God. And always it is more a divine activity than a human activity. The boundaries of responsibility in the matter cannot be marked, but it is more an act of God than an act of man. It is this divine action that has "the liberating power to set us free for a new and better life."²

¹ God was in Christ, p. 201.

² Ibid., p. 172.

Moreover, this is not the only element of objective activity. It is out of the struggle and sacrifice that takes place within the life and being of God at immeasurable cost, that forgiveness comes. This is something that takes place completely outside of the life of man, it is thoroughly objective, it is something that, in the very nature of the case, man could never accomplish for himself. "The Atonement", he writes, "is something within the life of God, wrought by God Himself, and applied by Him to men in every age."¹ This tremendously costly struggle within the life and being of God comes to its climax in the conflict between the Love of God and the Wrath of God through which expiation is achieved and out of which forgiveness comes. Here we are in the very depths of the mystery of the "Divine Economy", of the activity of God. And it is here that Baillie's concept could be clarified and strengthened--without doing violence to his thinking or sacrificing any of its essential values--by recognizing that Atonement means also a change in God; that God also is reconciled as well as being the Reconciler. However this may be, Baillie most certainly does include an objective element in his concept of the Atonement which safeguards the realization that forgiveness is accomplished by God within Himself and at tremendous cost to Himself, and is something that man could never accomplish for himself. His concept does safeguard the Christian truth that "the Atonement is something within the

¹ Ibid., p. 192.

life of God, wrought by God Himself, and applied by Him to man."¹

In Baillie's view, therefore, there is both an objective element and a subjective element in the Atonement. Moreover, these two elements cannot be clearly separated. He writes,

Surely these two aspects cannot be separated at all, though the attempt has often been made to classify atonement theories in that way. In theological argument on this subject we are apt to forget that we are dealing with a realm of personal relationships and nothing else.²

The Atonement means a moral influence on man that moves him to repentance and reconciliation; but it also means a costly sacrifice within the life of God Himself that is completely objective, by which man's sin is expiated and out of which the forgiveness comes that makes reconciliation possible and brings about at-one-ment. Typical of his thinking is the way in which he sees these two elements as being interdependent and inseparable with undefinable boundaries between man's responsibility and God's accomplishment. When asked, "is the significance of the Cross objective and cosmic or only revelatory?", he replied, "How can we ever separate these two things in the realm of personal relationships?"³ He can only insist that both its objective and subjective elements must be included in any adequate concept of the Atonement.

When our thought moves, however, from the meaning of the Atonement as it relates to persons to its more cosmic aspect, then it must

¹ Ibid., p. 192.

² Ibid., p. 198.

³ Unpublished Lecture Notes.

be admitted that Baillie's presentation is incomplete. The difference between the two meanings and their relation to each other is not easily understood. Bishop Aulen states that the Classic interpretation regards sin "as an objective power standing behind men, and the Atonement as the triumph of God over sin, death, and the devil."¹ Yet he also claims that this view gives us "the deepest and most personal idea of sin".² A comparison with Luther he deems illuminating:

In him we find sin once again treated as an objective power; but at the same time God's claim on man is so spiritually conceived that it cannot be summed up in obedience to any law...; here, if anywhere, the idea of sin is fully personal.³

But does the defeat of sin as an objective power in a cosmic sense explain the defeat of sin as an objective power in an individual? It does not seem that Bishop Aulen makes the connection entirely clear. Perhaps a better understanding could be gained by considering the manner in which man is by birth in bondage to sin. First of all he is born as a human self-conscious ego who has an innate will to express himself, whether or not this later comes into conflict with other wills, including the will of God. This conflict with the will of God constitutes rebellion and is a real power of evil. The Atonement obviously breaks this power, moves man to repentance, and brings about reconciliation in a personal relationship. With this aspect of the Atonement Baillie adequately deals. But there is another way in

¹ Christus Victor, p. 164.

² Ibid., p. 165.

³ Ibid.

which man by birth is in bondage to sin. By birth he becomes part of a great network of evil to which he contributes and to whose power he is in bondage. As Dr. Bultmann describes it, it is an atmosphere "to whose compelling influence every man contributes but to which he is also always subject".¹ The Atonement is also a triumph over this power of evil. This power over man is broken, a new relationship is established between God and the world, a new order--the Kingdom of God--is introduced that co-exists with or exists within the existing order, and there is manifestly a finality about the work of God in Christ as related to this power. Baillie is not oblivious to this network of evil and suffering to which man is in bondage. He refers to it in considering forgiveness and the suffering that is consequent upon man's sin.² But he does not develop the idea in relation to the Atonement. In this aspect of the objective content of the meaning of the Atonement his interpretation is incomplete. The basic and truly important objective aspect of the Atonement, however, the immeasurably costly divine forgiveness and the revelation of the love of God coupled with the action of prevenient grace, which together break the power of sin in individual men, is adequately included in his concept.

¹ Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 257. See above p. 272.

² See above pp. 271 f.

IV

Evaluation

One of the great strengths of Baillie's concept of the Atonement, as it was with his Christology, is his determination to retain both human freedom and the complete sovereignty of God. Before reconciliation can possibly take place man must repent; yet at the same time the Atonement is essentially an accomplishment of God. Man is not under external coercion to repent; it is a purely moral influence that is exerted upon him. Nevertheless, it is God who, through the Cross, influences him to repent; it is God who, by prevenient grace, moves him to repentance; and it is God who, at tremendous cost, offers him the forgiveness which alone makes reconciliation possible and which is so completely beyond his ability to accomplish for himself. However paradoxical it may sound, the Atonement is totally dependent upon man's repentance, yet at the same time it is totally dependent upon God's action; and, as in his Christology, the relative percentages of dependence simply cannot be defined. This is unimportant so long as the realization is maintained that man's part is indispensable even although it is essentially all an act of God. The Atonement is both subjective and objective and even for theoretical purposes the two aspects cannot be separated. Baillie has been accused, as we have noted, of not adequately including the objective aspect of the Atonement in his interpretation. In regard to the Atonement as related to

individuals, this criticism has questionable validity. The Atonement, in Baillie's view, could never be regarded as an accomplishment of man. The very nature of forgiveness puts it beyond man's reach. In a personal relationship, forgiveness can only come from the person who has been wronged; by no possible conception is it within the power of the person who did the wrong. Forgiveness comes from God, and it comes out of a tremendously costly conflict within the life and being of God. This is a conflict in which man has no part; it is a conflict between the Love of God and the Wrath of God that expiates man's sin and makes forgiveness possible. As Baillie wrote, "the Atonement is something within the life of God, wrought by God Himself."¹ This concept could only be described as objective.

It is true that in Baillie's view the conflict between the Love of God and the Wrath of God did not commence at the time of the Incarnation. It is hardly conceivable that God had no struggle with sin or no victory over it before then. The victory revealed in the Incarnation is an eternal victory. Nevertheless it is the revelation of the Incarnation that makes it effective for us; and this revelation makes it effective not just by way of moral influence. It is true that we see here what our sin costs God and what He is doing for us and that this does have a moral influence. But the revelation is more than just an example or an illustration; it is God literally and actually at work on the plane of history for our salvation. God always reveals

¹ God was in Christ, p. 192.

Himself to us by doing something in us and for us. The revelation at a fixed point in time has soteriological consequences that are eternal, and the revelation and the consequence cannot be separated. By thus revealing Himself God ties in His great redemptive act with our life, brings us back to Himself and the objective action of His victory over sin becomes effective for us. The revelation and the soteriological consequence are inseparable. But this does not reduce the objectivity of that which is accomplished by God within His own life and being in the Atonement of every single individual person.

This insight, that the struggle and sacrifice of God is a continuing one for every man's sin, is surely a true insight. The suffering of God for the sin of man surely was not confined to the temporal event of the Incarnation. Here we encounter the problem of trying to explain eternal realities in temporal terms. What happened, for example, to the saints in Israel before the Incarnation? The mediaeval teaching was that the benefits of the Atonement were not available until after Calvary and so all who died before then had to wait in the limbus patrum until Christ, after His atoning death, descended to release them and take them to heaven. Reformed theology, however, taught that Old Testament believers already had, by faith, the full benefits of Christ's Atonement even although he had not yet come and suffered. John Calvin held that Old Testament believers

both had and knew Christ the Mediator, by whom they were united to God, and made capable of receiving his promises.¹ "Who will presume to represent the Jews as destitute of Christ," he wrote, "when we

¹ John Calvin, The Institutes, II, X, 4, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 193, footnote 1.

know that they were parties¹ to the Gospel covenant, which has its only foundation in Christ?"¹

And Baillie comments,

What could this mean except that the divine work of reconciliation was already present, that in some sense God was already making atonement, and the same atonement which was afterwards to appear on the plane of history in the Cross of Christ?²

Baillie also claims that there are hints in the Christian tradition from earliest times that the atoning work which appeared once for all in history on Calvary continues in the heavenly sphere. Paul, at his conversion, hears the voice of Christ saying, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."³ And the Epistle to the Hebrews speaking of apostates says, "since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt."⁴ This idea is carried on into modern times in Anglican circles in reference to the Eucharist. Canon Quick writes,

The Eucharist ... is the perpetual externalization in human ritual of the self-offering of Christ, which was once for all in fact externalized on Calvary, but is ever real in the inward and heavenly sphere.⁵

Surely Baillie is right in the belief that the divine Atonement cannot be confined within any one moment of time but is as old and as endless as sin. That God suffers for my sin is an altogether arresting thought; it brings the Cross as a present reality before the Christian's eyes in

¹ Ibid.

² God was in Christ, p. 193.

³ Acts 9:5, R. S. V.

⁴ Hebrews 6:6, R. S. V.

⁵ O. C. Quick, The Christian Sacraments, pp. 198, 200, quoted in God was in Christ, p. 196.

the face of every temptation; it sets sin in its true light and enables him to realize what a truly terrible thing it really is. In one sense the work of Christ is a finished work; it need never be done again on the plane of history, and the Protestant Church is right in presenting to the world an empty cross. But in another sense it is a continuing atonement, it is a struggle and victory that will go on as long as sin continues, and the Roman Catholic Church is right in presenting to the world a crucifix. There is an insight here that can be a powerful influence in the Christian life. That this suffering and victory could be going on at the same time does not lend itself to rational explanation. As Baillie puts it,

Perhaps we can conserve both sides of the truth by saying, paradoxically, that while there is suffering (for human sin) in the life of God, it is eternally swallowed up in victory and blessedness, and that is how God 'expiates' our sins, as only God could do.¹

Baillie has included here, in the idea of the eternal nature of the divine sacrifice, a most valuable insight which does not destroy or diminish the objective aspect of the Atonement.

There is one grave danger, however, in this close identity of the love of God and the love of Christ about which we are cautioned. Baillie's idea, as is evident throughout his Christology, is that Jesus Christ is literally God incarnate. We need not develop this idea again here² but it involves his concept of pre-existence and of the Trinity. Too sharp a division between the "Persons" of the Trinity infers that in some way

¹ God was in Christ, p. 199.

² See above pp. 216 and 220 f.

the Cross was an offering to God and that the suffering was a delegated suffering. Baillie is most concerned to demonstrate that it was God Himself who suffered. He treats as almost identical the love of God and the love of Christ. He claims that for Paul, "there was no distinction: the two were one and the same thing."¹ He once said to his students, "the Cross is not merely a symbol or illustration of the love of God. It is the actual outcropping of that love on the plane of history for our salvation."² The danger about which we are cautioned is that in thus closely identifying the love of God and the love of Christ we are in danger of losing Christ as the centre of the Christian faith. This is a very real and serious danger, but it is counter-balanced in Baillie's theology by the central place given to the historical Jesus, and by his Christology. In his view, it is by the historical Jesus that we come to faith. In his view Jesus was a real man who met life as men meet it, and who reveals how God intends men to live. For him Jesus is the prototype of the Christian life, the very centre of the practical daily life of the Christian, whose responsibility it is to seek to follow his Master. Moreover, the historical Jesus provides the way to an understanding of the significance of the Cross; He is essential to an understanding of the meaning of the Atonement. Without the historical Jesus Baillie's theology would fall apart. Thus Jesus is a separate being from God, He is human and the centre of practical

¹ God was in Christ, p. 189.

² Unpublished Lecture Notes.

Christian living; but He is also God, author of our salvation and worthy of all our worship, who will ever remain the centre of the Christian faith. Baillie believes that Jesus is two persons in One. Although He is God incarnate, He is not identical with God. He is the One who is at the same time our Leader and the Author of our salvation, and because He is, He can never be removed from the centre of practical Christian living nor from the centre of the Christian faith.

Returning now to the objective aspect of Baillie's concept of the Atonement, there is a consideration of importance to which attention should be drawn. The concept of the great and costly conflict between the Love of God and the Wrath of God, out of which comes forgiveness and the expiation of man's sin, can include, as we have already noted in comparing Baillie's interpretation with the Classic Theory, the objective concept that in the Atonement God is reconciled as well as man. Baillie insists that there is no change in God's attitude to sinners. He writes,

throughout the New Testament material there is no trace ... of the idea that God's attitude to sinners had to be changed by the sacrifice of Christ from wrath and justice to love and mercy.¹

and again

in whatever way the process of salvation through the Cross is conceived, God's merciful attitude towards sinners is never regarded as the result of the process, but as its cause and source.²

Obviously, he is most concerned to avoid any discontinuity in the operation of the love and mercy of God; to deny that God's attitude was

¹ God was in Christ, p. 186.

² Ibid., p. 188.

changed. He is also concerned to avoid any suggestion that some sacrifice was demanded and offered from outside of God in order to propitiate His wrath. But the concept that God is also reconciled can be included without doing these things. Consequently, our contention is that this concept could be included in Baillie's interpretation without doing violence to his thinking. It would add strength to his interpretation for two reasons. First, it would provide a concrete objective factor that would move his interpretation out of any suspicion of being only subjective. Secondly, it would enable him to deal more adequately with the concept of the wrath of God. Rightly, he rejects Professor Dodd's suggestion that the wrath of God is the consequence of sin in a cause and effect moral order; Baillie insists that the wrath of God is the personal wrath of a Divine Person. This is most important to an understanding of the nature of God and the seriousness of sin. But then he leaves the concept incomplete; there is no propitiation of the Divine Wrath. The idea of propitiation would add a measure of depth to the costliness of forgiveness, which Baillie is so concerned to emphasize, that expiation does not provide. It would also add a measure of demand to the righteousness of God and a measure of depth to the seriousness of sin that an adequate concept of the Atonement ought to contain. This refusal to admit that God also is reconciled is a weakness in Baillie's interpretation.

The major weakness in the objective segment of his concept of the Atonement, however, is his failure to include its cosmic aspect. There is a finality about the Atonement on the historic plane, a breaking of

the power of evil in the world and the introduction of a new order-- the Kingdom of God on earth--which he does not include. He does speak of

Paul's mystical doctrine of the union of the believer with the dying and rising Christ; with the implication that in some sense the passion and the resurrection are not simply episodes in the past, but are, both together, a present reality, an eternal conflict with evil which is also an eternal victory.¹

and he comments, "This brings us very close to the 'Christus Victor' conception of the Atonement."² But does it? This is something else again from the breaking of the cosmic power of evil that holds man in bondage in the inter-related network of sin and evil into which he is born and to which he contributes. It must be admitted that the objective aspect of his concept of the Atonement is seriously weak at this point.

But he does include the essential objective aspect that forgiveness comes out of something that is accomplished by God at tremendous cost within the life and being of God Himself. And the union of the subjective and objective aspects of the Atonement that retains human responsibility yet sees it all as an accomplishment of God, is one of the great strengths of his interpretation.

The major strength of his concept, however, as with his Christology, lies in its relevance to life. In Baillie's presentation the Atonement is not some dusty incomprehensible dogma handed down from the past,

¹ God was in Christ, p. 199.

² Ibid., p. 200.

but is something that is immediately relevant to daily life. There can be no concept of the Atonement without a concept of sin, and a concept of sin is not a characteristic of modern life. But he shows that there is no adequate substitute for it, and that forgiveness is essential to a wholesome emotional life. Thus he ties the concept directly to daily life. Then he demonstrates how true love cannot let the loved one off nor let him go. From there he points to the costliness of forgiveness and then ties this awareness to the revelation in the Cross. Thus beholding the suffering of God and the cost of forgiveness, man is moved to repentance and finds reconciliation. Baillie does emphasize the objective aspect of atonement as we have just seen, but he builds up to this and ties in the development of his thought with human experience every step of the way. The Atonement is one of the Christian doctrines whose relevance is not easily demonstrated to modern man, but Baillie succeeds in remarkable fashion.

As he has done throughout his theology, he retains a place for morality in his concept. Man is free to decide whether he will repent and accept God's forgiveness or not; the influence that is brought to bear upon him is purely a moral influence.

He also retains a place of importance for the historical Jesus. Were it not for the incarnate life, he points out, with its willingness to die for sinners, we would not be able to grasp the significance of the Cross as the revelation, the outcropping in history, of the saving

activity of the eternal love of God. Not only so, but neither would successive generations be able to understand the dogmas that are centered in God's self-sacrifice on the Cross.

In dealing with theories of the Atonement we are deep in the mystery of God's way of dealing with the sin of man, and are moving in an area where certitude must be humble and dogma is out of bounds. Baillie's concept does have some weaknesses, but he retains both human freedom and divine sovereignty, and in most effective fashion makes the Atonement relevant to the daily life of man. With remarkable clarity he accomplishes that which every adequate concept of the Atonement ought to accomplish namely, to "exhibit the love of God dealing with the sin of the world and overcoming it as only love can do."¹

¹ Ibid., p. 200.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Donald Baillie's deep awareness of the depth and reality of God's love for man coupled with his sympathetic understanding of human nature and its need of God, provide the combination that gives to his work its chief characteristic and greatest strength. His great concern was to demonstrate the relevance of the Gospel and to make it communicable, and this objective he achieves with unusual success. From first to last throughout his theology he relates Christian truth to the human situation, and invariably he finds a point of contact in human experience which demonstrates the relevance of the segment of theology under consideration and which, at the same time, provides a handle whereby its meaning may be grasped.

An examination of his theology, by way of illustrating this point, can best begin by considering his concept of the nature of faith. Here, from the very commencement of the development of his theological thought, these characteristics of relevance and communicability are plain to be seen. He is not the only one, of course, who connects faith and experience. The late Principal P. T. Forsyth, for example, claimed that all faith found its origin in the experience of salvation. "We begin with the facts of experience, not with forms of thought," he wrote, "...and that certainty of the saved experience is the one foundation of all

theology."¹ But the experience of salvation is not an experience commonly held to which reference can easily be made nor is it a starting point congenial to the modern mind and therefore easily communicable. Baillie starts farther back and relates faith to an experience that is common to every man, namely, the awareness of moral values. This, he believes, is something which everybody possesses; it is what he calls the "germ" of faith. A man may not have any awareness that this has a relation to God or even any relation to faith, but if he is obedient to its demands he will grow in moral awareness. In this way, when confronted with Christ, he will be able to recognize in Him the embodiment of the moral ideal. This recognition of a personal relationship represents a much higher degree of revelation and results in a fuller measure of faith. A yet more complete revelation comes and a yet fuller measure of faith when man finds that he cannot follow this Person, that the demands of Love are too much for him; and through this experience he finds the reality of enabling grace. The fullness of revelation, however, only unfolds when through the experience of salvation Christ is recognized as Saviour, the centre of gravity moves from self to God, and faith becomes a saving faith. This is not a closed plan of salvation to which everyone must conform; it may be encountered at different stages of development. But the point is that at every stage of development it is immediately relevant to human experience, and it starts in

¹ The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 10.

the general experience of moral awareness that is common to every man. In Baillie's view, therefore, faith is not something that simply falls on a man and takes possession of him. However much faith is a gift of God—and he would agree that in the last analysis it is a gift of God—it is something that grows out of a man's experience and is immediately relevant to his daily life. Thus, in his concept of the nature of faith, the characteristics of communicability and relevance are very much in evidence.

These characteristics are also prominent in Baillie's Christology. Every Christian knows the experience of the operation of divine grace in his life. There are times when accomplishments are made through him which he well knows are not his own achievement. In some sense they are his achievement; yet at the same time they are also the result of some power working through him which is not his own; he knows that somehow the good that he does is really wrought by God. Moreover, he knows that truth does not lie in the idea that he initiated the project and that God simply helped him out with it. Rather he knows that God started the whole thing in the first place and that the action of God was somehow prior to his participation; and he knows further that the boundaries cannot be set between his share in the accomplishment and God's share. This working of the paradox of grace is common knowledge to every Christian, and Baillie suggests that this is a handle in our experience by which we can grasp an understanding of the meaning and nature of the Incarnation. It was all of God, it was the result of the

action of God's prevenient grace; yet human responsibility was there and there was a genuinely human element in it. This takes it out of the realm of a mystifying doctrine about two persons in one and makes it immediately relevant to life. It is understandable that God could thus so completely live and act in Jesus that Jesus was God incarnate. Thus its revelation can be understood to be authentic; this is really God incarnate, and consequently, this is really how God intends man to live and this is really what God has done for man's salvation. Yet at the same time, and this is equally important, this same Christ is our Leader and our Friend, who met life as we meet it, who has been where we are and who speaks our language. So often the Incarnation is a matter of sheer mystification to the non-theologian. Baillie, however, so relates it to our experience that it is understandable, and at the same time he makes clear that it is something that is vitally relevant to the every-day living of the Christian life.

The same is true of his presentation of the Atonement. The Atonement is an essential part of the Christian faith, but it is completely beyond the understanding of the modern non-Christian and is practically meaningless for thousands of marginal Christians. Here again Baillie starts in human experience. He points out that man, whether he has a faith in God or not, is, by the very construction of his nature, in need of forgiveness. Only God, however, can forgive; only God can release him from the guilt that bedevils him; only God can cure him of the malaise that is simply unrecognized guilt. But this forgiveness

is something that is utterly beyond man's achievement. Only the one who is wronged can forgive, only God can forgive, and this forgiveness, as every human being who has ever forgiven a deep hurt knows, is tremendously costly. In the Cross of Jesus Christ we see on the plane of history something of how costly to God this forgiveness really was. Reconciliation is quite impossible without forgiveness, as from our experience we so well know. But only immeasurable love would be willing to pay so great a price. Thus Baillie explains the Atonement. Through every step of the development of his thought he ties the doctrine in with human experience and makes it understandable. Moreover, with simplicity and clarity he shows that it is relevant to the life of modern man, even though he may not be aware of the fact, and that it is a matter of immeasurable consequence to him.

Thus, throughout the development of his theology, with a skill and a thoroughness born out of his concern to communicate, Baillie shows the Christian faith to be meaningful and relevant to the everyday existence of modern man. He lifts it out of what Dr. Emil Brunner calls "technical theology"¹ and makes it a live issue that confronts every person. As Dr. Brunner has put it,

What he, very successfully, tries to show is that to understand these high doctrines on the significance of Jesus Christ is nothing else and nothing less than to understand our own life, human reality, in the light of divine revelation.²

¹ Emil Brunner, a Review of God was in Christ in the Christian News Letter, July 21, 1948, p. 9.

² Ibid.

This illumination of the Christian faith by way of connecting it with human experience and this demonstration of its relevance to daily life, is one of the great contributions that Baillie has made, and constitutes the major worth of his theology.

A second major contribution is the sound balance that Baillie retains between human freedom and the sovereignty of God. One of the prevailing weaknesses of theological thought, a weakness that is particularly apparent in modern theology, is the tendency to over-emphasize one at the cost of the other and thus to end up with an interpretation that is so badly out of balance that essential values of Christian truth are lost. Baillie avoids this tendency; he retains full human freedom without sacrificing anything of the sovereignty of God. This feature is again consistent throughout his theology.

Faith, of course, is a gift of God. But God is ever pressing in with His revelation of Himself and often speaks to man long before man is aware that it is God who is speaking. In Baillie's view, faith and revelation are two sides of the same thing. Consequently, when God reveals Himself in any measure a measure of faith is established, even though it may not be consciously held as faith in God. God may first speak to man through awareness of moral values and through conscience, and it is at this point where human responsibility is most important. When God then speaks man is responsible for being obedient to the good that he thus comes to know. If he is obedient then he will grow in his knowledge of goodness and the germ will grow into a more complete faith.

This does not mean, according to Baillie, that man can in this manner achieve a faith for himself. But he does have responsibility for being obedient, thus putting himself in an area where further revelation is likely to take place. Obedience becomes even more demanding when man sees in Christ the embodiment of the moral ideal and thus becomes aware of a personal relationship. It is in attempting to be obedient and finding himself utterly incapable of following Christ, that the final revelation and the fullness of faith come. Revelation, in every degree, comes from God, and faith, consequently, is a gift of God; yet at every stage of the developing revelation man carries a very definite and critical responsibility for obedience to the measure of faith which he already holds.

The place of human responsibility and the place of divine sovereignty are even more clear in Baillie's Christology. Here he develops his great central theme of the paradox of grace. In this paradox, as pointed out above, every Christian knows himself to be responsible for the evil that he does; yet he is also aware that all the good that he does is an accomplishment of God. Here a new emphasis finds expression in Baillie's thinking. Not only is the Christian enabled to do good by the grace of God, but God even influences him in choosing to do good in the first place. The grace of God is prevenient; the action of God is always prior. In his book, Faith in God, where he develops his theology of the nature of faith, the emphasis lies on human responsibility. In his later book, God was in Christ, where he develops his Christology,

the emphasis has changed to the prevenient grace of God. The change is evident in an unpublished series of lectures under the title Beyond Morality in which he presents the idea of the paradox of Moralism. This paradox is that just as the quest for happiness defeats itself, so the quest for goodness defeats itself; it either leads to obvious failure or self-righteous pride, "which", he writes, "is really the worst failure of all."¹ In his theology of the nature of faith, as has been explained, he fully retained the sovereignty of God; in emphasizing human responsibility he did not lose sight of it; in no conceivable way could man achieve a faith by his own resources or wrest a faith from God. But Baillie was not impervious to the influence of the theological thought of his time, and a change of emphasis is here apparent between his earlier and later work. Even though it is only a change of emphasis, it is a most important change which warrants attention being drawn to it. It should be further noted that not only does the emphasis change from human responsibility to the grace of God, but within the concept of grace it rests on prevenience. The importance of this emphasis on prevenience can hardly receive too much attention. It is his insistence that the grace of God is prevenient rather than an enabling grace that retains the sovereignty of God in his Christology and rescues it from humanism. It does not follow, of course, that this emphasis on prevenience means that human freedom is

¹ The Theology of the Sacraments, p. 136.

consequently curtailed. On the contrary, the human person is never more free nor ever more a person than when he has surrendered all to the sovereignty of God. Here in his Christology, therefore, both human freedom and divine sovereignty are even more enhanced than in his theology of the nature of faith. On the analogy of the paradox of grace carried to its ultimate degree Jesus Christ was completely free and fully a human person, while at the same time He was God incarnate.

In moving on to consider this aspect of his theology in relation to the Atonement we find that the place of importance given to human responsibility has not been reduced nor has the sovereignty of God been in any way curtailed. Man, confronted by the Cross and the awareness that this suffering is for him and that it is in some measure brought about by his sin, is moved to repentance. And repentance is an absolutely essential pre-condition of reconciliation. On the other hand, the costly forgiveness which is entirely within the keeping of God, is also an absolutely essential pre-condition of reconciliation. Only man can repent and no one can do it for him, but only God can grant forgiveness, and God even takes the initiative in moving man to repentance. Thus, although he uses paradox in order to accomplish it, Baillie does retain both complete human freedom and complete divine sovereignty.

It might be worthwhile to note at this point that his theology has come under criticism because of the central place that he gives to the use of paradox. But when the attempt is made to give expression

to the eternal in terms of the temporal, to the infinite in terms of the finite, to the Creator in terms of the creature, in short, to the eternal, infinite, personal reality of the being and activity of God--not as an object but as a Divine Person--we can only do it in human concepts and in finite and temporal terms and we are bound to become involved in distortion and paradox. In making this attempt we are endeavouring to give expression to the inexpressible, and paradox is an inevitable consequence; God simply cannot be captured in a concept or any combination of concepts. Baillie may lay more emphasis on paradox than needs to be placed there, and he may infer that other paradoxes lend more support to the central paradox than they actually do.¹ But when we are considering the relation of human freedom to divine prevenient grace we are inevitably involved in some measure of paradox, and it is better to use paradox and retain full Christian truth than to avoid paradox and sacrifice truth. This is what he has done; as he said on the last page of Faith in God, "We shall not now be surprised if we find Christian faith unable to describe God's purposes without paradox and antinomy. Above all, we shall not be content to solve the paradox by sacrificing anything which our moral faith demands."² On this basis, even with all the dangers involved, the use

¹ See J. L. M. Haire, "An Unresolved Tension in the Theology of D. M. Baillie", Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 17, No. 3, September, 1964, pp. 303 f.

² Faith in God, p. 301.

of paradox is legitimate. It enables Baillie to present a balanced theology, and, in this day of such marked imbalances, this constitutes a most valuable contribution.

Closely related to the retention of both human freedom and divine sovereignty is a third major contribution. This is to be found in the relation of his theology to the two major trends in current theological thought. Here his contribution lies in offering a theology which not only provides a meeting place for them but which also retains the essential values of both while avoiding their major weaknesses. The chief strength of the existentialist school of thought lies in its approach to modern theology. It is possessed of a worthy and profound concern to present the Gospel in the light of human existence in such a way that its relevance can be demonstrated, and to re-set it in language and concept that will make it communicable to modern man. With the desire to demonstrate the relevance of the Gospel and to make it communicable Baillie, as has already been emphasized, is in full sympathy. But he does not agree that an adequate interpretation can be made within the bounds of human existence. He would not agree with Dr. Gregor Smith that man has so matured that he can find an adequate interpretation of the meaning of life within history. He would not even agree with Dr. Bultmann that the revelation of the eschatological event of the Cross is enough, and that from there theology can be worked out in terms of human existence while the background of the revelation is left in complete mystery. He could not agree that a man-centered interpretation

of life is adequate to contain the essence of the Gospel. He would insist that our theology cannot be complete unless we look for meaning beyond human existence and move on to a theology of revelation. Before we can grasp the full message of the Gospel, he contends, we need to know that man is dealing with a Transcendent Personal God. Only then can we realize that sin is more than man's failure to attain his true self; only then will we be able to realize that sin cannot be adequately described in terms of failure at all, but only in terms of rebellion against God. It is his opinion that before our theology can be complete we need to know that grace is more than a power arising out of the surrounding darkness, more than an influence that springs up in the midst of human life from no particularly recognizable source; we need to know that it is the gracious personal influence of God upon man. It is his opinion that before our theology can be complete we need to know that Jesus Christ is more than a Leader and an Example, that He is more than the Man for others; we need to know that He was God Incarnate who came down for us men and our salvation, who invaded human history to take action for our redemption. He believes that an adequate theology, let alone the complete meaning of life, cannot be formed within human existence nor within history; in order to find them we have to move beyond a man-centered interpretation of existence to a theology of revelation. Thus Baillie would be in complete sympathy with the Existentialist approach and would share their deep concern to demonstrate the relevance of the Gospel and to make it communi-

cable. But he clearly sees the weaknesses of an anthropocentric theology and the danger of an accommodation to current cultural and philosophical patterns that is prepared to risk the loss of essential Christian truth in order to communicate.

But how can the Existentialist approach be developed into a theology of revelation? How can you start by an examination of human experience in a man-centered interpretation of life and then move over to a God-centered interpretation of life? In other words, how can you change from an anthropocentric theology to a theocentric theology? Many modern theologians are convinced that this cannot be done. Their opinion is that you are free to choose one approach or the other, but having chosen, you are not free to change over part way nor can you in any way unite the two. If you choose the strengths of one, they believe, you will also have to accept its weaknesses because no synthesis is possible that would unite the strength of both. Baillie would not agree. Without having been designed for the purpose, his theology does provide a point of transition in the realm of morality that enables him to retain the strength of the Existentialist approach while at the same time it includes the strength of a theology of revelation. As has been already outlined, his belief is that man has the innate ability to recognize moral values, and that God speaks to him through conscience. In the same way, by revelation, man has the ability to recognize the embodiment of the Moral Ideal when it is presented to him. But the achievement of this ideal is beyond him; the fulfilment of the law of

love is utterly beyond his capacity. In this experience of failure he discovers that mere morality is not enough. If he continues in attempting to be obedient and in attempting to follow the Moral Ideal—Jesus Christ—he will discover that through this personal relationship enabling grace comes. Baillie expresses it as follows:

as men obey the challenge, they begin to find that the voice means not only challenge and command but also support and help. The ultimate reality is not only claiming them, but also offering itself to them.¹

The point of transition comes when man becomes aware of a personal relationship and that God is helping him as well as demanding something of him; when the centre of gravity changes from self to God. Through this personal relationship with Jesus Christ the further revelation comes that God loves man in the measure that the Cross reveals and has taken this action for his redemption; the revelation comes that Jesus is the Christ. This revelation is the core of the Christian faith; this it cannot lose and live. Through his theology of the nature of faith, therefore, Baillie provides a transition from the Existentialist approach to a theology of revelation.

The great Christian truths related to the Creation, the Incarnation, Salvation and the Sovereignty of God, the Barthian theology of revelation admirably retains, and with this retention Baillie agrees. But with its extreme scriptural scepticism, its predestinarianism, and its complete determinism he cannot agree. He is convinced that the

¹ D. M. Baillie, I Believe in God (Church of Scotland Committee on Publications, 1937) p. 17.

life and teaching of the historical Jesus are not irrecoverable and that they constitute an important part of the revelation, and he is also convinced that God's relationship to man is essentially a personal and moral relationship. He does not believe that God's grace falls on a man like a bolt from the blue in an all-encompassing, predestinarian fashion that leaves man no freedom of response. He believes that the action of God's grace is a gracious personal influence and that man is free to respond or to refuse. He does not believe that man's response is wholly determined. Through his belief in the prevenience of divine grace, of course, he believes that man's response is in some sense determined; but he denies that it is wholly determined and insists that man is free to choose. Dr. Barth also insists that man's freedom is retained, but he maintains that it is overlapped by the grace of God. They both present the relation of human freedom and divine grace as a paradox and claim that both human freedom and divine sovereignty are maintained. In the working out of his theology, however, Dr. Barth virtually denies human freedom, while in the working out of his theology Baillie so effectively retains it that one of the chief criticisms of his position is that it borders on humanism. There can be no doubt that Baillie's theology does safeguard human freedom. Thus in retaining the great Christian truths related to Creation, the Incarnation, Salvation and the Sovereignty of God but in rejecting its extreme scriptural scepticism, its predestinarianism and its complete determinism, Baillie retains the essential strengths of the

Barthian approach but avoids its major weaknesses.

In this area of its relationship to the two modern trends in theological thought and their relationship to each other, therefore, Baillie's theology makes an important contribution. It retains the essential strengths of both while at the same time it avoids their major weaknesses, and it provides a bridge between them in the realm of morality.

This retention of important places for morality and for the Historical Jesus constitute two further contributions that Baillie's thinking has to make to the contemporary situation. The place of morality in his theology is central. Here he shows both his indebtedness to Kant and Ritschl, and the independent use which he has made of their thinking. With Kant he agrees that man is aware of a moral imperative. But he does not agree that you can argue inferentially from this to the existence of God as the Moral Governor of the universe. The connection between God and morality, he believes, is much more direct than that; it is rather to be understood as God speaking directly to man through man's moral conscience. As John Baillie puts it, "It is not merely that through our values we reach God or that from them we infer Him, but rather that in them we find Him."¹ This constitutes the nature of the revelation. Baillie also shows his indebtedness to Ritschl in

¹ Our Knowledge of God, p. 131.

seeing this close connection between morality and revelation. Unlike Ritschl, however, he never allows morality to dictate to revelation. He thinks of morality rather as a pathway that leads to revelation or as a medium through which revelation comes; but he never allows morality to sit in judgement on revelation. The important place that morality holds in his concept of the nature of faith has already been outlined. By obedience to the good that he knows man grows in his knowledge of Goodness; in other words, God speaks to him more clearly and reveals Himself more fully. It is important to note that this moral "germ" of faith does not automatically grow into faith nor can man by himself develop it into a full faith. But morality is a means whereby God speaks to man and moral obedience on the part of man leads to areas where further revelations of God are likely to take place, until eventually the full revelation comes. Baillie's right to use morality in this way is often questioned by modern theologians. In considering this matter we must maintain the awareness that he held no naive and unrealistic view of morality. He is quite prepared to admit that morality appeared, "as a gradual result of social evolution, largely conditioned in its utterances by social tradition and environment."¹ Nevertheless, the question is not how conscience developed, but whether its utterances have any objective validity, "and whether this can be given any meaning apart from the idea of God."² Baillie claims that

¹ Faith in God, p. 178.

² Ibid., p. 179.

the utterances of conscience do have objective validity, and our experience indicates that this is a valid claim. Do men then decide what is morally real and valid or is there some other source? Surely we cannot agree with Sartre and the existentialists that men invent their own values. If so, then we must observe two claims, the claim of moral values and the claim of religion; the claim of conscience and the claim of Christ. Surely we cannot thus divorce morality from the God of righteousness and love which the Bible and our own faith--experience reveal. It is difficult to escape Baillie's conclusion that conscience, in its last analysis, cannot be given a meaning without the introduction of the idea of God.

The important place which he accords to morality is also evident in his Christology. A personal relationship is a moral relationship, and Baillie understands the Incarnation to be the union of two persons in a dynamic, living, personal relationship. If, however, man's response to God is completely determined, if his freedom to respond voluntarily is taken from him, it is difficult to see how it can really be a personal relationship. It is Baillie's belief that God influences man by moral persuasion, not by coercion; in his understanding, the activity of prevenient grace is by way of persuasion rather than coercion. He believes, therefore, that God does respect human freedom. This is why he is so concerned to retain human freedom in his Christology. Without human freedom and responsibility the relationship of God and man is something less than a personal relationship, it is

something less than a moral relationship and man is something less than man. Morality, therefore, in the form of guaranteeing human freedom, has an important place in Baillie's doctrine of the Incarnation.

It also has an important place in his doctrine of the Atonement. In Baillie's thinking Atonement means reconciliation. Consequently, as far as individual men are concerned the Atonement means the reconciliation of a broken personal relationship. By its very nature, therefore, it cannot be effected by coercion. Man is not coerced into accepting what God has done for him; it is the moral influence of what God has done that moves him to repentance. This does not represent the whole meaning of the Atonement nor does it minimize the objective aspect of what was accomplished in the Atonement. Nevertheless, the moral content is of essential importance because without man's voluntary decision to repent no reconciliation can possibly take place.

This retention of a place of importance for morality constitutes a most significant contribution to modern theology. It is our contention that Barthian theology must restore human freedom and thus return morality to its rightful place; it must restore the inter-personal relationship of faith before it can become a healthy and balanced theology. It is also our contention that Existentialist theology must find a personal relationship to God before it can become a healthy theology. Here morality can, as we have seen, provide a bridge to a theology of revelation which would make such a personal relationship possible. And in

addition to the contribution that morality can make to existing theologies it also contains a potential for making contact with the modern non-Christian. In this area the most hopeful point of contact seems to be the field of Christian ethics and contact with the historical Jesus. Here morality could well be the means, as the Bishop of Woolich suggests,¹ of enabling this generation to find again that faith in God is relevant in the last half of the twentieth century.

Finally, the place that Baillie retains for the historical Jesus also constitutes an important contribution to modern theology. Starting once again with his concept of the nature of faith, we see that the role of the historical Jesus is most important. Here His life and teaching enable men to recognize in Him the embodiment of the moral ideal. Faith thus becomes a personal relationship and Jesus becomes Leader, Example, and Friend. The discovery of such a Jesus can have a most powerful influence; witness to this can be found in the rapid rise of the Jesus of History movement and its continuing influence among lay Christians. People who do not understand Christian dogma and doctrine feel that they can understand this Man who appeals to all that is good in them; they feel that through Him they can understand what it means to be a Christian in terms of human relations and social justice and in their own private lives. In the historical Jesus there is an obvious embodiment of incarnate love, there is offered a warmth of personal relationship, there is a depth of human understanding, there is a relevance to life

¹ See The New Reformation, pp. 35 f.

as men are experiencing it, that has a tremendous appeal; and even if this understanding of the Christian faith is in itself inadequate, this does not mean that its appeal should be ignored. The pathway through the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith has been trod by thousands of people and is still a most hopeful one for modern man, and not only can the historical Jesus be a pathway to the Christ of faith for new Christians, but He is also the Guide and Friend still for thousands and thousands of Christians who are mature in their faith.

Is the historical Jesus then not enough? Must we go on to build up Christologies and formulate doctrine? Baillie would reply with a counter question: what do you think is the real significance of the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth? What does it reveal of the plan and purpose of God? Is it merely to show men how to live in their own strength, to provide for them a prototype, or is it something more? Is Jesus an Example or a Redeemer? And he would answer his own question by saying both. The fact which modern theology must face is that you cannot separate the revelation of the life and teaching of Jesus from the revelation of the Cross. As Brunner puts it, "The Christ of faith is none other than the Jesus of history."¹ The Jesus of history is part of the total revelation, and this is important in relation to the Atonement. It is because Jesus died for sinners literally in His earthly life that we are able to understand the significance of the Cross. His

¹ Christian News Letter (July 21, 1948) p. 9.

life and teaching and death and resurrection are all of a piece, God's redemptive act, and we cannot carve them up without losing something of essential value to the Christian faith. As Baillie himself puts it,

Surely the saving work of Christ is not confined to what happened at the end of His life, but extends back over the whole of His life, and we cannot understand the meaning of His death unless we remember whose death it was, not only in an 'eschatological' but in a purely historical sense.¹ Apart from the whole story of Jesus as an historical human figure, with a teaching and character and career of his own, leading up to the passion, it is difficult to see how we could hear God speaking to us through the Cross at all.²

In summing up this conclusion, the following are the chief features of Baillie's concept of the Atonement. In the first place he connects it closely with the life and teaching of the historical Jesus, as has just been pointed out. Through the life of the historical Jesus we see love in action, and through the fact that he literally died for sinners in his earthly life we are able to grasp the meaning and significance of the Cross. This leads to the second feature of his concept, namely, that atonement means more than a revelation by a "Man for others" of what at-one-ment with the Ground of being is like; rather it means the coming of God into the life of man to break the power of sin in him and to effect his redemption. And this leads to the third feature. This redemption was not effected by coercion, but was thoroughly moral in that man's repentance was brought about by a moral influence upon him. The fourth feature is that this repentance on the part of man does not tell the whole story of redemption. Even as man

¹ God was in Christ, p. 220.

² Ibid., p. 222.

must repent by his own voluntary act before reconciliation can take place, so also God must forgive before reconciliation can take place. There is both a subjective and an objective aspect to the Atonement and the concept is incomplete if either is omitted. For Baillie the objective aspect is contained in the immeasurable cost of forgiveness. He does not develop this idea of costliness beyond pointing out that true forgiveness is costly in proportion to the reality and depth of the love involved in the relationship--since God loves infinitely, therefore divine forgiveness costs infinitely--and beyond pointing to Dr. Brunner's suggestion that this forgiveness and expiation come out of the conflict between wrath and love within the life and being of God. This objective aspect of his concept would be greatly strengthened if he admitted that out of the struggle between wrath and love reconciliation comes to God also, but this he does not do. For this reason, and because he fails to deal with the cosmic aspect of the Atonement, his concept is somewhat lacking in its objective aspect. Nevertheless, with unending emphasis, he insists that forgiveness can come only from God. The explanation of the process whereby this costly forgiveness comes out of the life and being of God, Baillie does not develop beyond insisting that it is immeasurably costly. With the factor of costliness he is content to cover the mystery that is involved. Through the inclusion of both an objective and a subjective aspect, however, he maintains a basic tenet of his whole thinking, namely, that complete human freedom and full divine sovereignty are essential elements in a balanced

theology. A fifth feature is that he believes the process of Atonement to be eternally going on within the life and being of God. Although the outcropping in history was once and final thus producing the historical revelatory source of the moral influence on man, the objective process of the Atonement continues in the heart of God as long as human sin exists. This concept has the value of making clear to man the immediacy of the effect of his sin upon God and its consequent seriousness, as well as the ever-present blessing of reconciliation. The sixth and greatest feature of his concept is its relevance to daily life. By nature every human creature needs to be freed of guilt; but only God the Creator is in a position to forgive. The great good news of the Gospel is that God's love is such that He is prepared to do this; but the cost is immeasurable. In beholding the wonder, depth, and reality of divine love as revealed on the cross, man is moved to repentance, God forgives, and at-one-ment or reconciliation takes place. Thus Baillie makes relevant and communicable the great good news that, "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."¹

With regard to the current value of Baillie's theology, in addition to his concept of the atonement, is the contribution that his thinking makes to modern theological thought. In the first place, he offers the salutary warning that the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are

¹ John 3:16, R. S. V.

both parts of the same revelation and that theology will be critically impoverished if it leaves out either side of the revelation. Secondly, he retains a place for morality, and reminds both the Barthian and Existential trends that a wholesome and balanced theology is not possible without it. Thirdly, he retains the essential values but avoids the major weaknesses of both trends in modern theology and, moreover, he provides a meeting place for them in the realm of morality. Fourthly, he consistently retains both complete human freedom and full divine sovereignty in his whole theological structure. The tendency to emphasize one at the cost of the other has been an inherent weakness in theology and his contribution is made more significant by the fact that this weakness is a characteristic of current theological thought. Finally, his greatest contribution lies in the ingenious manner in which he finds a handle in human experience that enables men to grasp the meaning of Christian truth, and the effectiveness with which he demonstrates its relevance without sacrificing anything of its content. In a presentation that is simple and lucid and yet profound he makes the Gospel come alive, and with consummate skill he accomplishes his great ambition, namely to communicate the good news that:

GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD
UNTO HIMSELF, NOT COUNTING THEIR
TRESPASSES AGAINST THEM.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 2

PAUL TILLICH

At the conclusion of chapter 2 brief mention was made of the theology of Paul Tillich.¹ It was pointed out that some theologians hold the opinion that Professor Tillich has provided a better bridge than Donald Baillie between the subjective and objective approaches to theology and has made a better job of retaining the essential values of both. The criticism was there made that Tillich's theology is essentially pantheistic and because of this quality it was seriously questioned whether he has established either an adequate doctrine of God or an adequate doctrine of man. It served the purpose of the text to deal with this criticism in rather summary fashion at that point, but some further amplification is called for in order to deal with the criticism more adequately and to do greater justice to this most comprehensive and carefully thought-out theology.

Certainly Professor Tillich starts from the existential "situation". He sees theology as an attempt to provide answers to the questions arising out of the human situation.² In developing his

¹ See above pp. 95 f.

² Speaking of his own work he writes: "It will be a positive judgment if theologians of the coming generations acknowledge that it has helped them, and nontheological thinkers as well, to understand the Christian message as the answer to the questions implied in their own and in every human situation." Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. 1 (Chicago, 1951), p. 8.

theology he is determined to sustain "a continuous correlation with philosophy",¹ to "stand on the boundary line between theology and philosophy",² and to show that it is possible to fashion a comprehensive understanding of reality that is satisfactory to both of them. Like Dr. Bultmann he believes it not only permissible but necessary to bring philosophical presuppositions to theology. "The analysis of existence", he writes, "including the development of questions implicit in existence, is a philosophical task."³ But "the questions are answered by the theological concepts."⁴ Thus:

Systematic theology uses the method of correlation...and must do so consciously and outspokenly, especially if the apologetic view is to prevail. The method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential⁵ questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence.

From this it is clear that the philosophical element is intentionally taken into the structure of the system itself.

Undoubtedly Professor Tillich's enormous apologetical effort in interpreting theology to philosophy has made faith in God meaningful to a great many questioning intellects. In an age when most of the traditional concepts used to contain the Christian faith are no longer

¹ Ibid., Preface p. VII.

² Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History (New York, 1936), p. 30.

³ Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, p. 71.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 35.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 67 f.

meaningful, he has striven to provide a new set of concepts that would be meaningful and would communicate to modern man and at the same time would contain the essentials of Christian truth. And in no small measure he has succeeded. His approach is so different from the traditional approach and his work so well done that it has proved to be a powerful apologetic for the Christian faith in the 20th century. Nevertheless, it is not fully convincing; there is an underlying uneasiness that there is something wrong with it, however difficult it is to pin point its weakness. It leaves one with a suspicion that its pantheistic quality makes his doctrine of God fall short of fully satisfying the demands of the Christian faith. And at the same time there is a suspicion that, in spite of his emphasis on the will and human choice, his doctrine of man is not fully adequate. As Barthian theology falls short in its doctrine of man and existentialist theology falls short in its doctrine of God, Professor Tillich, less obviously, falls short in his doctrine of both.

With his right to use symbol we cannot quarrel.¹ This is necessary because the infinite transcendence of God is beyond all finite expression; there is no concept that could contain it. Nor is there any symbol that could circumscribe God in its own literal

¹ He wrote: "The centre of my theological doctrine of knowledge is the concept of symbol." The Theology of Paul Tillich edited by Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York, 1952), p. 333.

meaning. But if symbol is to be so used to designate God, must there not be some fixed point in reality that is non-symbolic or else the whole theological system could be merely a structure of symbols? Professor Tillich agrees and makes the fixed reference the non-symbolic statement that God is being-itself.

On the face of it this seems to involve him immediately in pantheism. Just as Dr. Barth emphasizes "diastasis", the complete separation of man and God, this seems to go to the opposite extreme and make them all one; man is a part of being-itself and God is captive in his own being. It would seem that God, being confined within the scope of being, cannot be transcendent but only immanent. It also seems to make God something less or at least other than personal. What place is there for grace, one feels like asking, other than something that is innate or that rises out of the surrounding darkness but from no personal source? And what place is there for God to take initiative in the reciprocity of the I-Thou relationship or in Providence or even in the Incarnation?

Professor Tillich's concept, however, is much more dynamic than that of Spinoza, and we cannot dismiss it as readily as might appear. It cannot be overlooked that he does insist that man's relationship to God cannot be less than a personal relationship. "The symbol 'personal God' is absolutely fundamental", he writes, "because an existential relation is a person-to-person relation."¹ In order to do it

¹ Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, p. 244.

justice, therefore, we must probe for a deeper understanding. In his book, The Courage To Be,¹ Professor Tillich presents his concept of the nature of faith and this throws much light on his theology.

The basic concepts he uses to portray the nature of faith are courage and anxiety. Care must be taken, he points out right at the beginning, to differentiate between anxiety and fear. "Fear...has a definite object...which can be faced, analysed, attacked, endured,"² he writes. But anxiety has no definite object, "its object is the negation of every object.... The only object is the threat itself, but not the source of the threat, because the source of the threat is "nothingness",³ or non-being. This makes anxiety much less manageable but a much greater threat simply because it has no object. This threat, therefore, has no character of its own, but must define itself in terms of that which it threatens if it is to be expressed in terms of being. Because three different types or forms of this threat are distinguishable, one cannot, consequently, speak of them and the three corresponding types of anxiety without presupposing three basic characteristics of being. It is the human being, of course, who is under discussion, because it is the human being who has the potential of faith.

¹ Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (Fontana Paperback, London, 1962), first published Nisbet, 1952.

² Ibid., p. 44.

³ Ibid., p. 45.

But Professor Tillich, most interestingly, does not speak of the basic characteristics of the human being, but, following Spinoza, speaks rather in terms of self-affirmation. He quotes Spinoza to the effect that "the endeavour, wherewith everything endeavours to persist in its own being, is nothing else but the actual essence of the thing in question".¹ And he goes on to add:

The Latin word for endeavour is conatus, the striving towards something. This striving is not a contingent aspect of a thing, nor is it an element in its being along with other elements; it is its essentia actualis. The conatus makes a thing² what it is, so that if it disappears the thing itself disappears.

According to Tillich the basic human conatus takes three distinguishable but inseparable forms and, consequently, there are three forms of the threat of non-being and its corresponding anxiety. He even distinguishes a relative and an absolute in each form of threat. These he classifies as follows:

	<u>3 forms</u>	<u>relative</u>	<u>absolute</u>	
Basic conatus	(ontic	fate	death) all immanent in each other
	(spiritual	emptiness	meaninglessness	
	(moral	guilt	condemnation	

One only needs to read over these threats--fate, death, emptiness, meaninglessness, guilt, condemnation, to realize that he is here "speaking our language", that this provides a most promising contact with modern man.

¹ Ethics III prop. 7, quoted in The Courage To Be, pp. 30 f.

² The Courage To Be, p. 31.

The contact is seen to be even more promising when one goes on to examine the use that he makes of these categories. In dealing with the ontic human conatus he points out the contingency of fate and provides a needed antidote to the concept of an easy-going Providence that has all of life planned for us. He has no pat answer to the problem of the providence of God. Rather, his solution for despair in the face of the contingencies of fate is indicated in the question he asks, "is there courage to be, a courage to affirm oneself in spite of the threat against man's ontic self-affirmation?"¹

In dealing with our spiritual conatus and the growing meaninglessness in life in modern times because of the loss of a spiritual centre, Professor Tillich writes:

The contents of the tradition, however excellent, however praised, however loved once, lose their power to give content to-day. And present culture is even less able to provide the content. Anxiously one turns away from all concrete contents and looks for an ultimate meaning, only to discover that it was precisely the loss of a spiritual centre which took away the meaning from the special contents of the spiritual life. But a spiritual centre cannot be produced intentionally, and the attempt to produce it only produces deeper anxiety. The anxiety of emptiness drives us to the abyss of meaninglessness.²

The process may be delayed by "clinging to affirmations which are not yet undercut, be these traditions, autonomous convictions, or emotional preferences,"³ but it cannot be stopped. And the only answer in the face of this threat of meaninglessness is to find the courage to be.

¹ Ibid., p. 53.

² Ibid., p. 55.

³ Ibid., p. 56.

Finally, what about the human moral conatus? Can moral conviction serve as a bedrock reality as it did for F. W. Robertson or Donald Baillie? It can be a mighty source of strength, Tillich admits. "If the spiritual contents have lost their power", he writes,

the self-affirmation of the moral personality is a way in which meaning can be rediscovered. The simple call to duty can save from emptiness, while the disintegration of the moral consciousness is an almost irresistible basis for the attack of spiritual non-being.¹

But it is not bedrock, because "existential doubt can undermine moral self-affirmation by throwing into the abyss of scepticism not only every moral principle but the meaning of moral self-affirmation as such."² There is no escape. "Suicide can liberate one from the anxiety of fate and death--as the Stoics knew. But it cannot liberate from the anxiety of guilt and condemnation as the Christians know."³ There is no escape here. The only escape from despair is the courage to be.

Although each of these three types of anxiety are immanent in each other, as pointed out, nevertheless, one of them is generally predominant, and this characteristic is noticeable at different periods in history. Most interestingly, the predominant one in the last half of the twentieth century is emptiness and meaninglessness. "The deci-

¹ The Courage To Be, p. 60.

² Ibid., pp. 60 f.

³ Ibid., p. 62.

sive event", he writes,

which underlies the search for meaning and the despair of it in the twentieth century is the loss of God in the nineteenth century. "The result is the pronouncement "God is dead", and with him the whole system of values and meanings in which one lived. This ...drives one either to Nihilism or to the courage which takes non-being into itself."¹

Not only in establishing his categories, therefore, but in applying them to life, Professor Tillich makes the development of his thought extremely relevant to modern life. He raises the questions posed by man's existential situation, and he shows that the answer to all the questions posed by man's anxiety is "faith", if faith be understood as the courage to be.

What, then, is courage? According to Professor Tillich's definition "courage is self-affirmation "in-spite-of", that is, in spite of that which tends to prevent the self from affirming itself."² Courage is self-affirmation in the face of the three-fold threat of anxiety which we have been considering. Not all courage is faith, he is quick to point out. It will be remembered that anxiety has no object as does fear, and that courage is self-affirmation in the face of a threat, and that self-affirmation "makes a thing to be what it is."³ On this level, Professor Tillich claims, being has what he calls a "basic polar structure".⁴ Being is marked by twin polar characteristics, the characteristics of individualization and participation. Here, then,

¹ Ibid., p. 141.

² Ibid., p. 41.

³ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴ Ibid., p. 89.

is the ground for a basis of classification within the field of courage. "Man's self-affirmation", he writes, "has two sides which are distinguishable but not separable: one is the affirmation of the self as a self"¹ (the courage to be oneself), which corresponds to the pole of individualization, and the other is the courage to be as a part, corresponding to the pole of participation.

It is important to an understanding of this theology to be clear that the mutual relation of the forms of anxiety are not the same as the mutual relation of the forms of courage. In the former each form is immanent in the others, and although one may predominate at different times, the pattern of predominance is not fixed. But in the latter the two forms of courage, the courage to be as a self and the courage to be as a part, are partial and one-sided and not complete, either singly or when put together. Only the third form is complete courage or adequately reflects being as such.

Although the two types of courage within the polar groupings are not as fundamental, this does not mean that they are unimportant. Historically they have played their part in the organization and interpretation of human life and experience. "the courage of the Middle Ages", he writes, "...is basically the courage to be as a part,"² and these collectivist manifestations are discernible right down to

¹ Ibid., p. 89.

² Ibid., p. 96.

our own day in Fascism, Nazism, Communism, and what he calls "democratic conformism".¹ The courage to be as oneself is a more modern phenomenon and is to be found most noticeably, as far as the present is concerned, in existentialism. In illuminating fashion he writes of this:

It is not astonishing that those who are unshaken in their courage to be as a part...are disturbed by the Existentialist courage of despair. They are unable to understand what is happening in our period. They are unable to distinguish the genuine from the neurotic anxiety in Existentialism. They attack as a morbid longing for negativity what in reality is courageous acceptance of the negative. They call decay what is actually the creative expression of decay. They reject as meaningless the meaningful attempt to reveal the meaninglessness of our situation. It is not the ordinary difficulty of understanding those who break new ways in thinking and artistic expression which produces the widespread resistance to recent Existentialism,² but the desire to protect the self-limiting courage to be as a part.

But the courage great enough to take this three-fold anxiety about which we have been speaking into itself "must be rooted in a power of being that is greater than the power of oneself and the power of one's world. Neither self-affirmation as a part nor self-affirmation as oneself is beyond the manifold threat of non-being."³ Only a courage which is both, which accepts and transcends the two poles of participation and individualization will suffice.

All three forms have a religious root; "every courage to be", he writes, "has openly or covertly a religious root."⁴ And in each form of courage a man's relation to being-itself has its own distinc-

¹ Ibid., p. 105.

² Ibid., p. 139.

³ Ibid., p. 152.

⁴ Ibid.

tive character. Courage to be as a part in man's relation to being-itself has a mystical character, courage to be oneself has a personal character, and, "if both poles are accepted and transcended the relation to being-itself has the character of faith".¹ Thus the courage of faith has both a mystical character and a personal character but is not exclusively either, rather, it accepts and transcends both and is what Professor Tillich terms "the accepting of the acceptance without somebody or something that accepts".² For Professor Tillich, therefore, neither "mystical union nor personal encounter fulfils the idea of faith", and he goes on:

there is faith in the elevation of the soul above the finite to the infinite, leading to its union with the ground of being. ...There is faith in the personal encounter with the personal God. But more than this is included in the concept of faith. Faith is the state of being grasped by the power of being itself, (Faith) is the state of being grasped by the power of being which transcends everything that is and in which everything that is participates.³

Only such a faith can withstand the threat of non-being.

But why go through all of this profound philosophic investigation if the God of theism is enough? This is just Professor Tillich's point. He is convinced that the God of theism is not enough. "The God of theological theism", he writes, "is a being beside others and as such a part of the whole of reality."⁴ "Only", he goes on, "if the God of theism is transcended can the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness be taken into the courage to be."⁵ And he concludes:

¹ Ibid., p. 153.

² Ibid., p. 179.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 178.

⁵ Ibid., p. 180.

The courage to be which is rooted in the experience of the God above the God of theism unites and transcends the courage to be as a part of the courage to be as oneself¹. The acceptance of the God above the God of theism makes us a part of that which is not also a part but is the ground of the whole.¹

One cannot but admire the able way in which Professor Tillich has worked out both a philosophy and a theology at the same time and so effectively correlated them. But the end result leaves one with the uncomfortable feeling that this position is close to pantheism. His emphasis on the mystical in all religious experience² and his statement that "the acceptance of the God above the God of theism makes us a part of (italics mine)...the ground of the whole", points to this conclusion. It is clear that he thinks himself to be in line with Protestant reformed theology. He refers often to Luther and the Reformers and considers the courage to accept acceptance to be implicit in the Protestant understanding of Christianity. And it is not easy to pinpoint the place in the development of his theology where he strayed into pantheism. One passage may help. He writes:

The God above the God of theism is present, although hidden, in every divine-human encounter. Biblical religion as well as Protestant theology are aware of the paradoxical nature of this encounter.

¹ Ibid., p. 181.

² He writes: "Mysticism is more than a special form of the relation to the ground of being. It is an element of every form of this relationthe element of identity on which mysticism is based cannot be absent in any religious experience." Ibid., p. 38.

They are aware that if God encounters man God is neither subject nor object and is therefore above the scheme into which theism has forced him. They are aware that personalism with respect to God is balanced by a trans-personal presence of the divine. They are aware that forgiveness can be accepted only if the power of acceptance is effective in man--biblically speaking, if the power of grace is effective in man. They are aware of the paradoxical character of every prayer, of speaking to somebody to whom you cannot speak because he is not "somebody", of asking somebody of whom you cannot ask anything because he gives or gives not before you ask, of saying "thou" to somebody who is nearer to the I than the I is to itself. Each of these paradoxes drives the religious consciousness toward a God above the God of theism.¹

This strikes a responsive chord because it is true to our religious experience and our awareness of the prevenient action of God. But even although it is true to our experience, there is an element of pantheism in it too. He speaks, for example, of forgiveness being accepted "only if the power of grace is effective in man." But in this theology what can grace mean besides something that just comes, an original endowment perhaps, if there is no personal God to effect it?

He also speaks of the paradox of speaking to somebody who is not somebody, of asking something of somebody who gives or gives not before we ask, and of saying "Thou" to someone nearer to the I than the I is to itself. He says that we must transcend the personal in order to include this quality of being; we must transcend the subject-object dichotomy because of the danger of doubt undercutting the subject-object structure. And so he speaks of the trans-personal.

¹ Ibid., p. 181.

It is this concern to present a God above or beyond the God of theism that leads Professor Tillich to accept the symbol of "personal God" but to refuse the symbol of "a Person". To speak of God as A Person, he holds, involves the danger of thinking of Him as an individual. And this in turn involves the danger of limiting Him within the concept of individuality, and God cannot be so limited and remain God. In other words, the danger is that the symbol, instead of pointing to the truth which it represents comes itself to be taken for the truth and thus comes to contain this unwarranted limiting quality. But, it must be asked, is not this the danger about which Professor Tillich is concerned in all use of symbol? The other side of the coin is that if one abandons this symbol and attempts to reach beyond it, so to speak, in the effort to gain a more adequate concept of God, and attempts to enter the trans-personal, then one passes the boundaries of human thought. It would seem that in transcending the subject-object dichotomy one goes beyond the limits of human thought and, therefore, since communication is no longer possible, is really saying nothing. Whatever is said will be interpreted within the limits of the subject-object dichotomy in any case. Accordingly, by a quality of being-itself or the power of being Professor Tillich obviously intends to mean something trans-personal in the sense of supra-personal, but because he has gone beyond the limits of human thought he cannot be understood to mean anything other than the impersonal or infra-personal. The end

result is that his more-than-personal ends up by becoming less-than-personal and his power of being, his God above God, is necessarily inferior to the living God.

If this criticism is just, it amounts to a staggering impoverishment of Christian truth. It would bypass the possibility that God can act in a special way in special events to achieve His ends. And if God cannot be thought of as taking initiative, then the great Christian doctrines and the truth they contain would be shrouded in impenetrable mystery. The concept of God as Creator, the One who stands over against His creation, so central in Dr. Barth's thinking, would have to be abandoned. Another example might be the doctrine of grace. Professor Tillich describes it in The Shaking of the Foundation as follows:

Sometimes a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying "you are accepted, you are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now". Simply accept the fact that you are accepted! If that happens to us we experience grace.¹

But from whence does it come? There is a pantheistic quality about the concept. The concept of a personal God initiating it would make it much less mysterious. Closely related to this is his doctrine of the Incarnation. He claims Christ to be the final revelation because he became completely transparent to the mystery he reveals. But in order to do this he must surrender himself completely. He can surren-

¹ Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations (New York, Scribners Paperback, 1953), p. 162. First published 1948.

der himself completely, however, only if he is completely united to the ground of being which he reveals. Is this not circular? Does it not require grace to make this possible? Does it not require the prevenient grace of a personal God to lift it out of complete mystery? Indeed, the whole reciprocity between man and God seems to be at stake. Is it really feasible for a person to gain salvation by "the accepting of the acceptance without somebody or something that accepts"?¹

Out of all this arises the awareness that this concept does not seem to leave room for God to take initiative in any act of providence. Providence, Professor Tillich writes, "is the quality of inner directedness present in every given situation."² But, as Paul Newman has put it, "to call providence a quality seems to exclude any possibility of God's having initiative to act."³ To have a concept of being-itself that is essentially a quality rather than a person seems to fall short of the Christian revelation. Beholding the cross in the light of this understanding of God does not elicit the response "love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all."⁴

¹ The Courage To Be, p. 179.

² Systematic Theology Vol. 1, p. 267.

³ The Ontological in the Theology of Paul Tillich (St. Andrews, 1964) unpublished thesis, p. 414.

⁴ The United Church Hymnary, #86.

In this connection mention should be made of the discussion regarding the suitability of the use of the word "above" in speaking of God's relationship to man. If the word is merely spacially conceived it should be discarded. But there is also a legitimate use of it. Christian faith knows an ingression into history in Jesus Christ and an ingression into individual lives in revelation and reconciliation the truth of which must be conserved regardless of whether the symbol of height or that of depth are used to describe it. As O. C. Quick, upon being asked where he would draw the boundary line of orthodoxy, said: "In the clause in the Creed which says 'who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven'."¹ Professor N. H. G. Robinson put it even more strongly when he said: "If in demythologizing you eliminate the 'coming down' you have eliminated Christianity".² The point of importance is that God be understood as standing over against His creation and still its Sovereign Lord and not a captive in it. About this Donald Baillie leaves no doubt.

In relation to this consideration of the use of the symbol "above" the question arises, how is one to evaluate the validity of symbols? Professor Tillich replies: "the measure of their validity is their adequacy to the religious experience they profess."³ But

¹ In a conversation at Cambridge University.

² In a lecture delivered at St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, 1965.

³ Religious Experience and Truth edited by Sidney Hook (New York, 1961), p. 10.

this does not raise the question of truth. So he continues:

There is a difference whether they use trees and rocks and stones and animals or personalities and groups as symbolic material. Only in the last case do the symbols comprise the whole of reality, for only in man are all the dimensions of the encountered world united. It is therefore decisive for the rank and value of a symbol that its symbolic material is taken from the human person.¹

But how, one is impelled to ask, can this, on the rational grounds of truth, be justified in his system? Why should one symbol be any better than another? Why should the Christian symbols be best? The inference is that Christian faith and conviction must grasp behind and through its symbols something more than bare being-itself; it knows itself to be confronted with the living God.

Finally, in regard to man's freedom, Professor Tillich writes:

God as a subject makes me into an object which is nothing more than an object. He deprives me of my subjectivity because he is all-powerful and all-knowing. This is the deepest root of atheism. It is an atheism that is justified as the reaction against the theological theism and its disturbing implications.²

It is quite true that man's subjectivity must be preserved. But, as Professor N. H. G. Robinson has recently pointed out,³ do we preserve it if we allow it to be swallowed up in being-itself? It would seem that man's subjectivity is much more securely preserved if he is seen as a

¹ Ibid., p. 11.

² The Courage To Be, p. 179.

³ In a lecture delivered at the Graduate School of Theology, Union College, Vancouver, B. C., 1966.

self-conscious agent with a will that is free and related to God in a person-to-person relationship as a completely independent being, and not "organically" related to the ground of being. Donald Baillie sees the relationship of man and God as the relation of two separate wills, dynamically conceived, in reciprocity with each other. This retains man's subjectivity much more effectively than considering him to be a part of being-itself. Baillie retains both the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man.

It cannot be denied that Professor Tillich has produced a most comprehensive system of thought that includes both philosophy and theology in remarkable correlation and that he has united the subjective and objective aspects of theology after a fashion. But in spite of this accomplishment it is difficult to escape the conclusion that when the final analysis is made this theology, in spite of what its author terms its "theocentric vision of the meaning of reality",¹ is essentially pantheistic. And because of its pantheistic nature it can be seriously questioned whether he has left us with either an adequate doctrine of God or an adequate doctrine of man.

¹ Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology Vol. III (Nisbet, London, 1964), p. 451.

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. 647 numbered sermons as well as a quantity of unnumbered sermons, sermon outlines, sermon notes, prayers and children's stories. These also are in the keeping of the Faculty of Divinity, St. Marys College, St. Andrews University, St. Andrews, Scotland. Although Baillie's characteristic lucidity is evident in all of this material, I did not find it as productive in contributing to an understanding of his theology as were the Notebooks.